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▪ **HAPPY 2008!**

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JANUARY 2008

—SYLVAIN FADAT SAMPLER—

DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC
AT MONTPEYROUX

MORE THAN ONCE clients have told me that by taste alone they can tell that a wine is my selection, without looking at the import strip. Hmmm. I consider my collection diverse and each selection distinctive. Still, I have my druthers, and Sylvain Fadat at Aupilhac does things like I like 'em to be done. Here are a couple of quotes from Sylvain:

“The work in the vines influences the quality more than the work in the winery.”

“Filtered wine = good, unfiltered wine = super good.”

His grapes are harvested by hand. No imported yeasts. The whites complete their malolactic fermentation. Reds and whites age in oak. He doesn't hire a bottler. He likes his wines to taste good young and old. He is as good as anyone in the Languedoc, yet his prices are far from the highest. He has good taste in women, but does that concern us here?

I drove into old Montpeyroux in 1992 and it all felt right, a site where excellent wine could be produced. Sylvain was just launching his domaine. His dad had always sold the grapes to the local cooperative, but Sylvain vinified and bottled some in 1989, 1990, and 1991. I tasted them and filled my notebook with stars and exclamation points.

Later, someone sent me an interview with Sylvain, who said that after I left him with an initial order that day, he fell on his knees and kissed the ground because it meant his gamble had succeeded and he would be able to realize his dream and develop a true wine domaine.

This year I revisited his 1991 twice and a 1995 and 1996. Look through the Languedoc, Rhône, and Provence. His aged wines stand with the best. Recent vintages recall the fabulous trilogy of 1989, 1990, and 1991, so it is a good time to shine the spotlight on his current achievements. The two of us chose the selections for this sampler. We suggest tasting the reds twice, once after uncorking, then again the next day. The new wines blossom with breathing.

Our sampler contains:

2005 LES COCALIÈRES BLANC

Equal parts Roussanne, Marsanne, Rolle, and Grenache *blanc* planted in an unusual combination of volcanic and limestone soil. Here is one of the south's finest whites, fairly Hermitage-like, but more minerally.

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE

\$324.00 PER CASE

2006 LOU MASET ROUGE

This beauty will go quickly at the price. It has a great Provençal perfume: black cherry, blackberry, and *garrigue*. It is ample on the palate with lush tannins and a long, spicy aftertaste.

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

2005 MONT BAUDILE “LE CARIGNAN”

Sylvain rescued the Carignan. The vine has a natural tendency to overproduce, and when it does, that ain't good, so he began pruning it viciously and vinifying it like a *grand cru*. The results stunned the wine world. He is to Carignan what de Villaine is to Aligoté and Ostertag is to Sylvaner. His Carignan is a fairly hefty wine, but the varietal's natural acidity keeps everything fresh and quenching.

Put some in your cellar for your own good, and enjoy it over the next twenty years.

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE **\$324.00** PER CASE

2005 MONTPEYROUX ROUGE

From the original hillside vines with the ruins of an ancient château in the middle, Sylvain's Montpeyroux shows its 40% Mourvèdre. The nose is ripe, suave, complex, and of impressive depth. The palate is intense like Tempier's La Migoua, rich with a luscious texture and wonderful flavor. Drink or age.

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

2005 LES COCALIÈRES ROUGE

Sylvain said that the bouquet reminds him of the smells in the air when he works in the heat of the day on the inner slope of the volcanic crater. I tagged along on a sizzling hot July afternoon. I was so zonked by the heady smell of the wild rosemary and thyme, I gathered a boxful of the herbs, dried them out, and cooked with them the rest of my time in Provence. I was even crushing the dried leaves on eggs in the morning.

The 2005 red starts bright and minerally, then seems to gather itself, and the impression grows of enormous depths to plumb. I like to start a meal with the Cocalières *blanc*, then move to the red. It is a great *terroir* for both colors.

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE **\$324.00** PER CASE

2004 LA BODA ROUGE

An experiment, Boda is a blend of Montpeyroux and Cocalières aged in oak *demi-muids*. As red wine, it may be acclaimed the best, but I hope he continues to keep the two *terroirs* separate, too, so I can enjoy the distinctive character of each. See what you think.

