

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

OCTOBER 2015



© Gail Skoff

MOLD ■ THE GUARDIAN OF BURGUNDY
NEW DOMAINES FROM CHIANTI AND FRIULI

MOLD

by Kermit Lynch

MOLD MIGHT BE considered a tough sell these days, but here I go. When I began to buy wine in Burgundy in the seventies, the vignerons had a saying: If you build a *cave*, a winery installation, and mold doesn't grow in it, start all over in another location. They were saying that mold is a good thing in a winemaking environment. And I remember what a treat it was, descending underground and being greeted by the smells of wine, wood, and moldy stone walls.

You might imagine a moldy smell like fruits and other foods develop when they rot, but no, it wasn't that at all. It smelled fresh and alive and healthy. The mold glistened with little drops of moisture. Mold was a sign of the right temperature and humidity for raising wine. Each cellar had its own particular mold and gave its own fresh aroma. Wines seemed to breathe in the distinct aroma of their cellar, and I could smell that in the aromatic components of each domaine's wine.

Each growth of mold had a different color, too, which made the walls a thing of beauty. In Raveneau's cellar, for example, the stone walls had gorgeous streaky blotches of red, purple, pink, orange, and ochre. When I tasted, it was often with my eyes on the walls. In my mind, I started framing certain areas of the walls and imagining them as abstract art, because they were so lovely. Chave's cellar was another particularly beautiful garden of mold, and I often put photos of his mold-covered walls and bottles in this brochure.

One day at Raveneau's, I decided to ask my wife to teach me to use one of her cameras so I could return another day, not to taste but to make color pictures of these weird shapes and colors. But I never did.

However, I'm writing this because the movement now in France is to clean up all the mold and make wine in a sterile environment. People want fresh fruit nowadays. Their taste has changed. Mold is a no-no.

Given that wine is a sponge and sucks up whatever aromas are in its environment, I'm afraid wines these days are sucking up sterility. Yes, the fruit is "cleaner" in a wine's aroma, but without mold much less complex, less suggestive of extra-vinous influences, and less reflective of the site where it was made—sort of like the movement away from native yeasts to test-tube concoctions.

If people like mere fruit so much, let them buy fruit juice. It's a lot cheaper.





TRAVELING THE LOIRE

by Julia Issleib

TODAY I'D LIKE to take you on a little road trip spanning 250 miles from west to east, along the Loire River. The sun is shining—*allons-y!*

2014 MUSCADET CÔTES DE GRAND LIEU SUR LIE “LA NOË” • ÉRIC CHEVALIER

When Éric Chevalier welcomes us with a broad smile at our first stop, you can practically smell the Atlantic Ocean in the air. Éric pops open a bottle of La Noë. The first glass is perfect with oysters—it is streamlined, saline, and full of lemon. Shortly after, the granite *terroir* kicks in, the wine becomes more full bodied, and chamomile and apricot notes lead to a rich finish—perfect to accompany local fish dishes.

\$17.95 PER BOTTLE

\$193.86 PER CASE

2013 SAVENNIÈRES “CUVÉE SPÉCIALE” CHÂTEAU D'ÉPIRÉ

After this nice meal, we should probably bike to our second destination. The Loire without its castles would be like . . . the Loire without Chenin Blanc! Luc Bizard can help us out with both. At beautiful Château d'Epiré, he crafts Chenin Blanc with elegance and stance, just like the master of the house. If you like wines with character, you're in for a treat. The intense nose of quince could have you fooled into expecting a sweet wine, but on the palate, this is bone-dry, lively, and exploding with flavors. It's time for cheese, isn't it?

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE

\$324.00 PER CASE

2014 SANCERRE • DANIEL CHOTARD

If you hear the accordion playing, you know we've reached our final stop for the day, Crézancy-en-Sancerre. Daniel has passed the reins of the cellar over to his son Simon, who shares his mischievous smile and indomitable curly hair, and makes wines of impressive balance, finesse, and maturity for his young age.

This 2014 is no exception. An intense exotic nose lures you in before the minerality channels the lightning energy of this pure Sauvignon Blanc, jostling you wide awake. There's electricity in the air, no? Or maybe it's just Daniel's accordion . . .

