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WINE MERCHANT

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

- **BEST COUTALE EVER?**
- **2003 DOMAINE ENTE**
- **2003 ZIND-HUMBRECHT**

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

OCTOBER 2005

BURGUNDY

2004 CHABLIS • ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

Tasting with Lavantureux this year, I thought he had undergone a personality transplant. Normally he acts like a guy whose life has been spent in a cold, wet little village that offers nothing to do but pound your head against the wall. This year he had a spring to his step, a healthy smile, and a 2004 of which he was obviously proud. “And look,” he said, “it is so limpid and brilliant, I don’t think I need to filter it.” How could I disagree?

Tasting notes: Springtime wildflowers, chalk, and pure Chardonnay fruit. Fleshy palate with a beautiful Chablis core, a spine that is firm. Minerality runs throughout it.

\$19.00 PER BOTTLE **\$205.20** PER CASE

2003 BOURGOGNE ROUGE • FRANÇOIS JOBARD

For the first time, there were three barrels of Bourgogne *rouge* on Jobard’s gravel floor. I got so excited tasting them, I spent my time trying to convince him to sell me all three and forgot to ask how he acquired the new parcel.

More *noir* than *rouge*, it is unusually rich, deep, and velvety.

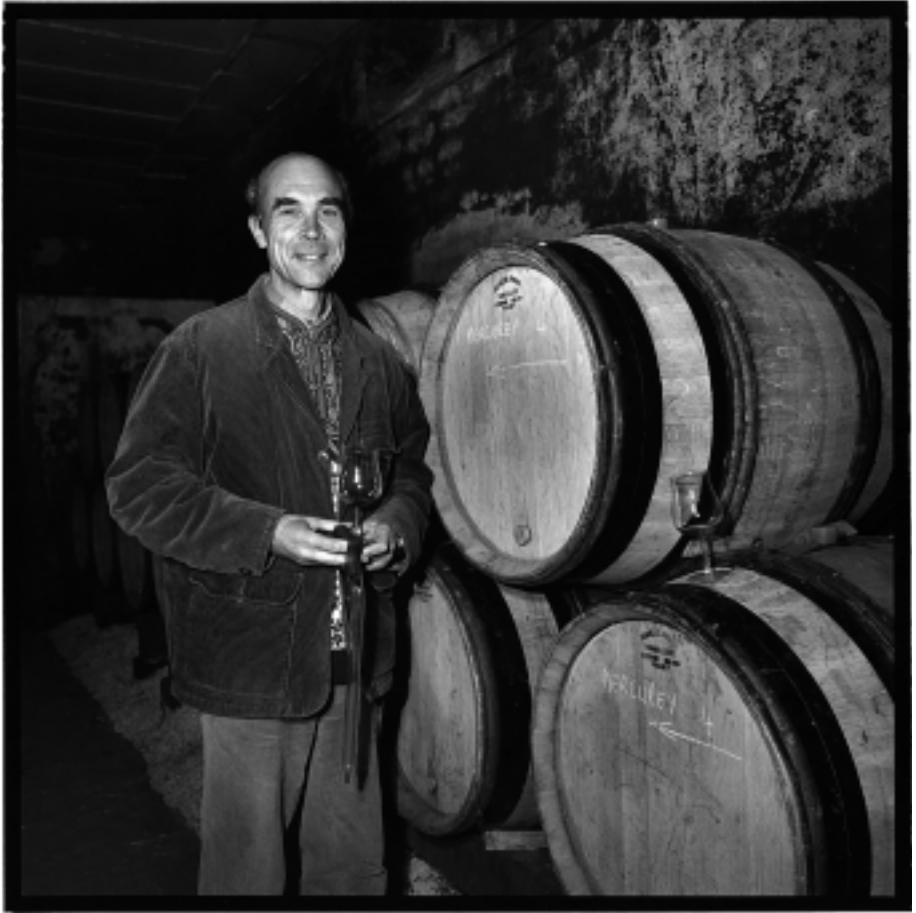
\$26.00 PER BOTTLE **\$280.80** PER CASE

2003 MERCUREY “LES MONTOTS” A. & P. DE VILLAINÉ

And this one is dangerous. If you have a sip and can’t stop drinking it, have no fear. It does not mean you have turned into an alcoholic. It means you have been lucky enough to obtain the most delicious red Burgundy I have tasted (and drunk) in a long time. It is fairly low in acidity, so I can’t venture a guess as to how long it might age. And I don’t see how it could possibly get any better than it already is.

