

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

APRIL 2019



Sailing down the Corsican coast

© Gail Skoff

NEW ARRIVALS FROM L'ÎLE DE BEAUTÉ ■ OYSTER BLISS XXII ■ VALUES OF THE MONTH



OYSTER BLISS XXII

QUINTESENTIALLY FRENCH, that's how we like to think of our annual celebration of oysters. Up and down the west coast of France, you'll find many *fêtes de l'huître*—oyster festivals—that look mighty similar to the one we put on here in Berkeley: crisp, local white wine served at long tables packed with friends and family, often a live band on a nearby stage, and a seemingly endless supply of oysters. A Bordeaux *fête* also features grilled garlic and pork sausage. Put six oysters and a couple sausages on a plate and you have a real Bordelais specialty, one that we've taken to calling “Kermit's Plate” at our Oyster Bliss.

If you've been to a past Oyster Bliss, you know what a great time it is. If you haven't, we urge you to come down to our retail shop and enjoy this now quintessentially Berkeley experience.

The big white tents will go up, Curt Clingman will grill sausages and shuck oysters, the gypsy jazz trio Gauchos will pick some tunes, and Bartavelle will pour our carefully selected wines.

And don't forget the Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant Oyster Bliss Motto:

**DARE NOT SERVE ME ONE,
SERVE ME A DOZEN!**

See you there!

Saturday, April 27 • 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Event presented by Curt Clingman and Bartavelle Coffee & Wine Bar

VALUES OF THE MONTH

by Anthony Lynch

2016 MÂCON-VILLAGES HENRI PERRUSSET

At a recent family reunion, Kermit and I poured our guests Perrusset's humble Mâcon-Villages before moving on to a 2002 *premier cru* Chablis from Domaine Raveneau. The next day, a relative—who enjoys the occasional glass of wine but is more of a beer drinker—reached out to order a few bottles. “Got any more of that Chablis?” he wrote. “And I’ll take a couple bottles of that other Chardonnay, too.”

I replied that, sadly, we had sold out of the former fifteen years ago, but I’d gladly send him some Mâcon—which, by the way, costs less per case than the Raveneau does per bottle. The experience perfectly summarized Perrusset’s knack for crafting all-purpose, crowd-pleasing Chardonnays at a good price. No oak; generous citrus and stone fruit on the palate; a clean, minerally finish—what more could one ask for in a white wine?

\$18.95 PER BOTTLE

\$204.66 PER CASE

2017 CÔTES DU RHÔNE SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH

Our house Côtes du Rhône is an unfiltered Grenache-based blend we select each year from a *cave co-op* outside of Avignon. The winemaker works closely with numerous small vigneron and purchases their grapes, sourcing from a variety of nearby *terroirs* to give a quintessential rendition of a southern Rhône red. Much of the fruit comes from the neighboring town of Châteauneuf-de-Gadagne—one of the twenty communes permitted to append its name to the Côtes du Rhône Villages appellation—whose stony, alluvial soils are similar to those of a much better-known Châteauneuf not far away. Our annual blending consists of tasting samples from roughly two dozen different tanks, with the goal of capturing classic Rhône flavors in a versatile and approachable bargain red. In the newly arrived 2017, you’ll find rich, juicy aromas of ripe dark fruit, spicy flavors of licorice and wild herbs, and chewy tannins that leave your palate replete with impressions of thyme, black cherry, and stone. We are always impressed by how delicious this little wine is when we taste it at the *cave* each year; we hope you’ll feel the same upon uncorking a bottle at home.

\$12.95 PER BOTTLE

\$139.86 PER CASE

— NEW ARRIVALS —

LIONEL FAURY

by Dixon Brooke

2017 CONDRIEU



The Viognier grape has been cultivated on the granite slopes of Condrieu since at least Roman times, and likely long before, which makes it all the more incredible that it almost disappeared after World War II; production for the entire appellation dropped to as low as 2,500 bottles in

the late 1960s, according to John Livingstone-Learmonth in *The Wines of the Northern Rhône*. Its revival has been hard fought, as the steep, terraced slopes here are painstakingly difficult to work, but the payoff for diligent growers is one of the world's most remarkable dry whites. Its ravishing perfume, luxurious body and texture, and unique abilities at table endow Condrieu with a special place in the connoisseur's cellar. Flabby and sweet versions are easy to produce, but the dry style, which preserves perfume and freshness along with unctuous richness, is the Holy Grail. For a little more than a decade, Lionel Faury has been mastering the art, and he is now among the elite producers of this storied French white.