\$27.00 PER BOTTLE

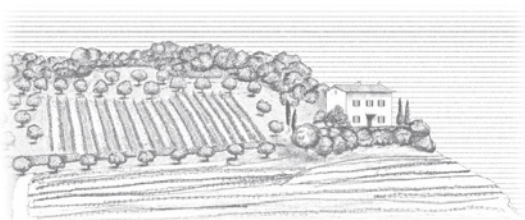
\$291.60 PER CASE

INTRODUCING PODERE CAMPRIANO

A SMALL FARM IN TUSCANY

by Dixon Brooke

FINALLY! Ever since I discovered this tiny family farm in the hills above Greve in Chianti, I have been doing everything I can to rush the wines over here. Alas, small sometimes equals slow: not as many hands on deck to prepare labels, bottle wine, work the vines, survey the previous vintages in cask, cook dinner, etc, etc. I have been doing my best to save part of the wheel of aged pecorino cheese that the owner gave me until the wine arrived, but I just missed it. He promised to send more. These beautiful expressions of pure Sangiovese rendered with Tuscan heart and soul will transport you to the magical place that is Tuscany.



2011 CHIANTI CLASSICO

Classic Chianti. Also textbook Greve. Dark, deep, infused with schist minerality, vigorous, bright, mouth-coating.

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE

\$324.00 PER CASE

2011 CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA

The Riserva is more a wine of the earth than a wine of fruit. It has a lot to say and needs air, time, and preferably a *bistecca* to say it.

\$42.00 PER BOTTLE

\$453.60 PER CASE

2011 ALTA VALLE DELLA GREVE "80"

From vines planted in their highest terraces in 1980, this is technically a Chianti Classico Riserva. Less technically, finesse, elegance, and pure deliciousness are a few of its most prized assets.

\$57.00 PER BOTTLE

\$615.60 PER CASE

THE GUARDIAN OF BURGUNDY

by Clark Z. Terry

THIS PAST SUMMER it was announced that, after nearly a decade of research and campaigning, the wine region of Burgundy and, most specifically, the categorizations of its *climats* (vineyard sites) were granted World Heritage status by UNESCO. This prestigious honor helps preserve the historical identity of Burgundy's vineyards for future generations of vigneron and wine drinkers. It also brings to the world's attention the phenomenal history of how Burgundy's wine traditions were developed—a history that dates back to the twelfth century.

The man behind this achievement is Aubert de Villaine, a friend of Kermit's for decades, and we wholeheartedly congratulate Aubert on his accomplishment and the realization of this dream.

Aubert's conviction about the importance of preserving the traditions and culture of Burgundy extends far beyond the World Heritage effort. As the manager and co-owner since 1974 of undeniably the greatest of all Burgundian

properties, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Aubert played a major role in DRC's ascent in the world of wine. The preservation of and respect for the incredible history of DRC and the utmost quality of its vineyards and wines throughout the decades raised the profile of Burgundy as a region, leading it out of postwar obscurity to the forefront of collectors' cellars. All involved in the business of Burgundy have benefited.

Aubert is also no stranger to advocating for his region in front of institutions and bureaucracies. In 1997 he successfully lobbied French appellation authorities to grant the small town of Bouzeron *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* status—a serious upgrade from Bourgogne Aligoté. Aubert long ago realized the greatness of the Bouzeron *terroir* when married to the Aligoté Doré grape, and I can only surmise that his efforts to promote this small village and to convince the powers that be within France that a new status was merited were no doubt on par with lobbying the United Nations.

Here we are, eighteen years after the official recognition of AOC Bouzeron and many decades into Aubert's inspirational wine career. Considering Aubert's latest accomplishment, it seems only proper to raise a cool glass of mineral and refreshing Bouzeron in his name and toast a man who, in his own humble and charismatic way, has done so much for the world of wine. Here's to you, Aubert.



2013 BOUZERON • A. ET P. DE VILLAINE

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE



Aubert de Villaine

© Gail Skoff

VIGNAI DA DULINE

by Kermit Lynch

HERE, HAVE A GLASS of Pinot Grigio.”

Sounds good to me. Wine fans dream of drinking a good Pinot Grigio, but they usually end up with a glass of something as generic as your standard-issue Côtes-de-Provence rosé.

Anyway, it was below zero degrees Fahrenheit when this California native landed in Munich, and after the short hop to Venice, I couldn’t take a water taxi to my hotel because the lagoon was frozen. Imagine that. There was, however, a bright side—I had Venice pretty much to myself, because hardly anyone else ventured outside. How rare is that? Venice without the mobs.

