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WINE MERCHANT

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- **BORDEAUX SAMPLER**
- **VALUES RED AND WHITE**
- **RESUMING THE PLEASURE**

by **Jim Harrison**

OPEN • TUESDAY–SATURDAY 11 A.M. TO 6 P.M. CLOSED • SUNDAY & MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 2005

— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

WHITE

2004 PETIT CHABLIS ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

Here I am, just stuck inside of Chablis with the *petit* blues again.

I know I know I know, real Americans don't want *petit*. Can you imagine Dick Cheney ordering at the White House canteen: "Gimme a *petit*burger, please."

Oh well, I have never exactly pursued the mass market anyway. I'm one of those brave go-against-the-flow-and-try-to-market-whatever-nobody-wants kind of guys, things like *terroir* and finesse, and now, *petit*. I'm here appealing

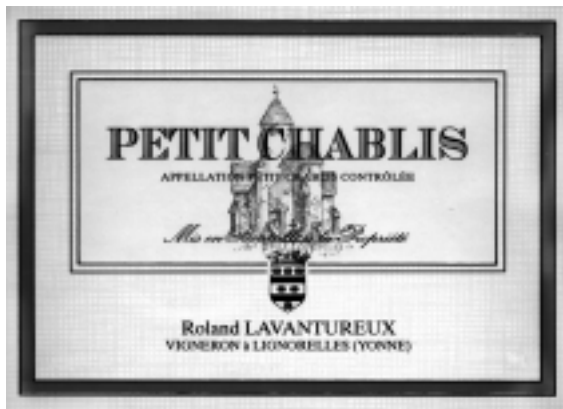
to a slightly more sophisticated crowd. You. The kind of person who is not so dumb that she or he *always* thinks big is better. For example, isn't it better growing up if your little brother is littler than you?

Petit Chablis. You might think that there is a ton of the stuff, but my *petit* book on Chablis wines (1986) shows 100 hectares of *grand cru* and 120 hectares of *petit* Chablis. That ain't much!

Roland Lavantureux claims that there is no real difference in the quality of the *terroir* between his Chablis and his Petit Chablis. The official delimitation runs right between two rows of his vines. One year he might prefer his *Petit* to his Chablis, the next year vice versa. He shrugs. "I don't know why they drew the line there."

The 2004? I've been tasting and buying from him since 1978. This is his best yet, and it smells like we at KLWM hope our Chablis smells. It was not chaptalised, so we have pure Chardonnay fruit seasoned by the Chablis *terroir*. Oops. The Petit Chablis *terroir*. It is fresh, dry, crisp, minerally, and above all, it is a perfect pleasure.

\$16.95 PER BOTTLE **\$183.06** PER CASE



— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

RED

2004 CÔTE DE BROUILLY • CHÂTEAU THIVIN

Welcome to Château Thivin:

- An historic château
- A great *terroir*
- An exceptional winemaker
- A gravity-flow winery
- Raised in fabulous old oak *foudres*
- Bottled unfiltered
- Good young or old
- Dear to the hearts of writers like Colette, Gerald Asher, and Richard Olney



Claude Geoffray Photograph © Gail Skoff

The vintage gives us not a light Thivin, not a thin one. Not even close. But it is a lean, crisp, lively Thivin . . . exactly the kind of body most of you are jogging and exercising to maintain. And Thivin has a *goût de terroir* that no one else has, a sort of brambly undercurrent which in this 2004 version reminds me of finding on a hike some fresh wild raspberries.

It is as versatile as wine can be, but I consider it especially magical with white meats like chicken, pork, or rabbit. Yet I have seen it shine with sweetbreads and kidneys. Or try it with my simple Vinegar Eggs recipe, page 191 in *Inspiring Thirst*. I swear it dazzles with goat cheeses, too.

\$10.25 PER TENTH

\$221.40 PER CASE

\$17.50 PER BOTTLE

\$189.00 PER CASE

\$36.00 PER MAGNUM

\$194.40 PER CASE

\$120.00 PER JEROBOAM



SOUTHERN FRANCE

2004 BANDOL BLANC DOMAINE DU GROS 'NORÉ

What a pretty golden little gem this turns out to be. If you detect in my voice a note of surprise, it is because I am not used to being charmed so stylishly by Provençal whites. The bouquet is the star of the show here: floral and honeyed, clean and fresh.