\$59.00 PER BOTTLE

\$637.20 PER CASE

2017 COLLINES RHODANIENNES SYRAH “L’ART ZÉLÉ”

Faury owns two parcels in the Côte-Rôtie *lieu-dit* known as “l’Arselié,” located high on the hill where the land begins to undulate before connecting with the plateau farther above. These parcels lie in the northern Côte Brune, on the north side of Ampuis, above Le Plomb and Grandes Places. One of them produces fruit for his Côte-Rôtie, which is blended with his holdings from Le Plomb and Fourvier on the lower, steeper slopes. The other portion, just outside of the official appellation, is used to create this bottling that differs from Côte-Rôtie in name only. We release it younger, and it drinks sooner, but it has all the telltale aromatics, flavor, and structure of the legendary roasted slope: black, ultra-smooth, loads of graphite. Traditionally made, whole-cluster Syrah from a proven master of the grape, aged in older *demi-muids*, this is one of the only Syrahs that gives you a taste of the great northern Rhône Syrah appellations without the price tag.

\$35.00 PER BOTTLE

\$378.00 PER CASE

WHITE BEFORE RED

BORDEAUX EDITION

by Jane Berg

2015 BORDEAUX BLANC “DÉFINITION” DOMAINE DE L’ALLIANCE

In French, *alliance* is the word for both a wedding ring and a union or pact. The estate is aptly named, considering that Daniel Alibrand, an Atlantic coast fisherman from Tours, and Valérie Alibrand, a native Bordelaise, dreamed of one day getting married and producing world-class Sauternes and dry, whittled whites. Valérie inherited old vines from Fargues, a quiet village halfway between Sauternes and Langon, and fourteen vintages later, they’ve upheld their *alliance* in all senses of the word. Producing organically farmed, chiseled wines that far exceed what seems possible for white Bordeaux, this couple inspires us year after year. Made from hand-picked and vigilantly sorted Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc, the deceptively saline Définition co-ferments in neutral, open-top fûts and, once racked, is left untouched in a cool cellar so as not to disturb the peaceful lees in blissful slumber. Created with love, the resulting wine tastes crystal-clean and is the perfect *définition* of Valérie and Daniel’s commitment to *terroir*-driven wines and the pact they made years ago.

\$42.00 PER BOTTLE

\$453.60 PER CASE

2016 POMEROL “POM ‘N’ ROLL” COMBAUDE-GUILLOT

If you’re searching for young, drinkable Bordeaux, the tiny appellation of Pomerol on the southern right bank of the Gironde River deserves a closer look. Raised in amphorae and air-tight, stainless-steel vats that capture the natural freshness and vigor of Gombaude’s signature organic and biodynamic grapes, this unfiltered blend of concentrated old-vine Merlot, Malbec, and peppery Cabernet Franc will generously stain your teeth, your glass, and your linens—save your grandmother’s pressed white tablecloth for a different occasion. A youthful perspective marks this dress-code-not-required Bordeaux, whose velvety tannins and supple structure fit more like soft flannel and worn jeans than a stiff suit jacket and tie. But don’t be fooled. This Pomerol will ceremoniously drum on for several days once opened and just as easily accompany a thick rib-eye with spring potatoes as it will a roast chicken with mustardy greens. Plan to get at least two rockin’ good meals out of it, or, if you’re a *gourmand*, grab a second bottle.

\$54.00 PER BOTTLE

\$583.20 PER CASE

CORSICAN WHITES

by Anthony Lynch

2017 FAUSTINE BLANC “VIEILLES VIGNES” DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI

Summing up Jean-Charles AbbattuCCI’s contagious energy in just a few lines is virtually impossible. The best way to experience it is to stand in his vineyards in central Corsica and feel it radiate through your body from the ground up. Luckily, that energy finds its way into every bottle he makes, and this gentle, breezy white from old-vine Vermentinu delivers it without compromise—each sip is like a gust of warm Mediterranean air flooding your senses with a perfume of flowers and wild maquis.

\$44.00 PER BOTTLE **\$475.20** PER CASE

2017 ÎLE DE BEAUTÉ BLANC • YVES LECCIA

Yves Leccia was among the first to replant the long-lost Biancu Gentile grape, an exclusively Corsican variety that almost went extinct until a group of proud and passionate vigneron took action to salvage it. Today, Yves blends BG with Vermentinu for the domaine’s entry-level white, an absolutely lip-smacking, thirst-quenching creation that perfectly summarizes the appeal of these island wines. Sun-ripened fruit, sea-mist salinity, and an alluring note of fresh herbs bring Leccia’s stunning Mediterranean vineyards straight to your glass.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE **\$313.20** PER CASE

2017 PATRIMONIO BLANC “CUVÉE SARAH” DOMAINE GIACOMETTI

Recently, the vigneron of Patrimonio voted to ban the use of synthetic herbicides, echoing a commitment to traditional viticulture championed for decades by historic growers like Antoine Arena and already embraced by a new generation coming of age in Corsica’s cellars. For young siblings Simon and Sarah Giacometti, the choice came naturally in their quest to best express the unique corner of the appellation they call home. This white, raised in *demi-muids* with malolactic fermentation, flamboyantly shows off the affinity of ripe Vermentinu grapes with a judicious use of wood. Its lushness and exoticism feel like sunshine splashing over your taste buds, and then a crisp, herbaceous finale brings you back to the soil and thirsty for more. Decant it for best results, and savor the new wave of talent that is sweeping through Corsica’s greatest appellation.