How wines are discovered can be of interest, I hope. The wines of Hubert de Montille, for example. I was tasting at Romanée-Conti back in 1975 and André Noblet told me he considered de Montille the best winemaker in Burgundy. Henri Jayer? I saw his name in a little list of gold-medal winners at the Mâcon wine fair. Leonard Humbrecht? In 1981 he strode largely into my hole-in-the-wall wine shop in Albany, California, bearing samples. And Vignai da Duline? At a restaurant in Venice one painfully frozen night three years ago, two pals and I were the only clients. When the proprietor poured Duline’s Pinot Grigio into my glass, I almost yelled Eureka! or Hallelujah! I didn’t, however, because that’s not my style. But there I was, on a cruel night, drinking the best Pinot Grigio of my life. It was what I’d dreamed Pinot Grigio could be during forty years of endlessly entertaining trips to the Friuli.

Vignai da Duline is my style, and three years later the magic produced by the seven-hectare property is now available. Vignai da Duline is on my all-star team. I found gold in those beautiful Friuli hills—finesse, touch, and class. Delicious *and* interesting.

Our sales staff has tasted each wine—speak with them for guidance and to put together a mix for drinking now and for your cellar.



	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2014 PINOT GRIGIO “RONCO PITOTTI”	\$45.00	\$486.00
2014 MALVASIA ISTRIANA “CHIOMA INTEGRALE”	45.00	486.00
2012 DELLE VENEZIE BIANCO “MORUS ALBA”	55.00	594.00
2013 CHARDONNAY “RONCO PITOTTI”	60.00	648.00
2012 REFOSCO DAL PEDUNCOLO ROSSO		
“MORUS NIGRA”	60.00	648.00
2010 PINOT NERO “RONCO PITOTTI”	124.00	1,339.20
2011 MERLOT “RONCO PITOTTI VALORI” MAGNUM . . .	159.00	858.60



Lorenzo Mocchiutti and Federica Magrini of Vignai da Duline

© Dixon Brooke

NOËL VERSET

1919–2015



© Gail Skoff

*Noël Verset made Cornas for more than seventy years.
Vintage 2006 was his last, produced when he was eighty-six years old.
We bid adieu to the great Syrah master.*

PIEDMONT

by Dixon Brooke

2012 CISTERNA D'ASTI SUPERIORE TENUTA LA PERGOLA

Typically I'll blend the wine from the Croatina grape into our Monferrato Rosso bottling. In 2012 it was so impressive we held some aside, aged it briefly in cask, and bottled it a year later. Thankfully, there is also a neat DOC for Croatina made in this way, named after the town above the winery, a small satellite of Asti. Thick, muscular, and deliciously fruity, it satisfies on many levels and is a lot of wine for the price.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE

\$216.00 PER CASE

2013 DOLCETTO DI DIANO D'ALBA "SÖRÌ SANTA LUCIA" • IL PALAZZOTTO

Hopefully, some of you have gotten comfy with Paolo Olivero's classic Dolcetto bottling that we introduced earlier this year, the Sörì Cristina. Here is his bottling from an older-vine vineyard largely planted in 1979. It has the freshness and drinkability that Dolcetto from Diano d'Alba is known for, with a little extra heft and concentration. See why the locals like to drink the wine of this grape with everything in the Piemontese larder.

\$19.00 PER BOTTLE

\$205.20 PER CASE

2007 BAROLO BUSSIA RISERVA "CASCINA DARDI" • A. & G. FANTINO

Could the Fantino brothers in Monforte d'Alba be any hotter right now? Year after year, in the wines they craft, from their Rosso and Barbera to their classic Baroli to their Riserva bottlings and their Passito and Chinato, the range is as mesmerizing as the consistency. In steps the latest incarnation of Riserva, from their oldest vines raised in a single large oak cask. Vintage 2007 offers immediate approachability, coupled with great power, density, and a down-to-earth (and earthy) Piemontese quality that makes you want to sit at an old wood-hewn table and eat agnolotti and tajarin pastas with hearty ragùs and, if you're lucky, a shaving or two of truffle.