My wife makes excellent tapenade. It is easy, she claims, as long as you have good garlic, olives, anchovies, and capers. Spread some tapenade on toast alongside Gros 'Noré's beautiful dry white and you will understand with extreme lucidity wine's *raison d'être*.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE **\$215.46** PER CASE

2004 VIN DE PAYS DE VAUCLUSE BLANC "LE PIGEOULET EN PROVENCE" VIGNOBLES BRUNIER

For the first time the Bruniers vinified their white country wine in an oak *foudre* instead of stainless steel. *Un vrai coup de foudre*. What a brilliant move, because it has raised the quality to another level. The 2004 is worthy of a much more exalted, more expensive, less wordy appellation.

It is a blend of Roussanne, Grenache blanc, and Clairette. The same wine with a California label would certainly run you \$30 to \$40 per bottle. That is the reality of the market today. I hope you are appreciating the bargains in this crazy market.

The oak *foudre* did not woody up the wine, but it did allow it to breathe and develop all its potential.

\$12.95 PER BOTTLE

\$139.86 PER CASE



Photograph © Gail Skoff

2003 GIGONDAS • CHÂTEAU DU TRIGNON

Back in the old days when André Roux vinified at Trignon, he made some beauties employing whole berry maceration, all in *cuves*.

Pascal Roux, André's nephew, has turned traditional, rejecting carbonic maceration, and brought in some beautiful oak *foudres*. There is even some foot stomping going on.

You take that and add the long, hot 2003 summer, and you end up with the biggest, deepest Gigondas ever from Trignon, a powerful mouthful of Gigondas flavor, drinking well already.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE **\$215.46** PER CASE

2004 PIC SAINT LOUP *BLANC* CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE

Citronnelle, stones, and honey dominate the bouquet of this dry white. No oak. On the palate: lively, supple, fresh, crisp, and tasty.

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

2003 BANDOL *ROUGE* • DOMAINE TEMPIER



Photograph © Gail Skoff

For years I enjoyed a family-run pizza joint in a little burg not far from where I live when I'm in Provence. The thin-crust mushroom pizza was a favorite starter, then I'd order lamb chops which the father of the family grilled over coals in the pizza oven. Just before taking the chops off the grill, he would throw a branch of fresh rosemary onto the coals. When it was burning well, he'd remove it and throw it on a platter and then place the cooked chops on top, suffocating the flaming rosemary, releasing the most exquisite smoke. Tempier's 2003 red smells something like that

smoke, embedded, however, in the finest Mourvèdre fruit our planet has developed so far.

Tempier's new winemaker, Daniel Ravier, has no bigger champion than Jean-Marie Peyraud, Tempier's winemaker from 1974 to 2000. Ravier is on a winning streak. His 2002, for example, following his luscious, profound 2001, is my favorite 2002 from southern France.

And now it is his 2003's turn, a full-blooded Tempier loaded with personality.

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

RESUMING THE PLEASURE

by Jim Harrison

Jim Harrison's newly released book, The Summer He Didn't Die, is a collection of three novellas.

HAS ANYONE EVER SAID, "Let's fly to London and taste some fine teas"? Flights across the ocean are far too perilous to gamble on anything but extreme pleasure. In all of my years as a commercial pilot flying the biggest birds created by man I was always mindful that death was my true copilot. That's why when I hit the ground, as it were, I was off and running to a wine bar to hoist down a mag or two. In Paris that mean Juveniles and Le Rubis.

Of course in actuality I'm only a novelist and poet and have been so since I received my essential calling at age fourteen while reading John Keats. I immediately set about learning the territory which I quickly surmised included women, nature, and wine, a triumvirate virtually forming the spine of literature, not to speak of a vigorous life.