\$37.00 PER BOTTLE **\$399.60** PER CASE

CORSICAN REDS

by Chris Santini

FUNNY HOW FAR the pendulum swings sometimes. Twenty years ago, if a red wine wasn't rich, black, oaky, dense, and with a high score, many didn't even want to hear about it. Now, some won't give a wine a chance unless it is fresh, light, easy, and off the radar. Don't get me wrong. I'm all for fresher, livelier reds with whole-cluster fermentation, lighter extraction, and less new wood. But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. At times you need a wine you can chew on a bit. It'd be a shame to open a Bandol or a Châteauneuf-du-Pape and not taste that deep, lavish juice we all love. I certainly wouldn't want to eat a hearty *bœuf bourguignon* every other day, but now and then, it's just what the doctor ordered.

These three Corsican reds are resolutely old-school: dark, full-bodied, juicy, and proud of it. The Maestracci E Prove, one of our longest-running reds from Corsica, ages a few years in large wooden casks to tame its wild, animal side. At four years old, it has mellowed and shows great class, especially for its price. The Giacometti Cuvée Sarah, an aromatic mix of roasted, smoking herbs with plenty of tannins to chew on, goes down with pleasure and calls for another round (and a grill). The final of the trio, Antoine-Marie Arena's Carco, is perhaps the finest and stateliest of the bunch. The bottle holds a fair share of sunshine and exhibits a noble, Tuscan-like quality.

2015 CORSE CALVI ROUGE "E PROVE" DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE

\$259.20 PER CASE

2016 PATRIMONIO ROUGE "CUVÉE SARAH" DOMAINE GIACOMETTI

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE

\$324.00 PER CASE

2015 PATRIMONIO ROUGE "CARCO" ANTOINE-MARIE ARENA

\$46.00 PER BOTTLE

\$496.80 PER CASE



FINE WHITES FOR ITALIAN GASTRONOMY

by Anthony Lynch

2017 FRIULANO “LA DULINE” VIGNAI DA DULINE

Suggested pairing: thinly sliced prosciutto, San Daniele if possible



With Duline’s Friulano—the grape formerly known as Tocai—there is simply no better course of action than the ultra-local pairing with paper-thin slices of fine Friulan prosciutto. Seeking out high-quality San Daniele pays off here, as its delicate, melt-in-your-mouth texture and sweet, exquisite flavor marry to perfection with this white. A blend of Tocai Giallo and Tocai Verde (two clones of the Friulano grape), it presents a sumptuous, mouth-coating peachiness thanks to the rare, low-yielding Giallo. The harmonious finish evokes wet stone and a hint of bitter almond—just what is needed to cut through all that salty fat.

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE

\$486.00 PER CASE

2017 COLLINE SAVONESI LUMASSINA PUNTA CRENA

Suggested pairing: lightly breaded fritto misto, preferably of seafood (specifically, fresh anchovies)

It is only natural that Lumassina, a rare grape exclusive to the Ligurian coast, should be served with another specialty of the region: crisp, lightly battered fried anchovies—supplemented, if you so wish, with calamari, little shrimp, thinly sliced fennel, and sage leaves (all deep-fried, naturally). The Lumassina, a gently flowery, low-alcohol white that presents a barely noticeable spritz, brings a lemony springtime freshness, allowing it to act almost as a condiment to the *fritto*. In Liguria, your *fritto* must be of such quality that a squeeze of lemon not only is unnecessary but would detract from the inherent purity of the raw ingredients. My suggestion: squeeze not; opt for a cold glass of Lumassina instead.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE

\$216.00 PER CASE



2017 PROSECCO TREVISO “SUI LIEVITI” GREGOLETTO

Suggested pairing: chopped Treviso salad with parsley and shaved Parmesan

Soak the radicchio leaves in ice water if they seem too bitter, then mix with tender whole parsley leaves and dress with lemon and olive oil. Marinated anchovies make a good addition, if desired. Regardless, you'll want to add plenty of cracked black pepper and shaved *Parmigiano* over the top. Gregoletto's slightly cloudy Prosecco *col fondo* (refermented in bottle and unfiltered, the old-fashioned way) is a stimulating partner to this Venetian-inspired dish: brisk, bubbly, bracingly mineral, and quite tactile on the palate. Its faint yeastiness plays beautifully with the radicchio, and every bottle seems to drain itself.

