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WINE MERCHANT

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- **STAFF FAVORITES**
- **PROVENCE, PROVENCE**
- **2005 DOMAINE TEMPIER PA**

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

SEPTEMBER 2007

NEW ARRIVALS

2004 JASNIÈRES SEC • PASCAL JANVIER

This dry white has a nose you ain't never met! Smoke, petrol, clove . . . well, it may be a bit Rangen-like, and there are also hints of mirabelle and quince. The mid-palate is nice and plump, the finish dry and minerally.

\$15.00 PER BOTTLE **\$162.00** PER CASE

2005 BEAUJOLAIS • CÉDRIC VINCENT

Sometimes I grow pessimistic about the future of real wine, and then something like this bottle shakes some hope into me. How could the human race allow such beauty in a beverage to disappear?

In a garage-sized winery there was a dirt floor, an old oak *pressoir*, and oak casks. Wearing the prettiest robe a Beaujolais AOC has ever worn, there was deep deliciousness and a silky texture.

Especially for skeptics: *Don't generalize gang, especially about wine.*

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

2005 CLAIRETTE DE DIE “MÉTHODE TRADITIONELLE” DOMAINE ACHARD-VINCENT

I was informed that the Romans made wine from the hillsides around Die, made it in amphorae, and that the current proprietor's grandfather (not Roman) switched to organic culture way back when.

The Clairette grapes were harvested at 11° alcohol. Native yeasts only. The sparkle (yes, it sparkles) is subtle and fine on the palate. There is a suspicion of peach, apricot, and toasted almond. Very pure, lively, with a long, long finish.

Drink it as you would a Champagne or a Vouvray *petillant*, for example.

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

2006 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE ROUGE “EN SEPTEMBRE” • À GRAMENON

Here is the Grenache in all its black fruit glory: black currant, black cherry, blackberry. Sleek, svelte, with a notably fine tannin emerging as the perfume lingers on the palate. Another jewel from Gramenon.

\$26.00 PER BOTTLE **\$280.80** PER CASE

When I visited Coche-Dury this summer I stayed for dinner and enjoyed a 1986 Perrières and this poem, written by his wife while she worked with him in the vines last year.

VIGNERON

À Jean-François, mon mari

À la cave, au soleil, à la cuve, au pressoir;
Dans le froid, dans le vent, sous un voile de brume,
Près de l'ardent brasier qui crépite et l'enfume,
Les aïeux, la nature ont transmis leur savoir.

Il s'éreinte souvent en choyant son terroir.
Bien trop tard, aux grands feux du couchant qui s'allume
Il achève sa tâche, œuvrant sans amertume,
Puis descend le coteau, las, mais fier dans le soir.

S'il détient l'art du vin, le secret de sa vigne,
C'est que, dès son enfance un vieux cep lui fit signe.
Désormais vigneron, toujours il serait là.

La vie en ce jardin lui sera salutaire,
Pour mieux comprendre un jour le chemin d'Au-delà,
Lui qui, par sa naissance est pétri de sa terre.

*Odile Coche-Dury
Le 20 mars 2006
à Puligny-Montrachet
en attachant les branches
dans la vigne
des Enseignères*

(I am looking for a French-speaking poet to translate for us.)

BACK TO PROVENCE

WHEN I WORK IN FRANCE, my family packs up and moves into our place near Bandol, but this year I arrived a few days earlier than they did. I drove into our village just as school let out. With the parents and school buses it took me 25 minutes to drive 200 yards. Any time of day you can run into a traffic jam in our little Provençal village, even though it is not touristy. Provence is like California in that there is plenty of sunshine and an ocean nearby, so a lot of people want to live there. More and more housing pops up every year, crowding out the gorgeous landscape. More people means more cars, but the roads haven't changed a bit.

Traffic bugs me, but once I turned into our driveway, things started looking up. Friends at Domaine Tempier had seen to it that there was a *rosé* waiting cold in my fridge. Oh my, that first fresh blast, right after a traffic jam. (Read the back label: *may cause health problems*. Uh huh. Next time you are stuck breathing fumes in a traffic jam, thank your government for warning you about *rosé*. I've always wondered, shouldn't pleasure be considered good for your health? I have heard stories, however, of a teetotaler who hallucinated atom bombs raining down from Saddam Hussein.)

Lo and behold, there was also a gift waiting from Gros Noré, some homemade wine vinegar and a good supply of their homegrown olive oil. Plus, I had arranged for Poilâne in Paris to send me one of their big levain loaves, because none (as in zero) of our village's bakeries make edible bread. What a drag after Berkeley, where Acme Bread is next to my wine shop.

Gail and I had put up several jars of salted anchovies before leaving last year, so I toasted a slice of bread, scraped it with garlic, put an anchovy filet on it, drizzled it with olive oil, and yeah, it tasted good with Bandol *rosé*.

After that I toured our garden. I had hired a retired seaman, of all things, to try to keep our organic vegetable garden alive. The tomatoes weren't ripe yet, but there were beets, new potatoes, a bunch of stuff, so I composed my little dinner:

- Roasted beets with slivers of raw baby leeks, oil, and vinegar
- Boiled new potatoes crushed, topped with minced shallots and olive oil
- Little chunks of zucchini fried with thyme from the hillside and a last-minute spoonful of minced garlic

Oops, forgot to go downstairs and choose a red. Hmm. That 1985 Tourtine looks good. That should work.

*Are you crazy? You, all by yourself, one of Tempier's great vintages?
But it'll taste good with the garlicky zucchini.
Save it for a pal, or when a winemaker visits.
I'm in a hurry. No time to argue.
You won't even drink it all. Think of the waste.*

It's not the quantity you down, it's the amount of pleasure you receive. Got it? Plus, I've driven for hours, worked fourteen hours a day for ten days straight, a different indifferent hotel every night...

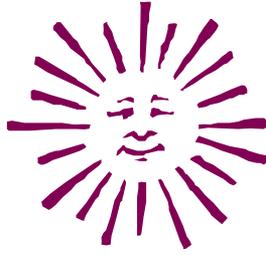
And now, thinking about it, there are only one or two things I might have enjoyed right then and there as much as that lush, silky 1985, and neither of them were wine.

Anyway, as the quality of the produce in our Provençal village descends into pure supermarket crap (even at the fruit stands and the so-called "farmer's" market), we had to arrange it so we can survive over there without doing much shopping. That means summers full of eggplant, tomatoes, zucchini, potatoes, peppers, garlic, onions, basil... What could be more Provençal?

As for the restaurants and markets, bakeries and wine shops, these days I do better in Berkeley—a complete reversal of the situation twenty-five years ago. Amazing!



© Gail Skoff



PROVENCE IN BERKELEY

HAVING HAD THE LUCK on a regular basis to enjoy the great Provençal home cooking of Lulu Peyraud, Maguy Brunier, and Richard Olney, I do my best to produce our Provence Day event in a manner that would make them feel right at home.

You think I'm name dropping? That's nothing. Hell, I once shook hands with Richard Nixon, whose regime seems to be reborn and poisoning our lives once again. "I am not a crook." "I don't not speak English good." "Spreading democracy" while we run out of it at home?

Back to Provence, please!

Okay, how about some southern comfort with Mediterranean origins? We close our handy parking lot to motor vehicles, arrange tents and tables under the olive trees, peel some garlic, fire up the coals, and uncork a medley of appropriate wines from . . . southern France. Sound good? And why not add some low-volume music played by living human beings, too?

The event is presented by Café Fanny and our chef is Christopher Lee from Eccolo Restaurant down on Fourth Street. The price will be ridiculously fair, as usual.

*Come one, come all,
help us live it up à la Provençale!*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 11 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

—PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER—

2005 **DOMAINE TEMPIER**

AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, I was worried when Jean-Marie Peyraud announced in 1999 that it would be his final vintage. He and I were friends, tennis rivals, and wine-tasting partners. Who would replace him? A champion of 200% new oak maybe, a techno-control genius, a certified jerk? No, it was to be my new pal, Daniel Ravier, whose series of successes, 2000–2006, matches the quality of any similar sequence that Lucien or Jean-Marie produced. Whew. The change in leadership at Tempier could have had quite a negative impact on my lifestyle.

For example, talk about fun, this August was full of winemakers coming to taste at Tempier. Pierre Boillot from Gevrey Chambertin, Pierre Ravaille from Ermitage Pic St. Loup, Michèle Aubery-Laurent and her son Maxime from Gramenon. And I had a blast with Neil Collins, winemaker at Tablas Creek near Paso Robles, who came with Claude Gouin, *maître de chai* at Beaucastel.

Tempier's 2005s? Here is a vintage that does not show the effects of global warming. In these three *cuvée spéciales*, the color is dark, the aromas marked by bright, fresh fruit. The palates are lean and muscular. They might remind long-time Tempier fans of the 1983s.

2005 BANDOL “LA MIGOUA”

\$258.00 PER SIX BOTTLES

2005 BANDOL “LA TOURTINE”

\$258.00 PER SIX BOTTLES

2005 BANDOL “CABASSAOU”

\$186.75 PER THREE BOTTLES



ALSO AVAILABLE IN MAGNUMS AND JEROBOAMS.

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

STAFF FAVORITES

—Michael Butler—

2004 VIN DE TABLE ROUGE • DOMAINE LECCIA

Okay, so anyone who comes into the shop probably knows that I love this wine, and here is part of the reason: a few years back I was fortunate enough to visit the lovely island of Corsica and meet with a few of the local producers, including Yves Leccia. A nice big glass of this wine brings back such vivid memories for me. The aroma of the arid herb-infused hillsides (which they call the *maquis*) combined with the deep, dark, cherry fruit and the bracing, dusty tannin takes me back to a little seaside café with a menu of the freshest possible local seafood, wild boar, and the spicy Corsican sausage they call *figatelli*. Ahhh, heaven.

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

2005 CHABLIS • ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

This is just the most classic, crisp, and refreshing dry white. Lately there have been a number of magazine and newspaper articles asking whether *terroir* really exists or not. This argument could be settled simply by drinking a bottle of Lavantureux's Chablis. The grapes are grown in Kimmeridgian limestone and raised in stainless steel, allowing the *terroir* to shine through. Nowhere else do you get this expression of oyster shells (fossilized remnants of an ancient sea), beautiful, bracing acidity, and that inimitable green-gold color. Does *terroir* exist? Try making this Chardonnay at Fresno.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE **\$237.60** PER CASE

—Mark Congero—

2005 ALSACE BLANC • KUENTZ-BAS

Kuentz-Bas has always been one of my favorite producers. They deliver terrific wines at affordable prices. The Alsace *Blanc* is a wine that you don't want to finish drinking; it is a beautiful floral blend of Pinot Gris and Riesling. From its pale green-gold color to its divine nose of melon, pear, and petrol, it is a perfect combination of the two grapes. The Pinot Gris gives it richness and depth, the Riesling gives petrol and hints of tangerine. The perfect summer sipper? I think so, but here are a few food thoughts: halibut baked in a fig leaf, roast pork with grilled peaches, or grilled summer squashes. I wouldn't pair it with a big fat rib-eye, but I certainly *would* drink it while I was grilling that big fat rib-eye.

\$12.00 PER BOTTLE **\$129.60** PER CASE

2004 CUVÉE SAINT MARTIN
SAINT MARTIN DE LA GARRIGUE

Did someone mention a big, fat, juicy rib-eye? Well, here you go: a big, chewy, dark, red meat wine for twenty bucks! This is one of my favorite wines. I will never forget my first sip of Mourvèdre, a '98 Bandol from Tempier; it was love at first taste. Saint Martin creates a masterful blend of Mourvèdre and Syrah in this, their top-of-the-line cuvée. It's got it all: beautiful dark purple hue, chocolate and coffee, a truffly earthiness, firm tannins, and a smooth, supple texture.

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

2004 SAINT-VÉРАН
"LES POMMARDS"
DOMAINE ROBERT-DENOENT

My good friend and colleague Steve Waters turned me on to the Denoent wines when I started working at Chez Panisse over seven years ago. I have been a loyal fan ever since. Denoent consistently makes impeccable wines and in my opinion offers the best bang for your buck in the KL white Burgundy lineup. This Saint-Véran is stunning; the structure, the balance, both seem perfect for the butterscotch, almonds, and ripe pear in the bouquet, the tropical fruit in the mouth, and a lemony-lime zest and mineral finish. While you can simply relax and enjoy, it is also a great food wine. It is begging for wild king salmon with Meyer lemon salsa verde or maybe some delicately flavored charcuterie, or even a big bowl of mussels *marinière*. I dare you, yes, I dare you to try to find a California Chardonnay in this price range with this much finesse.

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

—Graeme Blackmore—

2003 E PROVE ROUGE
DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

Near the port of Calvi in the northwest of Corsica, wild herbs and sun-tinged spices from the *maquis* infuse the vineyards of Michel Raoust. Those flavors are magically captured in his wines and come pouring out of this bottle. It is pretty heady stuff, and along with layers of rich, aromatic fruit, the Niellucio varietal gives up warm earth aromas, and a lingering finish that some of you might liken to a beautiful Chianti.

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

2004 CHINON “BEAUMONT”
CATHERINE ET PIERRE BRETON

This Chinon evokes a very definite sense of cool, yet it is generous enough to invite a conversation. That is a very attractive quality, and all of Breton’s wines are extraordinary biodynamic examples of this attitude. But as some of you found out at a recent tasting here in Berkeley with Pierre and Catherine, this bottling from the Beaumont vineyard is essential drinking for any wine lover because it is just so delicious. Deep Cabernet Franc fruit, spicy palate with a hint of cocoa, and a firm velvet finish.

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

—Jodie Arey—

2006 GRIS DE GRIS ROSÉ
DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE

No one at the retail shop was surprised when I told them I was writing up the Gris de Gris as my staff favorite. It is by far the wine I buy and drink most often. Strawberry and peach fruit with a crisp clean finish—it tastes good. It is perfect for backyard sipping on a hot day and versatile enough to carry through dinner.

\$12.95 PER BOTTLE **\$139.86** PER CASE

2005 INCÒ BIANCO • LA VIARTE

This wine is not too heavy, not too light, not too fruity, not too lean, and not too expensive either. It is mostly Tocai Friulano and it is often just the right wine. I like it especially for risotto because you can add it to the risotto, drink a glass while it’s cooking, and if there is any left you can have it with dinner. It also works well with pesto and many fish dishes.

\$11.95 PER BOTTLE **\$129.06** PER CASE

2005 CHINON
“LES PETITES ROCHES”
DOMAINE CHARLES JOGUET

If you are in doubt about the deliciousness of Cabernet Franc from the Loire, I recommend that you try this wine. When I first started working for Kermit Lynch I have to admit that I was not a big fan of Cabernet Franc. Perhaps my

palate has been Kermitized, but I now count these reds among my favorites. This 2005 from Joguet has everything—good fruit, good acidity, dusty tannins. Put a little chill on a bottle and give it a try.

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

—**Paul Burkhart**—

2006 **GRAVES BLANC**
CHÂTEAU GRAVILLE-LACOSTE

A whiff of this sumptuous, Semillon-based, dry white sends a message directly to my brain's pleasure center. It's SO fresh, with notes of honeydew melon, white blossoms, and honey. A versatile, well-balanced white whose elegance surprises and pleases.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE **\$172.80** PER CASE

2006 **POUILLY FUMÉ “VIEILLES VIGNES”**
RÉGIS MINET

A previous vintage of this wine was my first purchase at Kermit Lynch. A refreshing Loire white with a hint of flintiness on the nose and a lovely flash of lemon zest on the palate, it is similar to Sancerre with perhaps more depth, and it pairs well with hors-d'oeuvres, especially goat cheese or charcuterie.

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

—**Peter Button**—

VALUE—LOW AND HIGH. Good value comes in all price categories. All three wines are favorites of mine because they offer you more than you expect.

2004 **DOLCETTO DI DOGLIANI “SURÌ”**
ALDO MARENCO

Right out of the bottle, Marenco's Dolcetto Surì does not force you to pay attention; it seems to slowly unfold itself. Partly this is because, like many good red wines, it needs a little air before it opens up, but there is also something ineffable at work, something surprising to discover in a wine costing twelve-fifty per bottle. At first there is fruit, right—blackberry and cassis, notes of raspberry and even cranberry—not surprising. Then there is a little spiciness, you know, some black pepper and clove to kick things up—and then some softness of well-

integrated tannins. Then—surprise—there’s more of all of that, and more—and yet more. Put it beside a red-sauce pasta or some chicken cacciatore and the surprising complexity is enlarged exponentially.

\$12.50 PER BOTTLE **\$135.00** PER CASE

2005 BOURGOGNE VÉZELAY BLANC
DOMAINE DE LA CADETTE

Neither flamboyant nor flashy, this white Burgundy reveals itself over the course of the glass, the bottle, and the meal. Medium-bodied with a lush ripeness working its way around the sparkling acidity, it brings layer upon layer of fruit and texture: apple, pear, notes of hazelnut and lemon—lean, racy, and unctuous all at the same time—it’s hard to believe so much comes out of such an inexpensive bottle. When the meal is over and the bottle is empty, you look around for more.

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

2004 CHAMBOLLE-MUSIGNY
“PREMIER CRU” • DOMAINE
FRANÇOIS BERTHEAU

And then there is heaven in a bottle. Talk about value—where else could you get heaven for seventy-five dollars? Great red Burgundy (I believe this has been mentioned before) is a religious experience; to speak of it in terms of fruit, tannin, structure, and balance is like discussing a woman’s beauty in terms of the mathematical proportions of her face. All that is here, to be sure, in great measure, but the true experience of this wine passes the power of words to describe. Here are a few, though: pure, pristine, kaleidoscopic, magnificent, unending. I’ll stop now. Try this wine and discover what these words mean.

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

—Clark Z. Terry—

2005 MUSCAT DE BEAUMES-DE-VENISE
DOMAINE DE DURBAN

The French know how to start a meal. They avoid high-octane cocktails and instead turn to lower-alcohol, palate-wetting apéritifs, or “un apéro,” as they say over there. So here’s a special *apéro* passed on to me by a close friend from Vaison-La-Romaine in the southern Rhône.

⅓ Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise
⅔ Champagne

Serve in a flute and *VOILÀ!* Sparkling honey and lavender goodness in your mouth. I had this for the first time while spending Christmas with my family in Venasque—it works at any time of the year, though.

I would recommend our Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise from Domaine de Durban, considered the finest of all.

\$16.95 PER TENTH **\$366.12** PER CASE

**CHAMPAGNE “PREMIER CRU”
BLANC DE BLANCS
VEUVE FOURNY**

If you have never tried a *Blanc de Blancs* (Champagne made from 100% Chardonnay), in a sense you are fortunate because you have a great treat to look forward to. Lighter on the palate than the traditional Chardonnay/Pinot Noir blend, with floral notes and a fine bead, this bottle could be the first of many more treats in the future, and I know where you can find a couple more such treats.

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE **\$388.80** PER CASE

**2005 BEAUMES-DE-VENISE ROUGE
DOMAINE DE DURBAN**

Now that your *apéro* is taken care of, move to the 2005 Beaumes-de-Venise *RED* wine, also from Domaine de Durban. This delicious, luscious southern Rhône has a textbook balance that makes it enjoyable by itself or with dinner.

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

—Steve Waters—

**2006 BEAUJOLAIS
DOMAINE DUPEUBLE**

I've seen the rolling of eyes when I've recommended it to you... I'll bet I can guess what you're thinking... that Beaujolais is a “wimpy” wine? Well, hats off to something that is pure and actually steroid-free! The '06 Dupeuble is so wonderfully fresh and easy to drink that the only thing to contemplate is how low in alcohol it is compared to a lot of red wines these days. To quaff or

not to quaff, that IS the question; but don't be surprised at how well this wine stands up to a steak simply adorned with a generous sprinkle of salt and pepper. Down it!

\$12.95 PER BOTTLE **\$139.86** PER CASE

2005 CHIGNIN-BERGERON "LES TERRASSES"
A. & M. QUENARD

I wrote up another Savoie wine the last time Kermit asked us to do staff favorites, so I have an established track record. I LOVE the white wines from the Savoie because they're so different and a great alternative to the thicket of Chardonnays and Sauvignon Blancs. If it's any easier, I'll break it down for you: Bergeron is the name of the grape in the Savoie, but it's more commonly known throughout the world as Roussanne. Grown in the French Alps, the wine smells like honeysuckle and pit fruits, and has a slight richness on the palate, finishing dry. I've said it before, and will gladly say it again—this is a dry white wine that is fabulously versatile at table. Please, organize a petition demanding that Kermit send me to the Savoie so I can taste at the source. I'm ready!

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE **\$259.20** PER CASE

2004 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE
"CUVÉE DU BOIS DES DAMES"
CHÂTEAU DU TRIGNON

This is truly the end of an era, because Château du Trignon was sold and we will no longer be importing their wines. For many years Kermit offered this treasure from the southern Rhône, one of the best wine values on the planet. The Cuvée du Bois des Dames is a single-vineyard Côtes-du-Rhône that drinks more like a Gigondas or Vacqueyras but costs a lot less. You couldn't ask for a better southern Rhône vintage, and the wine has an aroma of *réglisse* and stoniness that epitomizes the French term *terroir*. Come and buy this beauty, as well as the remaining '04 Sablet and Rasteau, before they are gone but not forgotten.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE **\$172.80** PER CASE

—**Daniel Madero**—

MÉMOIRE D'AUTOMNES
DOMAINE LA TOUR VIEILLE

A glass of chilled Mémoire from Domaine La Tour Vieille accompanied with aged Manchego, Marcona almonds and Medjool dates bleeds layers of flavor. I

love this pairing! The wine is aromatically dense with sea salt and yeast tones, yet the palate is refreshingly crisp and clean with a comforting nutty finish that won't quit. Check it out!

\$26.00 PER 500 ML BOTTLE **\$280.80** PER CASE

2005 **MORGON • GUY BRETON**

Morgon is a wine I can take anywhere and be sure it will be warmly received, even though I make sure to serve it nice and cool. This wine flirts and has soul. Have you heard Jimmy Smith's tune "Mustard Greens"? I find something gripping in all that funky music. The wine's ripe fruit and gaminess are distinctively captivating.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE **\$270.00** PER CASE

—**Bruce Neyers**—

2004 **CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET**
"LES CHAUMÉES" • PHILIPPE COLIN

Every evening needs a dash of great wine and Philippe Colin's white Burgundies are as close to a sure thing as there is. Like many of the winemakers in Burgundy, I find myself drawn to the 2004 whites. To my palate they are finer and more elegant than those from the 2005 vintage. The *Premier Cru* Chaumées is probably Philippe's best work of the 2004 vintage. He somehow combines finesse with rich texture, so you get a white with both weight and complexity. The hazelnut aroma is textbook!

\$66.00 PER BOTTLE **\$712.80** PER CASE

2000 **LUSSAC ST. EMILION**
CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE

Proprietor André Chatenoud served this wine to us at his château in March with duck breasts grilled over vine cuttings. We were astonished to learn that he still had some of his 2000 for sale. When Kermit learned that some cases remained, he snapped them up and so should you. The wine is from Merlot and Cabernet Franc, grown on a five-foot-thick outcropping of limestone, just to the north of the great growth châteaux of St. Emilion. It is dark in the glass, and the old vines and low yields bestow a certain intensity. While it tastes like a very expensive red Bordeaux, it's not. Not yet, anyway.

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

—Dixon Brooke—

2004 MEURSAULT-BLAGNY
PREMIER CRU “LA GENELOTTE”
COMTESSE BERNARD DE CHERISEY

Visiting the hamlet of Blagny on the stony hillside above Puligny-Montrachet is like stepping back in time . . . several hundred years. The small village straddles the appellations of Meursault and Puligny-Montrachet, with vineyards in both appellations surrounding its crumbling stone walls. Meursault-Blagny is a microclimate on the hillside just below the woods behind Blagny that runs up the ridge toward Meursault. It is known for deep, structured, powerful wines, capable of aging effortlessly. This beauty will be no exception, a deep, honeyed, minerally *vin de terroir*.

\$76.00 PER BOTTLE **\$820.80** PER CASE

2005 BARDOLINO ROUGE “LE FONTANE”
CORTE GARDONI

Gianni Piccoli’s vineyards are in the southernmost part of the Bardolino appellation, known for making the region’s best wines. The vineyards are filled with large, round stones, not unlike those at Vieux Télégraphe, making the land difficult to work for Gianni and his three sons. This wine is a blend of 50% Corvina and 50% Rondinelle, grapes you may recognize as part of the Valpolicella blend. This acts like a more elegant version of Valpolicella—higher-toned fruit, fresher, great balance, finesse, earthy, *terroir*-driven finish. Piccoli explained to me that it is much harder to make a wine like this than a big, rich, palate bruiser, although most people think the opposite. How true. Piccoli and his family are one of the last holdouts making traditional wines in a sea of *cave* cooperatives, similar to what is happening in regions across France, such as Quincy and Muscadet. Support family wineries, because if you don’t, wines like these will only be memories.

\$9.95 PER BOTTLE **\$107.46** PER CASE

