

**2016 ARBIN MONDEUSE “TERRES BRUNES”
A. & M. QUENARD**

Once known only for cheap, thin whites, Savoie now produces world-class wines in all styles that put forth the stunning *terroir* of this Alpine growing region. At the foot of massive peaks, the vineyards benefit from excellent sun exposure; a cool, dry climate; and poor, rocky soils often planted at a significant gradient. Native grape varieties thrive in these conditions, giving lively, thirst-quenching wines with distinct regional character. The Quenard family has prime holdings on the steep limestone slopes of the Chignin appellation, but this Mondeuse bottling hails from the neighboring village of Arbin, where richer clay soils give broader, chewier, thicker wines. Aged in a combination of stainless steel and oak *foudres*, it conveys loads of juicy, brambly berries with floral and gamey nuances. Decant it to allow its dense tannins to soften, and then enjoy with roast duck, mushrooms, or Alpine cheeses.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE \$345.60 PER CASE

2015 CÔTES CATALANES “RAFALOT” • DOMAINE VINCI

Many describe the Roussillon as the new frontier of French wine, a result of producers like Domaine Vinci creating compelling cuvées from dramatic vineyards in the rugged highlands of French Catalonia. These arid, sun-drenched inclines are home to a number of extremely old vines in a diversity of soil types, often planted at high elevation—a recipe for concentrated wines with freshness and striking complexity derived from their *terroir*. The cuvée Rafalot comes from century-old dry-farmed Carignan in rugged clay and limestone soils, tended with the utmost care and respect for the environment. Olivier Varichon and his wife, Emmanuelle Vinci, stomp the grapes by foot and let them ferment naturally before aging the wine in neutral barrels before an unfiltered, unfiltered bottling with minimal added sulfur. Imposingly structured with deep, powerful black fruit, licorice, and spicy herbal tones, this big, bad Roussillon red makes a serious case for the Wild West of French wine.

\$38.00 PER BOTTLE \$410.40 PER CASE

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GRILLED LAMB LOIN CHOPS WITH HERBS

by Christopher Lee

Richard Olney inspired this dish, and though his palate is of Provence, the lamb perfectly accompanies the Mondeuse. Many butcher shops and good grocery stores offer spring lamb right now, but to find chops with a strip of belly (or apron) attached, you'll need the local craft butcher. You can easily make the rosemary skewers yourself by cutting 4-inch pieces from the branches of a nearby bush and stripping them nearly bare, leaving a tuft of leaves at the sharpened tip for decoration as well as flavor. Choose branches the thickness of a wooden skewer, and if you don't have rosemary at hand, use a skewer. Mondeuse is not well known in this country, and the example from Quenard is remarkable in its elegance and charm.

4 spring lamb loin chops with belly attached, cut about 2 inches thick
¼ cup olive oil
½ teaspoon sea salt
2 tablespoons black peppercorns, coarsely cracked

Dried thyme or oregano, as you prefer
4 rosemary skewers, 4 inches in length, with a sharpened tip (or 6-inch wooden skewers)
1 lemon, quartered

Rub chops thoroughly with olive oil. Then rub with sea salt, cracked black pepper, and dried herbs. Coil the piece of belly tightly around loin section and skewer through with a sprig of rosemary to fasten. Place the chops on a plate, cover with plastic wrap, and marinate in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 hours or overnight. Remove chops from fridge and bring to room temperature. Season chops again with an additional light sprinkle of sea salt. Grill chops 6 to 8 minutes on each side over medium coals, turning regularly until chops are crisp and slightly burnt on the outside, fat is rendered, and loin is cooked medium. Transfer chops to a warm serving plate, and serve with lemon wedges.



Makes 4 servings

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