

ADVENTURES CLUB

by Anthony Lynch • OCTOBER 2016

2015 VAL DE LOIRE CHARDONNAY ÉRIC CHEVALIER

The Pays Nantais, land of Muscadet, may not be known for Chardonnay, but Éric Chevalier has earned a reputation for the fresh, clean rendition of the grape he crafts at his family estate. Since taking the reins from his father a decade ago, Éric has ambitiously implemented new ideas in order to improve the domaine's wines: gradually eliminating the use of herbicide, plowing the soils, and effecting other sustainable practices for an eventual conversion to organic viticulture. Consequently, his wines express greater complexity and finesse each vintage, all while maintaining their budget-friendly appeal. This Chardonnay is fermented with native yeasts in stainless steel and ages in tank before being bottled unfiltered. The nose is floral with suggestions of crisp apple and pear, while the palate shows the same saline, mineral quality we expect from Muscadet—a clear marker of its Atlantic *terroir*. We recommend keeping a bottle in the fridge at all times in the event of an impromptu apéritif.

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

2014 BOURGOGNE ROUGE “EN MONTRE CUL” RÉGIS BOUVIER

At the northernmost end of the Côte de Nuits, Régis Bouvier farms a parcel far removed from the idyllic agrarian landscape typically associated with Burgundy. En Montre Cul lies within the Dijon city limits, rising up from the asphalt to give a view of housing projects and other not-so-picturesque markers of unrelenting urban development. Although the city has all but invaded this long-standing viticultural haven, growers like Régis work hard to preserve the winemaking tradition at this unusual crossroads. The historically acclaimed vineyard, so named because its steep grade offers peeping harvesters a generous view of their upslope colleagues' rears, is the source of fine Pinot Noir that yields one of Bouvier's signature bottlings and one of the best values in red Burgundy to be found. His fifty-year-old vines provide a deep, chewy red that punches well above its price point, an accessible introduction to the Côte de Nuits for anyone looking to casually enjoy great Burgundy.

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

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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TUSCAN TOMATO AND BREAD SOUP

by Christopher Lee

Tomatoes are perfectly ripe and crazily abundant this time of year. Tomato and bread soup, pappa al pomodoro, may showcase the ripeness of tomatoes better than any other dish. It's made simply, from garden tomatoes, stale bread, basil, and Parmesan rind. Some cooks add grated Parmesan at the table, but that's heresy. The soup is even better the second day, though we often end up scooping some out of the pot while it's still on the stove. In winter, you can do without the basil, or you can sneak it in if you wish. Many cheeses shops and delis now have Parmesan rinds on hand. Some cooks add red pepper flakes, but we never do, and don't even think about adding stock.

- 1 large red onion, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus drizzle for garnishing
- Piece of Parmesan rind 3 inches square
- 4 cups peeled Early Girl or San Marzano tomatoes, crushed in your hands (in winter, use peeled Italian plum tomatoes—*pomodori pelati*)
- 2 cups basil leaves; save stems and tarnished leaves for soup base
- 2 cups country bread a day or two old, crusts removed, torn into 2-inch-square pieces
- Optional (although not recommended): grated Parmesan cheese

Sauté onion and garlic in olive oil until soft and translucent, without any color. Add tomatoes, basil stems, any tarnished leaves, and Parmesan rind. Simmer on lowest heat for about 20 minutes, stirring frequently, as mixture easily scorches. Add bread to soup, plus a little water to thin it slightly and absorb bread. Keep stirring. Simmer on lowest heat for another 40 minutes, still stirring. Remove basil stems. Stir in fresh basil leaves (tear any big leaves into small pieces) just before serving and drizzle with olive oil. You are not allowed to grate Parmesan cheese over this soup (unless you can't resist).

Makes 8 servings



Christopher Lee is a former head chef of Chez Panisse and Eccolo restaurants in Berkeley and co-founder of Pop-Up General Store in Oakland. Visit his website: oldfashionedbutcher.com.