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE **\$388.80** PER CASE





Aubert de Villaine

© Gail Skoff

2003 DOMAINE ENTE (MEURSAULT)

THERE IS NEVER much Ente to go around, which is tough, because he is one of the three or four best in Meursault. In fact, he learned his trade chez Coche-Dury.

Nadège Lanier-Garde runs our Beaune office. She also moves in with the Ente family and works harvest with them every year. Here she reports on the 2003 harvest, which was unusual because of the heat wave:

The Entes were vacationing like almost everyone in France in August, and when they returned to Meursault and saw the grapes, Arnaud called his team of harvesters and we went right to work. It was only August 19th and we were the sole crew harvesting. Some of the other growers thought he was crazy. Evidently no one has ever started so early. But Arnaud rightly predicted a potential loss of natural acidity, and he is not one to acidify his wine. At Ente's, nothing added, nothing taken out, as my boss says. And anyway, those grapes were perfectly ripe.

You will want some 2003s in your cellar. They are quite rich but not overblown, and his show good balance and even minerality. Ente is a great purist, and his wines show it.

Do not overlook the Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire, despite the clumsy title. I told him I wanted to be hooked up to it with an IV. He vinified it without SO₂, using the method of Jules Chauvet [see Adventures on the Wine Route, pages 207–211]. I can imagine spreading some on a croissant for breakfast. It's that good!

PER BOTTLE

2003 BOURGOGNE ALIGOTÉ	\$24.95
2003 BOURGOGNE GRAND ORDINAIRE ROUGE	24.95
2003 BOURGOGNE BLANC	35.00
2003 MEURSAULT	59.00
2003 MEURSAULT "CLOS DES AMBRES"	82.00
2003 MEURSAULT "LA SÈVE DU CLOS"	116.00
2003 MEURSAULT "LA GOUTTE D'OR" 1ER CRU	116.00
2003 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET "LES REFERTS" 1ER CRU	116.00
2003 VOLNAY "LES SANTENOTS DU MILIEU" 1ER CRU	82.00



—PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER—

2003 ZIND-HUMBRECHT

ALSACE AND ZIND-HUMBRECHT were of course affected by northern France's unusually dry, hot 2003 summer, too. Yields were lower than ever and the wines are predictably rich and powerful. What might surprise you is that 2003 did not produce many sweet wines. Olivier says, "We tried to avoid overripeness in order to help the wines ferment as dry as possible, and that is what they did."

The grapes were small with thick, healthy skins, giving an almost tannic texture to some of these luscious whites.

Olivier mentioned a 1945 white Hermitage he had tasted and said that it reminded him of his 2003s: huge, white, and dry. "It gives me hope that these 2003s will age well, too."

California weather, Alsatian *terroir*, Humbrecht's vinification.

The staff has tasted the different bottlings, if you'd like some guidance.

	PER CASE
ZIND	\$258.00
MUSCAT "GOLDERT" <i>GRAND CRU</i>	489.00
RIESLING "THANN"	327.00
RIESLING "TURCKHEIM".	327.00
RIESLING "HERRENWEG DE TURCKHEIM"	417.00
RIESLING "CLOS HÄUSERER"	498.00
RIESLING "HEIMBOURG"	459.00
RIESLING "CLOS WINDSBUHL"	627.00
PINOT GRIS "HERRENWEG DE TURCKHEIM"	339.00
PINOT GRIS "ROTENBERG"	378.00
PINOT GRIS "HEIMBOURG"	378.00
PINOT GRIS "CLOS JEBSAL".	597.00
PINOT GRIS "CLOS WINDSBUHL"	516.00
PINOT GRIS "RANGEN" <i>GRAND CRU</i>	618.00
GEWURZTRAMINER "WINTZENHEIM"	357.00
GEWURZTRAMINER "HERRENWEG DE TURCKHEIM"	417.00
GEWURZTRAMINER "HEIMBOURG"	558.00
GEWURZTRAMINER "CLOS WINDSBUHL"	696.00
GEWURZTRAMINER "GOLDERT" <i>GRAND CRU</i>	636.00
GEWURZTRAMINER "HENGST" <i>GRAND CRU</i>	756.00

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



Near Béziers

© Gail Skoff

SOUTHERN FRANCE

2003 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE ROUGE VIEUX MAS DES PAPES

The Bruniers hit 2003 right on the mark. Their Vieux Mas des Papes is rustic, thick, and chewy, an intense, stony Grenache at a great price.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE **\$270.00** PER CASE
\$14.00 PER TENTH **\$302.40** PER CASE

2003 BRONZINELLE CHÂTEAU SAINT MARTIN DE LA GARRIGUE

If you find yourself in southern France near Béziers or Pézenas, you can drop my name and have a friendly reception at the stunning Château Saint Martin de la Garrigue. What an enchanted spot. There are acres and acres of oak, pine, olive, and almond trees, plenty of *garrigue*, and, oh yes, grapevines. Visit the exquisitely restored chapel which dates from before the year 847! Dig that Louis XIII fountain, enjoy the gardens, revel in enviousness, and slurp down some Bronzinelle.

The 2003 is so good I ordered it in magnums and jeroboams. Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, and Carignan aged in oak barrels and *foudres*, fined with egg whites, bottled unfiltered. Spicy nose reminiscent of a ripe Pomerol that has been blessed by a dose of Mediterranean *garrigue*.

\$17.95 PER BOTTLE **\$193.86** PER CASE
(also available in magnums and jeroboams)

2004 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE ROUGE "LA SAGESSE" DOMAINE GRAMENON

by winemaker Michèle Aubéry-Laurent

Pure Grenache from vines at least sixty years old. No de-stemming. Eighteen-day maceration. Aged seven months in oak barrels without SO₂. Addition of one gram SO₂ per 100 liters at the bottling.

Vivid color. The nose is delicate, floral (rose and violets), and exotic (sandalwood and citrus). The palate is elegant and filled with fruit (raspberry and Morello cherry) and spices. Soft tannins.

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

LOIRE

2004 QUINCY • DOMAINE JAUMIER

I was allowed to taste through Jaumier's cellar and choose my own KLWM USA blend. I liked an old-vines cuvée from a parcel named La Victoire, but it finished a little too lemony. Strangely enough, my favorite was from a parcel named Les Bruniers. What are the Bruniers doing up in the Loire Valley, up in Sauvignon Blanc country? But no, it is not those Bruniers. The name of the vineyard probably comes from the color of the soil. *Brun* = brown.

Anyway, the old-vines cuvée Les Bruniers in 2004 gave a typical Quincy aroma with citrus fruits in the Sauvignon Blanc perfume, good body, and crisp acidity. The only thing it lacked was a dash of razzle-dazzle, which I found in a cuvée of younger vines and added to Les Bruniers.

A pretty, tasty dry white, it has a bistro-ish quality to it.

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

2004 BOURGUEIL "ALOUETTES" DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE

Holy palooka, what perfection! You get a lot of class, intensity, and impeccability for your money. It starts with the bright, deep robe, then keeps delivering all the way through. Nothing missing, nothing exaggerated. It is what we wine guys call elegantly oozing with complexity. Cabernet Franc 100%. Black currants, blueberry, spice, and a smidgen of black pepper.

\$12.50 PER BOTTLE **\$135.00** PER CASE

2004 VOUVRAY • DOMAINE CHAMPALOU

by Steve Ledbetter

One of my favorite stops in the Loire is chez Champalou up behind Vouvray. They are gracious hosts, and I always look forward to discovering a new vintage. Chenin or *pineau de la Loire* wears many faces: dry, sparkling, modestly sweet, sweeter still, and decadently sweet. The climate decides a lot for us, and 2004 brought us marvelous lighter wines, refreshing and fun to down. Here is a Vouvray whose only agenda is to bring us pleasure.