\$67.00 PER BOTTLE

\$723.60 PER CASE



Catherine Breton and her harvesting vehicle

© Catherine & Pierre Breton

— RAIDING THE CELLAR —

FOUR DECADES OF

CATHERINE & PIERRE BRETON

by Dixon Brooke

THE BRETONS ARE quite a couple. Let's start with the fact that their last name, Breton, is literally a synonym for the Cabernet Franc grape in the Loire Valley. Both are relatively short, so they can easily walk through the openings of all the troglodyte cellars that dot their property along the Loire River. Both are little balls of explosive energy and are super-passionate about their wines. They continue to take on more and more projects even though they are already working seven days a week and never come up for air. Catherine is now making wine in Vouvray and running a retail shop on the Île d'Yeu. Despite all this activity, they make some of the most natural and the most consistent wines in France. It is just insanity. In their immense wisdom they thought to stash away vintages from their greatest Bourgueil vineyard over the past four decades in their cool, limestone caves, and here we are able to present you with a perfectly preserved vertical. Three to drink now, one to age yourself. *Santé!*



	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2012 BOURGUEIL "LES PERRIÈRES"	\$49.00	\$529.20
<i>A thoroughbred of a wine with great breed and poise, long future.</i>		
2003 BOURGUEIL "LES PERRIÈRES"	82.00	885.60
<i>Deliciously lush and full, remains fresh with backbone.</i>		
1996 BOURGUEIL "LES PERRIÈRES"	88.00	950.40
<i>A vintage that took a long time to come around but is now singing.</i>		
1989 BOURGUEIL "LES PERRIÈRES"	88.00	950.40
<i>La grande année—25+ years and still going strong.</i>		

LANGUEDOC VALUES

by Anthony Lynch

2014 LANGUEDOC BLANC CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE

Suggestions of wildflower honey and ripe stone fruit give La Roque's *blanc* a lavish richness, yet the precision on the palate leaves no doubt that it can also provide mouthwatering refreshment. The vinification—with native yeasts in a combination of stainless steel and neutral casks—has been fine-tuned over many years to strike a perfect balance in this stony, fennel-scented white. The blend includes Marsanne, Rolle, Grenache Blanc, Viognier, and Roussanne, and you'll see that each contributes a distinct element to create something greater than the sum of its parts.

\$18.00 PER BOTTLE

\$194.40 PER CASE

2013 LANGUEDOC ROUGE "LOU MASET" DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC

Lou Maset is the Occitan name for a little farmhouse. This little farmhouse is surrounded by Cinsault, Grenache, Carignan, Syrah, and Alicante Bouschet vines that make up this fulfilling everyday blend. It is a delicious medium-bodied red made from organic grapes, which at one time might have served to hydrate thirsty farmworkers snacking on *saucisson* during their midday break in a small shack among the vines. For our purposes, this is a tasty bottle of *rouge* that you can uncork any and every day of the week for straightforward, honest pleasure.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE

\$172.80 PER CASE

2013 CORBIÈRES ROUGE "RÉSERVE LA DEMOISELLE" • DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE

With all the undeservedly overpriced wine on the market today, it's easy to say we've found a great deal. Nevertheless, Fontsaïnte's Demoiselle takes "value" to the next level: a time-tested *terroir* and generations of *savoir faire* yield hedonistic drinkability, uncommon complexity, and long-term cellaring potential, all at an unchanging and quite accessible cost. Century-old Carignan with a hearty dollop of Grenache and Mourvèdre is responsible for this dark, meaty, *garrigue*-ridden stallion. If past vintages are any indicator, you'll want to enjoy this today, tomorrow, and much farther down the line.

\$16.95 PER BOTTLE

\$183.06 PER CASE



YOU ARE INVITED

Please join
Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant
for our
RETAIL CLIENT TASTING.

A diverse selection of two dozen wines from
our French and Italian portfolio will be presented.

Friday, October 16, 2015

6:00–8:00 P.M.

\$50

Julia Morgan Hall
UC Berkeley Botanical Garden
200 Centennial Drive, Berkeley

*To purchase tickets, please call
the store at (510) 524-1524.
Limited space available*

*For your convenience, a parking lot directly
across the street from the event will be available.*



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THE FINAL BANDOL ROSÉ

by Anthony Lynch

2014 BANDOL ROSÉ DOMAINE DU GROS 'NORÉ

If you've kept up with our monthly brochure since July, you've had the chance to sample wonderful rosés from Tempier, Tour du Bon, and Terrebrune. This month—last, but certainly not least—we shine a spotlight on a fourth Bandol rosé, from our boxer-turned-vigneron friend Alain Pascal at Domaine du Gros 'Noré. His features a tangy green-olive saltiness, typical aromas of Provençal herbs, and enough substance to give it real character without sacrificing an ounce of crisp freshness. With his 2014, Alain has undoubtedly made his way to the top of Provence's rosé hierarchy.



\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE