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- PLEASURES OF AGING
- PA NORTHERN RHÔNES
- NEW BRUNELLO PRODUCER

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

JANUARY 2009

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# INTRODUCING SESTI

by Dixon Brooke

**O**UR LONG SEARCH FOR a classic Brunello ended on a mountaintop in Tuscany next to a 14th-century castle last year. How's this for an Italian drama: A worldly, Venetian-educated astronomer, descendant of a famous Sicilian painter, moves to Siena in the 1970s and purchases the Castello di Argiano in Brunello. Giuseppi Sesti did just that, and has combined forces with our galaxy and the *terroir* of Tuscany to bring us these masterpieces. Giuseppi's great-great-grandfather was a Sicilian painter known as "the catcher of light." Born of a military father, Giuseppi traveled often but settled in Venice once his father was permanently posted there. So he grew up and studied in Venice and started his adult life as a fresco painter. Then he moved to architecture, and, after crossing the Sahara and falling in love with the night skies, he changed to astronomy.

In fact, it is Giuseppi's formal training and studies in astronomy that most inform his work in the vineyards and cellars. Those of you fortunate enough to come across his Riserva Phenomena bottlings will see an artist's rendering of a different astrological phenomenon on each vintage's label. All of the work in the vineyards and winery is planned around the lunar cycles. The approach is decidedly biodynamic, and these are pure, *terroir*-driven expressions of Sangiovese with remarkable consistency, freshness, and class. We are thrilled to be able to offer you these wines, shipped just last month from Tuscany under the most strictly controlled conditions, the products of a true artist.

## 2006 MONTELECCIO

Pure Sangiovese from Tuscan soil at a great price. Is there anything not to like about it? Medium-bodied, delicious flavors, ripe, long, and as Tuscan as you can find. It also has a roasted thyme aspect to the aroma.

**\$17.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$193.86** PER CASE

## 2006 ROSSO DI MONTALCINO

Kermit and I were blown away by the class and refinement in this bottle of wine. Many compare the wines of Barolo and Barbaresco to Burgundy in terms of finesse and aging potential, but I am ready to argue that the *terroir*-driven wines of today's Tuscany make a worthier comparison. The best examples offer so much transparency and can be enjoyed young and old.

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How to differentiate this from the first wine, the Monteleccio from the same vintage? This has more body, but mainly you pay stricter attention to it. There are more rewards when you search its depths.

**\$27.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$291.60** PER CASE

### 2003 BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO

I thought Steve Tanzer said it pretty well recently in his *International Wine Cellar*: “Sweet, precise and high-pitched, with impressive energy giving the wine excellent grip. Conveys an impression of intensity without weight. The rising finish is suave, fresh and very long. Superb Sangiovese complexity here, with virtually no sign of the vintage’s heat. A beauty.”

**\$58.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$626.40** PER CASE

### 2000 BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO

Brunello retains some of its mystique due to the fact that it is released much later than virtually any other wine on the market today—it must be held at the *azienda* for a minimum of five years from the harvest date before release. The minimum amount of barrel aging has been reduced over the years, but the Sestis continue to age their Brunello for four years in large oak *botti*, with an additional year of cellaring in bottle. A proud, showy Sangiovese, it satisfies by its elegance, too. With lovely sweet fruit, spice and herbs, and perfect balance, it will offer its pleasure for many years to come.

**\$58.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$626.40** PER CASE



SESTI

BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO

2000

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— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

2006 NORTHERN RHÔNES

THIERRY ALLEMAND

We have a spectacular vintage on our hands that ranks with the best northern Rhône vintages in history for size, beauty, and balance.

Allemand vinifies without SO<sub>2</sub> and has learned by experience the minimal dose necessary at the bottling to protect his Syrah masterpieces.

Chaillot gives more pleasure in the first years, then Reynard kicks in for the long haul. The two are almost black this year. Chaillot's nose is a spicy marvel with black pepper and olive notes. Rich texture, firm, minerally finish.

Clape's Cornas and Thierry's Reynard are as grand as Cornas gets. Big-shouldered, mouth-filling goodness, loads of Cornas right there in the bottle.

2006 CORNAS "CHAILLOT" . . . . . \$387.00 PER SIX BOTTLES  
2006 CORNAS "REYNARD" . . . . . \$472.50 PER SIX BOTTLES

*Also available in magnums*

AUGUSTE CLAPE

Clape delivers a great one-two punch in 2006, too. Renaissance, by the way, is not a young-vines cuvée. In fact, it has some old vines from Reynard in it. It is like Allemand's Chaillot, showier in its first ten years. This 2006 is another black, dense Cornas loaded with Syrah-in-the-granite fruit.