\$19.00 PER BOTTLE

\$205.20 PER CASE



The Gregoletto estate

ROSSI PIEMONTESE

by Dustin Soiseth

2017 DOLCETTO DI DIANO D'ALBA "SÖRÌ CRISTINA" • IL PALAZZOTTO

The fourth generation to make wine from the family's vines, Paolo Olivero of Il Palazzotto has a process that is rooted in tradition. What's more, his hometown of Diano d'Alba is one of the top *crus* for Dolcetto in Piedmont due to its high elevation and white limestone soil. Green-harvesting, natural fermentation, and Paolo's most sophisticated technique—opening the windows of his cellar during winter to stabilize the wine before bottling it unfiltered—all lead to freshness, elegance, and a dusty black cherry note in this charming Dolcetto.

\$18.00 PER BOTTLE

\$194.40 PER CASE

2017 BARBERA D'ALBA "BRICCO DEL PILONE" BENEVELLI PIERO

I love talking with people about this wine because I get to tell them that it spends ten months in *botti grandi*—my favorite Italian wine-related phrase, which is almost impossible to pronounce without a cheesy Italian accent. Try it and you'll see. Those few months in "big barrels" allow the wine to soften and breathe a bit without imparting a ton of tannin or oak. That is good, because this Barbera has plenty of grip on its own, and covering up this gorgeous fruit would be a crime. With big, ripe flavors, this bottling is perfect with a rich, meaty ragù or a deep-dish pizza.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE

\$270.00 PER CASE

2014 BAROLO "VIGNA LAZZAIRASCO" GUIDO PORRO

Guido Porro must have one of the shortest commutes in the business. All he has to do is step out the cellar door and he's standing in one of the most famous *crus* in Barolo: Lazzarito. The Nebbiolo vines for the Vigna Lazzairasco, Porro's oldest, are ideally situated with a southeastern exposure; they soak up the morning sun but are spared the worst of the afternoon heat. The 2014 is a Barolo for near-term drinking. Wait two to four years, or drink it now, absolutely guilt-free. I love the coolness on the nose—think mint or eucalyptus—as well as the blood orange and floral notes. *Open* and *charming* are two adjectives not normally associated with the fearsome Barolo, but sometimes you just luck out.

\$53.00 PER BOTTLE

\$572.40 PER CASE

PREMIER CRU BURGUNDY

by Will Meinberg

2017 CHABLIS 1ER CRU “VAILLONS” HENRI COSTAL

Costal’s Chablis holds a dear place in my heart as my introduction to the world of Kermit Lynch wines. This bottling of *premier cru* Vaillons is a classic example of mineral-driven Chardonnay with an incredibly clear sense of place. Aromas of Bosc pear and white flowers soar from the glass and lure you to take a sip, then a bracing acidity and crisp stoniness invite you back for more. Just as I remember it—true to its *terroir* and delicious all at once!

\$42.00 PER BOTTLE

\$453.60 PER CASE

2016 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1ER CRU “LA TRUFFIÈRE” • BRUNO COLIN

Bruno Colin crafts this heavenly Chardonnay from one of the smallest *terroirs* in Puligny, perched high on the Côte de Beaune. Great wines, especially *premier* and *grand cru* Burgundies, often need time in the cellar to fully mature, but that doesn’t seem to be the case with this one. Its energy and intensity are enhanced by a gentle kiss of oak, which produces a warm hint of cinnamon-like spice that beautifully complements its crystalline fruit. Colin’s restrained winemaking approach delivers a grand wine that can be enjoyed now without the fear of missing out on something, but collectors, fear not—this bottle will unveil many pleasant surprises in years to come.

\$197.00 PER BOTTLE

\$2,127.60 PER CASE

2016 GIVRY ROUGE 1ER CRU “A VIGNE ROUGE” DOMAINE FRANÇOIS LUMPP

François, how do you do it!? Dedicated to the Givry appellation, François Lumpp elevates each wine to a level rarely seen in this southern part of Burgundy. François is quick to point out that Givry shares the same soils as the Côte de Beaune, and indeed, just a taste reveals he has no reason to envy his neighbors to the north. The aromas are typical of fine Burgundy: raspberry, incense, cedar, and clove; on the palate, it presents a dense core and fine tannin. While all of François’s reds offer pleasure now and have good aging potential, none are more cellar-worthy than A Vigne Rouge. But to be honest, I’ve never resisted the temptation to drink it young!

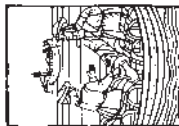
\$56.00 PER BOTTLE

\$604.80 PER CASE

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“ I personally loved Corsica. The landscape and rugged architecture were magnificent, so were the beaches, and every port we sailed into had a different charm. I had never been there before and fell in love at first sight. ”

—Eric Clapton, from his autobiography



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT—TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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