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

2004 CHEVERNY • DOMAINE DU SALVARD

by Daniel Madero

The aromatics remind me of fresh rainwater, wildflowers, and the essence of sliced grapefruit. The texture is just heading toward viscous. Subtle hints of lime and minerality glide through the fresh, clean, crisp flavors. It is a reminder of springtime as we head toward winter.

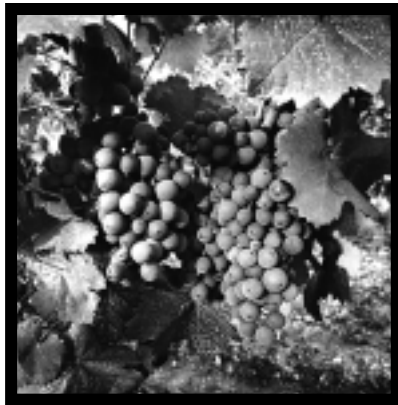
\$12.00 PER BOTTLE **\$129.60** PER CASE

2003 CHINON “LA CROIX BOISSÉE” BERNARD BAUDRY

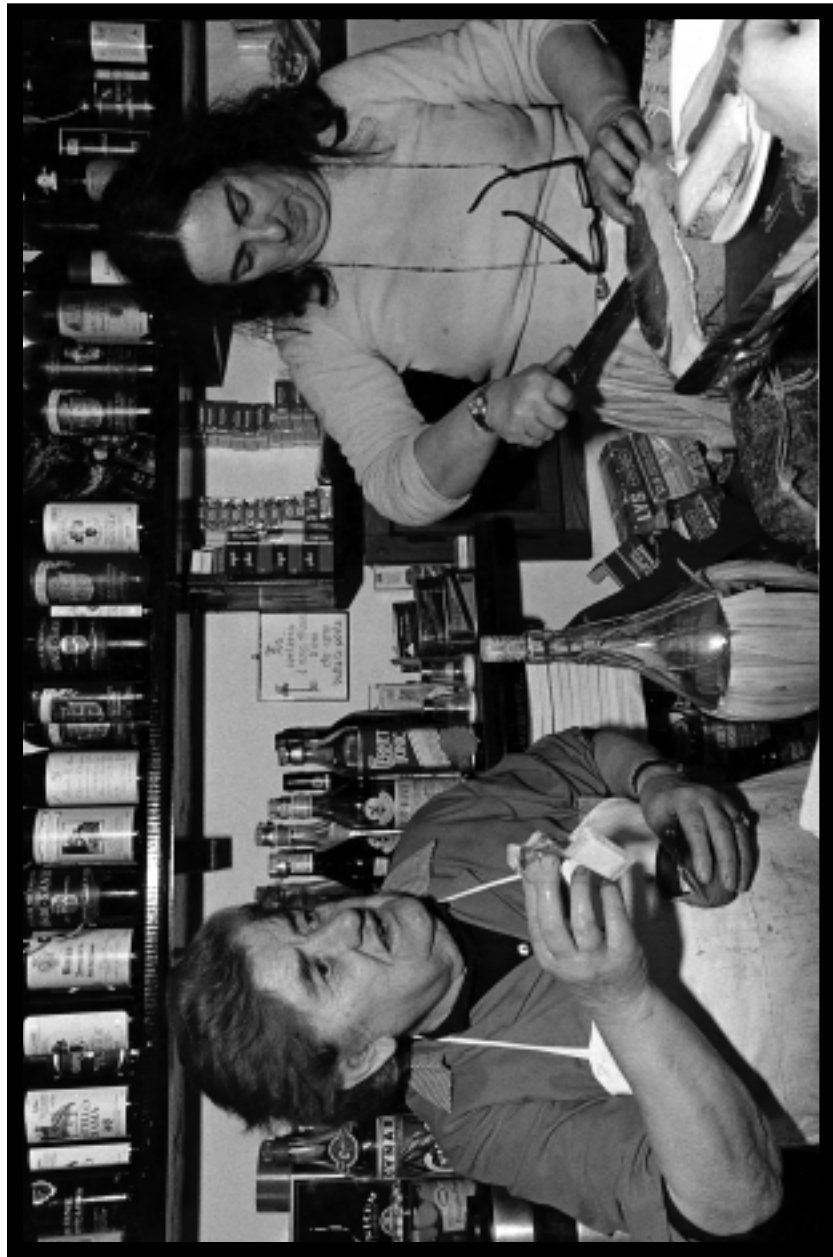
I was with my wife stretched out upon a remote beach on the island of Corsica taking a break from my relentless tasting schedule. The road down to the beach was worth a reality series, and our rental car took a beating. There were only a few other brave souls sharing the beach with us, and when one of them stood up, we caught each other’s eye. It was Bernard Baudry. I’m glad I ran into him because he turned us on to a superb restaurant outside of Calvi called *Le Cou Cou*. They only offer one first course, a platter of eighteen Mediterranean-style tapas, all fabulous.