Returning to earth I recall myself as an eighteen-year-old listening to Berlioz's "Requiem" with my sister with a seventy-cent fifth of Gallo and a burning red candle, a metaphor of the hotness of our souls on the verge of real life, which seemed somewhat distant from the rural Midwest. My wine drinking, mixed with other forms of alcohol, began and continued in a rather disorderly fashion until this early winter when I came down with Type 2 Diabetes. My valves were blown according to the body mechanics, the doctors, my threads stripped bare from purported overuse. For the time being no more wine, pasta, potatoes fried in duck or goose fat, or pomegranate soufflés, and as for alcohol a mere two ounces of vodka a day, the kind of paltry drink a publisher has when bent on cheating a writer. I also had to drop thirty pounds, which meant throwing away the hundreds of thousands of dollars I had spent on my ample tummy that many women in the world considered an *objet d'art*. But most of all it was the absence of good wine that brought me to tears and occasional sobs. Literary writers aren't gunslingers or poker players. Our gifts demand fragility and extreme vulnerability to life. I didn't want to be manly, I wanted wine and her shy handmaiden, fine food, with the intensity that a man marooned on a glacier for four months might desire a Big Ten cheerleader.

After four nasty months of improbable physical exertion which included pushing back from the table before I was ready, and pondering the mysteries of yogurt which even my dogs scorned, I was ready to return to earth. I invented a project to visit Collioure in France and search for the missing manuscripts of Antonio Machado, one of my favorite poets who had lost a valise of poems

while escaping Franco's Spain with his family in late 1937. Machado was a great poet, and there was an ineffable melancholy about the matter that had troubled me for a long time. Another reason to go to Collioure is that I had seen an extraordinary film about the vineyard of Christine Campadiou and her husband, Vincent Cantié, Domaine La Tour Vieille.

Fortunately my friend and wine maven, Peter Lewis, had French intentions for writing a wine bar piece, so we decided to travel together as we had done before on what we euphemistically call our "wine and food tours." Peter has amazed a number of my French friends with his knowledge about their wines. These are not the most agreeable people, as we all know, habitually greeting the most splendid meal with a sardonic *pas mal*. Peter is a modest fellow and burgeoning novelist, agreeing with my contention that wine criticism bears the same relationship to wine as fustian theology does to God. As a novelist and poet I value the judgment of those who have created notable works. If I were a vintner and Mr. Brunier of the fabled Vieux Télégraphe in Châteauneuf-du-Pape told me he liked a bottle I had created, I would be thrilled, less so by a positive review in a wine magazine.

I do, however, value the experience when Peter speculates aloud why I like a particular wine so much. It's really not adequate at times for me to merely say "yummy" or "mother dawg." It's fun to talk about wine without saying "there's a chiaroscuro of flavors here reminiscent of the colors of a fledgling finch, or perhaps the saddle of Lucretia Borgia." After a few hasty days in Paris, the high points being the seafood at La Cagouille and everything possible at Lulu's Assiette over on rue Château, we had two mediocre days in Lyon until Thierry Frémaux who runs the esteemed L'Institut Lumière and also runs the Cannes Film Festival took us out for an extraordinary meal at Le Passage.

Our intentions, however, were elsewhere. As we drove southwest toward Collioure, the only problem was my feet. I'm a country boy who only rarely walks at length on cement and the formula the doctor concocted of walking two to three hours for every bottle of wine was mildly punishing though it is fun to feel like a faux marine.

In this remote corner of France it is easy to slide into the realm of the senses where we quite comfortably belong. I felt quite at home in Collioure and I was in my hotel room for an entire ten minutes before I sipped a glass of La Tour Vieille. From the balcony I could see the rooming house where my hero Antonio had perished, and I had a splendid sense of freedom from the Roman Empire that the United States has become. An hour later we were at the house of Vincent and Christine eating Christine's wonderful home-cured anchovies (Collioure was the center of the French anchovy fleet) and then some rice and tiny squid in their own ink covered with a layer of the best langoustines I had ever had. As we drank a number of vintages of La Tour Vieille I reflected

on feeling that the wine emerged from the local earth in the same manner that Domaine Tempier belonged to Bandol. For several days we wandered the area, including the nearly vertical vineyards which explained why Vincent and Christine are both handsomely slender. Another evening Christine fixed a stewed rabbit and a bowl of fresh favas with blood sausage, the splendid food of the earth from which the wine had sprung. The third night we visited Le Cabaret, a restaurant owned by Antoine Delmas, an old friend of Cantié's, and were served, among other things, a four-kilo *loup de mer en gros sel*, one of the most pleasurable fish dishes of my life.

