

ADVENTURES CLUB

by Anthony Lynch • DECEMBER 2017

NV VOUVRAY BRUT • CHAMPALOU

The Champalou family—Catherine, Didier, and their daughter, Céline—are Chenin Blanc specialists: from the vineyards around their home in the heart of the Vouvray appellation, they make wines in every style from the noble Pineau de la Loire, as the grape is also known. Their Vouvray *pétillant* is crafted in the *méthode traditionnelle*: the secondary fermentation takes place in bottle, and then the wine is aged extensively on its lees—in this case, two years—before being disgorged and recorked. From clay and limestone vineyards, they are able to obtain remarkable complexity in their Brut, while the texture shows both a creamy richness and an austere minerality. For this reason, this wine makes a great bargain alternative to Champagne, but it is important not to overlook the fact that it comes from a *terroir* and grape variety of its own. The Champalous like to serve it at the end of a meal, but this dry sparkler works well from the *apéritif* all the way through dessert.

\$23.00 PER BOTTLE

\$248.40 PER CASE

2016 BOURGUEIL “CUVÉE ALOUETTES” DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE



About thirty miles downriver of Vouvray lies the sleepy town of Bourgueil, where Cabernet Franc reigns. Thierry Boucard represents the seventh generation of his family to run Domaine de la Chanteleuserie, an estate blessed with some of the appellation’s finest parcels. From their south-facing limestone sites, in fact, Thierry and his forebears have produced beautifully nuanced Bourgueils with the structure to age for decades in bottle. The Cuvée Alouettes,

however, comes from sandier soils, which tend to yield softer wines with very supple tannins—perfect for drinking young. It saw fermentation and aging in stainless steel to preserve maximum aromas of fresh fruit, and the fruits are not lacking: wild berries jump out of the glass invitingly, while a peppery note adds an earthy twist. The gentle finish makes it oh-so gulpable—be sure to put a slight chill on it, and serve with picnic fare, lunch, or a BLT.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE

\$172.80 PER CASE

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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— CATALAN OCTOPUS AND CHICKPEA STEW —

by Christopher Lee

Variations on shellfish stew are endless, strung like pearls across the Mediterranean. I like this version for its rusticity and deep flavor, even without the addition of a separate shellfish stock.

The recipe has several early steps, but the cooking is very simple.

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| 1 cup dried chickpeas | 1 small bay leaf |
| 1 tablespoon sea salt | 6 pieces dried mild chili peppers |
| ½ pound dry-farmed tomatoes, quartered, or 1 small can | of 2 or 3 types |
| peeled Italian plum tomatoes, drained and crushed | 2 cloves garlic, peeled |
| 4 ounces extra-virgin olive oil | ¼ teaspoon fennel seed |
| 1½ pounds octopus, preferably fresh | 1 medium onion, peeled and diced |
| 2 pounds manila clams | 2 pinches saffron |
| ¾ cup white wine | 4 pieces country bread, cut ½ inch thick |
| | <i>Optional:</i> 4 ounces lemon mayonnaise |

Soak chickpeas overnight in water in the refrigerator. Next day, drain chickpeas. Cover with water by 3 inches, add 1 teaspoon salt, and simmer until soft enough to crush with a spoon, about 1½ hours; drain chickpeas and discard liquid. Stem tomatoes and cut into halves or quarters, depending on size. Place tomatoes in a shallow pan or casserole. Add 1 ounce olive oil, ½ teaspoon salt, and roast uncovered for 40 minutes at 375° F, until blistered and soft. Simmer octopus in water until tender, about 1½ hours; reserve liquid. When done, cut octopus into 1-inch pieces and set aside. Open clams with white wine and bay leaf in a shallow, covered pot. Strain, and reserve liquid. Remove clams from shells; discard shells. Remove stems and seeds from chili peppers; place in a bowl and cover with hot water. Cover bowl and steep for 20 minutes, until soft. Strain chilies and blend to a smooth paste with garlic, fennel seed, 1 ounce olive oil, and ½ teaspoon salt. Sauté onions in remaining 2 ounces olive oil until soft. Add tomatoes, chili paste, chickpeas, saffron, and ½ teaspoon salt. Thin to desired consistency with octopus and clam liquors. Add octopus and clams and simmer 10 minutes partially covered. Adjust seasoning. Serve in warm bowls, with a piece of toast on top of each and a dollop of lemon mayonnaise, if desired. Serves 4–6