The bottling labeled simply Cornas is the Big Daddy, and never has it been more so. A monumental Cornas!

2006 CORNAS . . . . . \$864.00 PER CASE  
2006 CORNAS MAGNUMS . . . . . \$888.00 PER CASE  
2006 CORNAS "RENAISSANCE". . . . . \$567.00 PER CASE

PATRICK JASMIN

I cannot stand oaky, inky Côte Rôties. They are a perversion of a great *terroir* and sadly about the only kind you can find these days. Here is a Côte Rôtie with exotic flavors (including 5% Viognier), and while it will stain your palate, it won't be with new oak or alcohol. Heed me—oaky, inky Syrahs are a dime a dozen, or should be. Jasmin's 2006 is classic. Drink over twenty to twenty-five years.

2006 CÔTE RÔTIE . . . . . \$597.00 PER CASE

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

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# ALSACE

by Dixon Brooke

## 2006 PINOT GRIS “TRADITION” KUENTZ-BAS

Everybody seems to love the exotic perfume of fermented Pinot Gris juice. Some say honeyed, others peat-like, or smoked meat-like, but our customers say DRY, I WANT DRY. What do you do with a sweet Pinot of any color? Kuentz-Bas decided theirs will be dry. Problem solved.

**\$27.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$291.60** PER CASE

## 2007 MUSCAT “KATZENTHAL” MEYER-FONNÉ

Here the very name of the grape suggests sweetness. Nope. Félix Meyer likes his Muscat as an apéritif or with cheeses. From granite and limestone soils, vinified *sur lie*, this dramatically aromatic, racy, DRY Muscat with naturally low alcohol is ... well, serve it to friends as an apéritif and listen for wows, because this wine's perfume provokes wows.

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

## 2007 PINOT BLANC “BARRIQUES” DOMAINE OSTERTAG

To finish off this month's Alsatian trio we have a masterpiece vinified Burgundian style by André Ostertag, a Pinot Blanc brimming with character. The nose is a virtual cornucopia of aromas, some fruity, some herbal, some floral—jasmine? The wood is perfectly integrated and the wine is crisp and dry. As his vines get older, his Pinot Blanc has obviously become more profound and interesting. In my book, this is the best he has made so far.

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



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# SOUTHERN FRANCE

by Dixon Brooke

## CLAIRETTE DE DIE BRUT ACHARD-VINCENT

What a discovery. A sparkling white wine produced organically from the Clairette grape in the Rhône Valley of southern France, grown on hillside vineyards in one of the most beautiful valleys you will ever see, which is split in two by a river with crystal-clear waters begging you to jump in (how rare is that these days??). This beauty is loaded with personality, and you might like to make it your new house sparkler.

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

## 2007 E PROVE BLANC DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

Kermit's house white. Do you trust his palate? This is another classic off-the-beaten-track discovery—dry, crisp, stony, all Vermentino from Calvi on the island of Corsica, it offers novelty, personality, even attitude. It makes a great apéro but shines equally with briny shellfish (what could be better than fresh-grilled sardines sprinkled with sea salt?).

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

## 2007 SAINT-PÉRAY • DOMAINE CLAPE



I thought it would be fun to choose some of our most unusual southern creations for this section. Hope you are enjoying this as much as I am (it's also a little after 6 p.m. here in France, so I'm starting to get hungry). Saint-Péray is an appellation just south of Cornas known for its steep granitic hillsides planted to the Marsanne grape. This may be Clape's best

ever for my palate—with a nose of gunflint and suave Marsanne fruit (honeycomb?), it has length and finesse.

**\$34.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$367.20** PER CASE

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**2006 COLLIOURE “PUIG AMBEILLE”  
DOMAINE LA TOUR VIEILLE**

You don't find reds more soulful than those of Tour Vieille. They are grown on the impossibly steep rocky cliffs above the seaside village of Collioure, where there is literally not an inch of *terre*. I just love their bottling of Ambeille, named after a particular vineyard parcel. It shows explosive perfume and a great balance between chewy texture and unexpected finesse. Collioure is not a well-known appellation, but it sure earns its price.