In a curious way the true nature of our trip only became apparent a month later when in a complete slump I made a round trip between Montana and Michigan and on the way home on a route through northern Wisconsin I saw a sign for Redwine Road in a remote rural area. Under this blessed road sign I semi-dozed and relived my trip, the gorgeous eel stew at the home of Jean and Nicole Meurice near a salt marsh (frankly I've had better food in a number of French homes that exceeded in quality anything at a half-dozen three-star restaurants), the bottles of Château La Roque of Pic St.-Loup I drank in the Montpellier region in keeping with the theme of *terroir*. I find Montpellier an engaging city and we were lucky to discover a relatively new restaurant manned only by Chef Jean-Christophe Blanc and his wife Whitney. The food here is simple and direct but utterly elegant. One day at lunch we raised our glasses of Pic St.-Loup to a woman having her hundredth birthday party. She smiled at us and drank deeply from her glass of red.

We had a fine dose of the natural during a day in the Camargue, then made our way to Anne Igou's Nord-Pinus in Arles, my favorite hotel in the world, bar none. Arles is a splendid walking town and has a marvelous market with a tinge of the proletarian absent in high-rent areas such as Avignon. There's a dearth of Texas women in five-hundred-dollar sunglasses carrying their dogs that are crossbred from monkeys and rats. In Arles I'm close enough to the territory to confine my wine drinking to Domaine Tempier's Bandol. In fact, Lulu Peyraud's vineyard was our last stop before returning to Paris. This completely private *restaurant* is my favorite place to eat in France along with Gérard Oberlé's fabled kitchen in Burgundy. My obnoxious, self-administered blood test in the morning revealed that I had passed again, having failed only one day in twenty when I missed my three hours of walking, certainly a small chore compared to the pleasure of wine.

How can humble grapes produce something so delicious with the cooperation of human alchemy? Drinking wine is beyond the vagaries of language and numbers and finds its essence, like sex, totally within the realm of the senses. Would you rather read the *Joy of Sex* or play Parcheesi with Penelope Cruz in Collioure?



Kermit and Penelope at Collioure

Photograph © Gail Skoff

ITALIAN WINES NOW IN STOCK

FRIULI

		PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2003	PINOT BIANCO • LA VIARTE	\$13.95	\$150.66
2003	TOCAI FRIULANO • LA VIARTE	13.95	150.66
2000	COLLIO GORIZIANO "BRAZAN" • I CLIVI	22.00	237.60

PIEMONTE

		PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2004	MOSCATO D'ASTI • ELVIO TINTERO	\$9.95	\$107.46
2004	ROERO ARNEIS • VALDINERA	12.00	129.60
2003	BARBERA "PIRONA" • ALDO MARENCO	12.50	135.00
2003	DOLCETTO "BRIC" • ALDO MARENCO	12.50	135.00
2003	DOLCETTO "SURI" • ALDO MARENCO	13.50	145.80
2003	DOLCETTO "I PARI" • GUIDO PORRO	14.95	161.46
2003	PAESAN • GUIDO PORRO	16.00	172.80
2000	BAROLO "LAZZAIRASCO" • GUIDO PORRO	34.00	367.20
1999	BAROLO "LAZZAIRASCO" • GUIDO PORRO	34.00	367.20
2001	BARBARESCO "VICENZIANA" • SILVIO GIAMELLO	27.50	297.00
2000	BARBARESCO • SILVIO GIAMELLO	25.00	270.00
1999	BARBARESCO "VICENZIANA" • SILVIO GIAMELLO	27.50	297.00

TOSCANA

		PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2001	CHIANTI CLASSICO • CANONICA A CERRETO	\$18.00	\$194.40
2001	GEGGIANELLO • VILLA DI GEGGIANO	16.00	172.80
2000	CHIANTI CLASSICO • VILLA DI GEGGIANO	17.95	193.86
1999	CHIANTI CLASSICO • VILLA DI GEGGIANO	16.95	183.06
1999	CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA VILLA DI GEGGIANO	24.00	259.20
1998	CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA VILLA DI GEGGIANO	24.00	259.20

