

ADVENTURES CLUB

by Anthony Lynch • SEPTEMBER 2013

2012 VERMENTINO “ISASCO” • PUNTA CRENA

Liguria: land of beaches, pesto, and colorful seaside villages. Add crisp whites to the mix, and why would you ever leave? That’s the way I feel when I visit Punta Crena, where the Ruffino family’s open-armed hospitality makes it difficult to climb into the car and drive away. Fortunately, once I am back in the U.S., I can always revisit Varigotti—the small coastal town the Ruffinos call home—through a cold glass of Vermentino. The vines that produce this wine come from the Isasco vineyard, a plateau located high in the mountains, towering over Varigotti and the inviting Mediterranean below. The altitude allows for cool nights that stretch out the growing season and fresh breezes that help keep the grapes healthy. This Vermentino tastes and smells just like Liguria, an uplifting medley of sea and sun that is bright and awakening like a breath of fresh Mediterranean air. It is lively and floral, with a mouth-watering salinity, and maybe a hint of the lemons that the Ruffinos also cultivate on the steep terraces overlooking the winery. The finish brings a crisp acidity that is the perfect palate cleanser after a bite of *fritto misto*, *farinata*, or simply warm *focaccia* drizzled with Punta Crena’s olive oil.

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

2011 PIC SAINT LOUP ROUGE “TOUR DE PIERRES” ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP

When the sun sets at Ermitage du Pic Saint Loup, a massive shadow is cast on the landscape before darkness totally covers the surroundings. This is the aura of the Pic (*pic* = peak) itself, the imposing limestone pinnacle that boldly emerges from the wooded countryside of the Languedoc. On the southern slopes of the Pic, the Ravaille brothers have powered through acres of *garrigue*, clearing the rugged land of some of its wild herbs and shrubbery to plant vines on these limestone soils. The primary contender here is Syrah, brought from its home in the northern Rhône to the Mediterranean climate of the Hérault. The slopes around Pic Saint Loup offer a cool microclimate to temper the heat of the South, allowing Syrah to thrive and express its northerly elegance and freshness. Grenache and Mourvèdre account for the second half of the blend, contributing to the wine’s deep color and structure. The three grapes, when cultivated with the help of biodynamic herbal blends, give a celestial perfume reminiscent of black olives and lavender—both of which you would expect to see amid the Tour de Pierres vineyards.

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

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

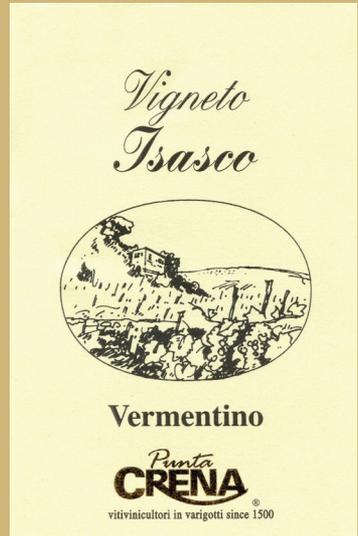
To re-order any of our Wine Club selections, please give us a call at 510.524.1524
to speak to a salesperson or send us an email at wineclub@kermitylynch.com.

VENETIAN-STYLE PASTA WITH SHELLFISH

by Christopher Lee

Venice has a way with shellfish. Varieties such as cozze, a tiny mussel harvested in the Laguna Veneta, appear on Venetian tables frequently. You'll also find vongole veraci (a small clam), cannolicchi (a local razor clam), and telline (or wedge shell) in pastas and sauces alike. We don't see these molluscs here in the U.S., but the ones we do have are just as tasty, if not as diverse. Recently, I was served a simple but spectacular dish accompanied by a glass of quite cold, delicious Soave, but dreamed of washing it down—can I say that about such an elegant dish? can I say that about such a charming wine?—with a glass of Punta Crena's lovely Vermentino, while sitting at a shaded outdoor table along the Ligurian coast in the warm summer weather. For this version, seek out tiny bay scallops (different from the much larger sea scallops sold in American shops), littleneck clams, and spot prawns.

1 pound small mussels, rubbed clean, beards removed, well rinsed;
littleneck clams, well rinsed; razor clams, well rinsed;
or whatever combination of bivalves you
find in your local shop
½ pound fresh bay scallops
1 pound fresh spot prawns or white shrimp,
shelled
1 cup diced fresh, ripe tomato
1 cup shaved fennel
8 ounces white wine
4 ounces diced shallots
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
6 ounces unsalted butter, cubed
and chilled
Pinch of chili flakes
Pinch of grated lemon zest
Pinch of sea salt
1 teaspoon Pastis
6 ounces finely chopped Italian parsley
1 pound dried noodles such as tagliatelle,
fettuccine, or spaghetti, cooked
al dente



Place mussels, tomato, fennel, white wine, shallots, garlic, and butter in saucepan, cover, and cook over high heat until mussels have begun to open. Add chili flakes, lemon zest, salt, and Pastis, and cook one minute. Reduce heat a bit, add scallops and prawns, and cook until sauce thickens and coats shellfish, shaking pan occasionally. Add parsley, toss with noodles, and serve in warm bowls. Drink wine.

Serves 6

Christopher Lee is a former head chef of Chez Panisse and Eccolo in Berkeley and co-founder of the Pop-Up General Store in Oakland, California. Read his blog at <http://oldfashionedbutcher.blogspot.com>.