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

**2006 IROULEGUY “CUVÉE LEHENGOA”  
DOMAINE ETXEGARAYA**

Do the Lehengo! Or at least figure out how we should pronounce it. This Basque beauty is made from 150-year-old Tannat and Cabernet Sauvignon vines. You will be stunned by the intensity of this one, the dense, dark color, the ripe, stony, earthy fruit ... the most impressive quality is that with all its intensity, it somehow remains refreshing. Produced beneath an old farmhouse isolated out on the pre-Pyrenees, the wine translates the beauty of the site.

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

**2006 BANYULS “VENDANGES”  
DOMAINE LA TOUR VIEILLE**

This port-style wine is revered in France for its pairing ability with chocolate. The French also drink it chilled as an apéritif. Traditionally, Banyuls was barrel-aged to a tawny stage, becoming smoky and nutty, and was often a blend of several vintages. However, much like vintage port, Tour Vieille's Vendanges is a single vintage, an early bottling in order to preserve the freshness of the super-ripe fruit. This is another artisanal product, increasingly rare these days. The domaine also makes the more traditional oxidized version, but Vendanges is like no other and has always been more popular with our clients due to its jump-out-of-the-glass deliciousness and versatility. Homemade dark chocolate torte for dessert, anyone?

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



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# BEAUJOLAIS

by Dixon Brooke

## 2007 BROUILLY • CHÂTEAU THIVIN

There is Brouilly, *grand cru*, and CÔTE-de-Brouilly, an impressive all-hillside *grand cru*. Our Côte-de-Brouilly from north-facing slopes vinified by Nicole Chanrion does not taste like Château Thivin's, which is from the southern-facing slopes. Thivin's Brouilly, from flatter terrain, does not taste like their CÔTE-de-Brouilly, which is classier and structured. Their Brouilly offers a richer texture, more accessible Gamay fruit, and a slightly lower price. Got that?

**\$18.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$204.66** PER CASE

## 2007 CÔTE-DE-BROUILLY • NICOLE CHANRION

Nothing gives me more pleasure than driving down every year to Cercié in the beautiful Beaujolais region to taste with Nicole. We go into the aging cellar underneath her *cuverie* to sample her six large *foudres*—each one pure Gamay, each with its unique personality, all delicious. Nicole and I inevitably decide to blend equal portions of all and bottle the result unfiltered for the USA. This is probably one of the easiest visits I do, but it is the quality of the wines, their unique character, and our conversations about food, politics, and whatever else strikes our mood that are always a joy. Here is a truly artisanal product that you shouldn't miss—you are supporting traditional agriculture the old-fashioned way by buying the results. This is more sustainable than government subsidies, and more likely to keep these wines out of the *négociants'* blending tanks.

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

## 2007 MORGON "CÔTE DU PY" • JEAN FOILLARD

I don't want to choose a best Beaujolais from our hard-earned portfolio. Let's just say I have a weak spot for Foillard's Morgon. I have a tendency to put aside magnums each vintage for longer-term enjoyment. This is probably the purest expression of Gamay you'll ever encounter, tipping the Richter scale in terms of its balance between complexity and pleasure. Vinified Burgundian style in barrel with little to no sulfur, then bottled unfiltered, this is explosive Gamay grown in what is considered one of the top granite soils in the region. Jean and Agnès Foillard are superstars in France, and their Morgon is always one of the first to sell out over here.

**\$29.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$313.20** PER CASE  
**\$64.00** PER MAGNUM      **\$345.60** PER CASE

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## THE PLEASURES OF AGING

**M**EANING, OF COURSE, AGING WINE. Some people might automatically assume I mean to convince you that wines are better old, but no, there is no rule, because that choice will be a question of one's mood. I find that I go through periods when all I want is fresh new wine. At other times old bottles get depleted with frequency. Middle-aged can be just right. I love my wine cellar for the arc of possibilities it makes available, and I collect selections from which I can profit at all stages of their and my life.

Many think that only expensive wines age well. Absolutely not true. And some believe that price is a score, that a two-hundred-dollar bottle must be better than a twelve-dollar bottle because, well, isn't that why the one costs more than the other? No. Not even close to always.

The idea to write something about cellaring was born when I invited my sales staff over to go through some older bottles from my collection. Some of the winemakers have become famous and their wines expensive and hard to find, but when I cellared the wines they were quite reasonably priced. I am still discovering new properties whose wine will age beautifully and are not yet expensive. Start your own cellar now and enjoy the arc of maturation for the rest of your life.

Our evening opened with a 1996 CHABLIS "VALMUR" from Raveneau, which I should have decanted because it kept improving with aeration in the wineglass until it was gone. It is entering middle age with a classic Chablis palate, including an oyster-friendly acidity and great length.

I was afraid my last bottle of 1979 CHABLIS "LE CLOS" might be tired. It is the first wine François Raveneau sold me, a whopping 25 cases. I had little money to spare for cellaring then, but thank god I put a dozen of this 1979 away. It has been one of my favorites at every stage of its life, including this final experience—old minerally nose, biscuity, grilled nuts, honeyed ... yes, that classic Chablis honeyed austerity that comes with age. Contact with the air seemed to give the aroma more freshness than less, and wow, was this wine ever lively on the palate! The flavor still haunts me, and what great memories it provokes.

The oldest Domaine de Cherisey white Burgundy I own is a 2001 MEURSAULT-BLAGNY "LA GENELOTTE," so we decided to see how it is developing. Amazingly, it had no trouble following the older Raveneau. It has a stony austerity, too, but it is fleshier, of course, with that slightly grainy Meursault texture. Generous, complete, long and delicious, a great beauty. We have newer vintages available because de Cherisey is a new name not yet as famous as a Raveneau or Coche-Dury, and the price is attractive, so start putting some bottles away. Meursaults and Pulignys, real treasures.

Coche-Dury's 1998 MEURSAULT "PERRIÈRES" tastes much more mature. The underrated 1998 white Burgundies are at a rather beautiful peak right now. The bouquet of the Coche doesn't gush out. It is reserved; you linger with

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your nose in the glass. Complex all the way through, it has developed a honey-like aftertaste.

The **1997 CORTON CHARLEMAGNE**, also from Coche, has a big expansive aroma that reminded me of the cellar smells in his *cave*. Yum. It is round, rich, with perfect toast to it. But why did I scribble “Man’s Temptation” in my tasting notes? I can’t remember. Something sexy about the wine’s body, perhaps.

We lucked out with another last bottle, Léonard Humbrecht’s **1988 RIESLING “RANGEN.”** It was as good as anything on the table. It did not try to knock you out with size or sweetness. It was perfection—lucid and lively with a lot to say.

Then to the Loire for a **1961 SAVENNIÈRES** from Château d’Epiré that showed deep baked pear and apple with a black slate mineral core. It was rich, still firm, totally dry, and had a regal presence to it. In the 1930s, Epiré was sold in Paris at the same price as Yquem. Our current vintage 2006 is only \$19.95. Just think, the 1961 is 47 years old and still giving.

Then we moved to reds, starting with a stunning **1990 NUITS-SAINT-GEORGES “LES CAILLES”** from Robert Chevillon, which opens with an astonishing perfume that I have never encountered before: kirsch, quail bouillon (what can I say?), and hints of candied fruits. Not fat, not thin—just right. Impressive balance and great length from one of the Burgundian masters. When you see a Chevillon, go for it.

Domaine Bertheau’s **1990 BONNES MARES** still has opulent Pinot Noir fruit. *Ça pinotte*, as the Burgundians say. Here was a luscious wine I would call pretty—not the dark, *noir-ish* style like we get from Maume, for example. The Bonnes Mares is, after all, from Chambolle-Musigny. It is a *grand cru* and showed grandeur.

François Jobard’s **1988 BLAGNY ROUGE “LA PIÈCE SOUS LE BOIS”** had a medium-deep robe, and a singular perfume, sort of like a cross between boysen- and raspberries. Discreet, elegant, inviting—a gem is what I’d call this 1988. I had feared following a big vintage *grand cru* with a Blagny, but my fear was unfounded. A gem, if it is pristine, can follow a blockbuster.

One of the major surprises for me was Domaine Maume’s **1988 GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN “EN PALLUD,”** a wine I thought would never come around. The hard, massive tannins have finally softened. En Pallud, not even *premier cru*, is always one of the best values for aging because it acts like a grander *cru*, showing great depth and personality.

Then my last bottle of **1976 MOULIN-À-VENT** amazed us all. Another super-tannic wine in its youth, it has barely a grey hair to it. In fact, it seemed middle-aged at 32. No wonder they call it the King of the Beaujolais.

Our Rhônes began with a **1995 CORNAS “CHAILLOT”** from the gifted Thierry Allemand. It is big, dark, and tannic with lead pencil, raw beef, and black pepper to the nose. Good drinking now, still a youngster.

A **1991 CÔTE RÔTIE** from Jasmin is at a beautiful peak. His never win the

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tastings of young Côte Rôties, but don't let that stop you. His 1991 is still fruity and elegant until a texturally perfect tannin emerges at the end, crescendo-like.

Marius Gentaz's 1991 **CÔTE RÔTIE** lives up to his legend, and has great depth to its aroma. The palate is grandiose; the flavors open up and sink into your taste buds without a hint of aggressiveness.

The 1990 **CORNAS** from Noel Verset shows a subtle, elegant bouquet. Time can work wonders. The palate begins round and velvety, then the granite fist emerges and proudly proclaims its provenance: "I am Cornas!"

I don't think my staff showed as much excitement all night as they did when Auguste Clape's 1988 **CORNAS** was poured. It was the most completely satisfying Syrah of the evening. Fascinating, deep, complex, mature aroma; expansive, penetrating palate; still showing gobs of Syrah fruit. With age it has really blossomed.

What better way to follow it than with Clape's 1976 **CORNAS**. The summer that year was unusually hot, and at 32 years this bottle showed both fresh and stewed fruit. There was also a sort of subterranean character to it that was lovely.

We still hadn't eaten.

Michael picked up some roast chickens from Lola's on Solano, Mark brought a huge potato gratin, and my wife made salad and dessert. I went back down to my cellar and puzzled over what to bring to table.

We were numerous enough for magnums, so we had one, a 1985 **BANDOL "CUVÉE SPÉCIALE"** from Domaine Tempier. I can't explain it, but it seemed like one of the realest wines I have ever drunk ... something about purity and lack of artifice, I suppose. Then came a 1978 **CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE** from Vieux Télégraphe, which finished our journey through the reds. It was majestic and rustic and simply loaded with goodness, a big lovely magnum that I felt like guzzling all night. My staff prevented that, finishing it right down to the last drop.

**O**UR SELECTION IS EVER-CHANGING, but I walked through the aisles today and jotted down what I would put together for you if you asked me to help start a reasonably priced cellar. I considered price, quality, and aging potential. Here is what I chose.

But, oh yes, as to quantity—now that I can afford it, I like to cellar full cases. You see how long these naturally produced wines from great *terroirs* keep on goin', so if you have a lot of bottles of something, you can really get to know it and enjoy the long arc of maturation. I have rarely cellared too much of anything. But for those on a budget, I think three bottles of any one wine is a minimum, so that is the quantity I usually use here. If any of you decide to go for this starter cellar, the price with a special 15% discount would be \$1500. Then you're on your way. Liquidity you can swallow.

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## STARTER CELLAR

BOTTLES		PER BOTTLE
3	2005 PINOT GRIS "DORFBURG" MEYER-FONNÉ ALSACE . . . . .	\$30.00
6	2007 GRAVES <i>BLANC</i> CHÂTEAU GRAVILLE-LACOSTE BORDEAUX . . . . .	18.95
3	2005 SAUTERNES "CUVÉE LÉON" CHÂTEAU ROÛMIEU-LACOSTE BORDEAUX . . . . .	47.00
3	2005 LALANDE-DE-POMEROL CHÂTEAU BELLES-GRAVES BORDEAUX . . . . .	35.00
3	2006 PIC SAINT LOUP <i>ROUGE</i> CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE LANGUEDOC . . . . .	18.00
3	2005 CORBIÈRES "LA DEMOISELLE" DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE LANGUEDOC . . . . .	16.00
3	2005 MONTPEYROUX DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC LANGUEDOC . . . . .	22.00
3	2007 VOUVRAY DOMAINE CHAMPALOU LOIRE . . . . .	19.95
3	2005 BOURGUEIL "VIEILLES VIGNES" DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE LOIRE . . . . .	17.95
3	2005 BANDOL <i>ROUGE</i> DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON PROVENCE . . . . .	28.00
3	2005 GIGONDAS DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES RHÔNE . . . . .	36.00
3	2006 CHABLIS "FOURCHAUME" <i>1ER CRU</i> OLIVIER SAVARY BURGUNDY . . . . .	32.00
3	2005 AUXEY-DURESSSES <i>BLANC</i> "LES HAUTES" DOMAINE VINCENT BURGUNDY . . . . .	32.00
3	2005 MEURSAULT-BLAGNY "LA GENELOTTE" DOMAINE DE CHERISEY BURGUNDY . . . . .	61.00
6	2006 MERCUREY "LES MONTOTS" A. & P. DE VILLAINÉ BURGUNDY . . . . .	42.00
3	2003 BAROLO "LAZZAIRASCO" GUIDO PORRO PIEMONTE . . . . .	39.00
3	2004 BARBARESCO "VICENZIANA" SILVIO GIAMELLO PIEMONTE . . . . .	34.00