VENETO

		PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2004	BARDOLINO "CHIARETTO" ROSÉ CORTE GARDONI	\$9.95	\$107.46
2004	BIANCO DI CUSTOZA • CORTE GARDONI	9.95	107.46
2003	BARDOLINO "LE FONTANE" • CORTE GARDONI	12.00	129.60
2001	VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO • LE SALETTE	12.00	129.60

BORDEAUX SAMPLER

BACK IN THE LATE SEVENTIES I did a lot of tasting around Bordeaux trying to find little-known, undervalued gems. Those of you who purchased such châteaux as Sociando Mallet, Haut Marbuzet, La Conseillante, and other direct imports here at Cedar and San Pablo got some bargains that make today's prices look like misprints.

I'm always in the hunt for good value, and with this Sampler I'm inviting you to taste some of my recent discoveries.

You might guess, I'm not much of a fan of today's mainstream Bordeaux. Lafite tastes like Mouton tastes like Ducru, etc., and they all come out with about 14° alcohol no matter what the vintage. The Holden Caulfield in me screams PHONEY. They are what I call pop wines. I'm looking for natural wines.

Take a whiff of my newest find, Château Fontalem. Consider the price/quality ratio. It could be the new world champion. Plus, it's got soul.

The 2004 "Les Griottes" is pure Merlot from Lussac Saint-Emilion. André Chatenoud of Château de Bellevue noticed that tasters went wild for it out of the barrel, so instead of blending it all into his normal bottling, he bottled some as is, early enough to capture its beautiful Merlot fruit. Screw cap, folks!

And take a close look at the classic 2001, from Château Belles-Graves, Aney, and Bellevue. Vintage 2001 is excellent, enjoyable now, but smart buyers will put some cases down at these prices and drink them over several years.

TWO BOTTLES EACH

NORMALLY

2003 CHÂTEAU FONTALEM • BORDEAUX SUPÉRIEUR	\$9.95
2004 CHÂTEAU DUCASSE • BORDEAUX <i>Blanc</i>	12.50
2004 "LES GRIOTTES" • LUSSAC SAINT-EMILION	18.50
2001 CHÂTEAU ANEY • HAUT-MÉDOC	19.95
2001 CHÂTEAU BELLES-GRAVES • LALANDE-DE-POMEROL	25.00
2001 CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE • LUSSAC SAINT-EMILION.	22.00

Normally \$215.80

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE

\$151

(30% discount)

MORE GRAND CRU BEAUJOLAIS

*Some of the 2004s seem to do everything a great Beaujolais aspires to do.
Take a couple or three home, see what you think.*

2004 MORGON • GUY BRETON

A glory of a wine! Lovely fruit inside and out. Every corner of your face is tingling with delicious little Gamay *noir* berries. If you can remember to pay attention to anything else going on, there is a structure in the midst of all that deliciousness that acts as a support for the lengthy aftertaste.

\$23.00 PER BOTTLE **\$248.40** PER CASE

2004 FLEURIE “LES MORIERS” MICHEL CHIGNARD

Chignard tells me that for him 2004 is a typical, classic vintage that produced exactly what one looks for in a Fleurie. He also wanted you to know that it is not a vulgar show-off, that it has class, distinction, and finesse. He is very proud of it, with reason.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE **\$216.00** PER CASE

2004 MOULIN-À-VENT “VIEILLES VIGNES” BERNARD DIOCHON

It is not easy to find good beef in France, but I’ve been working with an Arab butcher in my hometown there, and he managed to find me a fairly marbled steak, on the bone. I grilled it for our last meal before my wife left with the kids to get them back in high school in the Bay Area. With the steak and a potato gratin, outdoors in the sunset, I served this Moulin-à-Vent and, after a couple of glasses, asked Gail what I should say about it here in the brochure.

“Tell them it’s really good with barbecued steak,” she said.

“Dear, couldn’t you have said ‘colossal’ or ‘stupendous’ or something motivating?”

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