When I visited the Loire earlier in the year, this Chinon is the last bottle Baudry uncorked: the showstopper. The nose is almost smokin’ with roasted coffee beans, menthol, ripe black currant, and blackberry. It is rich and powerful with sweet depth and a solid tannin to ensure a long life. It’s a prize!

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE **\$345.60** PER CASE



© Gail Skoff



© Gail Skoff

Shopping in Tuscany

ITALY

PROSECCO SUR LIE • ADRIANO ADAMI

You might have noticed over the years that I have a weakness for Prosecco, a weakness I nurtured during several visits to Venice, and it delights me that I am no longer alone. Prosecco has become one of our best-sellers.

I brought in some of this *sur lie* bottling to show fans what Prosecco used to taste like. Adami makes one cuvée *sur lie* every year. I'm not saying it is better or worse, but it is different: cloudier, livelier, and more austere. A little less succulent but a little more minerally.

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

2000 CHIANTI CLASSICO • VILLA DI GEGGIANO

Here is certainly one of the finest Chiantis I have imported. Winemaker Andrea Bandinelli wrote to me: "Vintage 2000 is close to my ideal. I do not need to be 'shocked' by a wine, but caressed, comforted, pleasantly entertained, surprised by the perfumed richness of a good glass. The 2000 has an absolutely fascinating character, and great aging potential."

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

2001 SANDIAVOLO • CANONICA A CERRETO

The deep, dark, vibrant color makes you imagine the other pleasures to follow. The huge, wild aroma seems quite Tuscan, despite the Cabernet and Merlot blended with the Sangiovese (75%). And even though it was aged in barrel, the oak is discreet and does not interfere with the fabulous smell of the wine.

On the palate it is loaded with flavor and ripe, luscious tannins. It is a pleasure to drink now, and seems packed full of neat stuff that will emerge even more with aging. Highly recommended.

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



WHITE BEFORE RED

WHAT GOOD IS a white without a red to follow, and what good is a red without a white to precede it? Intelligent design, folks, in the world of grape-based beverages.

In our continuing variations on this pertinent theme, we will begin up on the Muenchberg, which does not mean Munch Mountain. It means Monk Mountain and refers to the tasteful Cistercian monks who planted the vineyard in the 11th century. The air on the Muenchberg is certifiably rarefied under the official designation *Grand Cru*. A great growth. A noble *terroir*. From such heights of Riesling complexity, we then descend into the heart of darkness with a big, boldly flavored Cahors. It is a beautiful progression, as I hope you will see for yourself.

2003 RIESLING “MUENCHBERG” GRAND CRU ANDRÉ OSTERTAG

While our 2003s from Zind-Humbrecht are offered pre-arrival, our tiny allocation of 2003 Ostertags just landed. See what a great 2003 from Alsace has to offer.

The nose here is fascinating and characterful. There is a smoky humus-like note that we identify more with Pinot Gris, but then, yes, this Riesling does show its innate freshness and zing. The palate is marvelously complex with *grand cru* length. The wine continues to change and astonish as it lingers.

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

2003 CAHORS • CLOS LA COUTALE

This is about as black as modern Cahors gets (see *Inspiring Thirst*, page 49). It has my vote for *Best Coutale Ever*, or at least since I've been tasting. Once you get over the “dark and deep” thrill, notice that lovely spiciness in the perfume.

The best Coutale ever has to be our **VALUE OF THE MONTH**.

\$12.00 PER BOTTLE **\$129.60** PER CASE