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—VALUE OF THE MONTH—

2006 SAUTERNES • CHÂTEAU  
ROÛMIEU-LACOSTE

**T**HIS IS A FIRST for us—a Sauternes (or Haut-Barsac, to be more precise) as our Value of the Month. You'll have to taste one before you truly understand why I selected it.

In the mid-1970s I met *Herald Tribune* wine writer Jon Winroth in Paris at his favorite wine bar, Au Sauvignon. I still recommend the place to people for its *saucisson* sandwiches on Poilâne bread and cheap classic AOC wines by the glass. Anyway, after a glass of Quincy and one of Beaujolais, Jon took me to the outskirts of the city to his favorite restaurant, Chez Serge, where we started with foie gras and a glass of Sauternes. I can't recall how many times we repeated the experience over the years, because it was such a lovely *tranche* of foie gras with a cheap, impeccable Sauternes.

Of course I noted the address and went to the Bordeaux region to meet the gracious proprietor, Madame Dubourdieu. Californians took Sauternes seriously back then, and I had quite a success with her wine.

When her son Hervé took over, he did not pay the Sauternes as much attention, meticulously focusing on his two wildly popular dry whites, Château Ducasse and Château Gravelle-Lacoste. Now, in the past decade, he has begun to return to the property's historic specialty—Sémillon grapes left on the vine in appropriate vintages (none produced at all in 2007) to be attacked by noble rot and slowly shrivel, concentrating the sugar and flavor.

His 2006 showcases an impressive combo of power and finesse, the hallmark of Haut-Barsac. Sinewy and graceful, minerally with plenty of ravishing botrytis, it is unusual to see a wine with this pedigree available at Hervé's price. Well, his Gravelle and Ducasse are remarkable values, too.

Don't underestimate the number of occasions this beauty will serve you. It is a habit-forming apéritif with or without foie gras. It marries better with cheeses than most reds, and the French are known to admire it with Sunday's roast chicken. With dessert? Yes. As dessert? Yes.

**\$42.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$453.60** PER CASE

**\$24.00** PER TENTH

**\$518.40** PER CASE





*Bateau de la Loire*

© Gail Skoff

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*Château de la Loire*

© Gail Skoff

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# THE LOIRE VALLEY

by Dixon Brooke

## 2007 SANCERRE • DANIEL CHOTARD

Kermit and I argued about which of us gets to use the word *sexy* this month. We voted, but it was a tie. We compromised and both of us get to use it.

This may be the sexiest Sancerre out there. The musically gifted Chotard is a master at coaxing the nerve plus the roundness and complex fruitiness out of his Sauvignon Blanc grapes. Not bad—classic Sancerre verve and stoniness and Dagueneau-esque intensity.

**\$22.50** PER BOTTLE      **\$243.00** PER CASE

## 2007 MUSCADET • CHÂTEAU DE LA FESSARDIÈRE

Two things make this wine stand out. First, uncompromising organic viticulture—not a drop of chemicals, insecticides, or pesticides touches their soil. You won't find a more passionate advocate of organic agriculture than this domaine's patriarch, Alexis Sauvion. Combine that with the interesting (for Muscadet) idea to age half of the wine in large, old wood *foudres*, which gives an uncharacteristic roundness that takes some of the traditional cut out of the wine without being oaky or banal. There is still plenty of salty, briny Muscadet zing and a purity of expression that is often striking in organic wines. Plus, their Muscadet is much more versatile than others, a Muscadet of many uses.

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

## 2006 CHINON “CHÊNE VERT” • CHARLES JOGUET

It occurred again twice this week, a journalist or client claiming that the domaine under the leadership of François-Xavier Barc is making wines as good as *and* more consistent than Kermit's old pal Charles Joguet did. Uncompromising quality, one of France's greatest domaines! This is the biggest, showiest, most splendid Chêne Vert since Charles planted the fabled vineyard. Don't miss it.

**\$42.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$453.60** PER CASE

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### 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.*

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