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

Six bottles normally \$160.90

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE

\$120.00

(25% discount)



RHÔNE AND PROVENCE

2006 VIN DE PAYS DU

**VAUCLUSE BLANC • CUVÉE SÉLECTIONNÉE
PAR KERMIT LYNCH**

This seductive dry white (Chardonnay and Viognier) is actually made by our old friends at Domaine de Durban. I only put my label on it because their label for it looks fairly dippy.

Now, the French vigneronns are still mostly farmers, not moguls. They work outdoors a lot and tend to compare a wine's perfume to the scents they encounter. Often I am unable to enjoy the comparisons because I did not grow up on a farm. In the early days when a vigneron told me that a reduced wine smelled like *ca-ca de poule*, I didn't know what he meant until I got my place in Provence, which included a chicken coop.

So, attention out there, I'm naive about this stuff, but when I sniff this lovely white I smell blossoms and peaches. Does it therefore smell like peach blossoms? I don't know, but I do know that the amazing peach and blossom perfume lingers on the palate an agreeably long time.

This is fun, succulent, dry and crisp.

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

2006 **BANDOL BLANC**
DOMAINE TEMPIER

I taste the sea in this one, and guess what. The vines are pretty darn close to the Mediterranean. This is a wine that stands up and sings at table, especially with seafood.

\$34.00 PER BOTTLE **\$367.20** PER CASE

2004 **BANDOL ROUGE “SAINT FERRÉOL”**
DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON

Saint Ferréol is Tour du Bon's very special hillside *terroir* and shows, amidst all kinds of hedonistic pleasures, an astonishing minerality. This is intensely flavorful, certainly a *vin de garde*, with great depth, unusual complexity and interest. Heart of Mourvèdre darkness. Heart of stone.

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

2005 **CAIRANNE ROUGE**
“CUVÉE LÉA FELSCH” • DOMAINE
CATHERINE LE GOEUIL

The labels of southern Rhône wines can seem confusing. There is an official hierarchy, but never forget that the classification is based on the *terroir's* possibilities, not the finished wines. So a Châteauneuf should be grander than a Côtes-du-Rhône, but a perfect Côtes-du-Rhône can give more pleasure than a flawed Châteauneuf. Here is the hierarchy, starting at the bottom:

1. Côtes-du-Rhône (generic appellation, village cannot be specified)
2. Côtes-du-Rhône Village (the name *Côtes-du-Rhône* appears on the label with the name of the specific village)
3. The name of the village or appellation stands proudly alone on the label—Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas, for example.

Cairanne is a neat place to visit, walking the ancient streets *centre ville*, driving up behind the village into the beautiful hillsides, or tasting with Catherine Le Goeuil, a favorite of ours. Thank goodness she makes good wine.

Her 2005 contains everything wonderful about southern Rhône wines. It is dark and colorful, full-bodied and flavorful, the aroma is thick and generous, and it has the chalky tannins that Provençal and other Mediterranean cuisines need.

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

2006 CÔTES DU RHÔNE ROUGE
DOMAINE CLAPE

Now we are in the northern Rhône, where very few wines appear wearing a Côtes du Rhône label. This one comes from Cornas; it is 100% Syrah; it is the work of Auguste Clape. Need I say more? No, but I will. Here you have a Côtes du Rhône that seems more like Cornas than a good many bottles labeled Cornas. I started to say that there was some lead pencil in the black-curranty aroma, but granite pencil is more like it. All of Clape's 2006s are sensational, and this is the first to arrive.

\$35.00 PER BOTTLE \$378.00 PER CASE

— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

2005 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE
DOMAINE DE LA
CHARBONNIÈRE

WE HAVE REASON TO BE spoiled by the southern Rhône's string of great vintages. Since purchasing Les Pallières in Gigondas before the 1998 harvest, there has been only one tough year, 2002, which was so diluted by a catastrophic one-and-a-half-day deluge that we sold off the entire crop in bulk. The question *But which is the best of this string of great vintages?* does not have an answer, although Daniel Brunier seems to have a personal preference for 1998 and 2005, at least at Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

I was thinking back to the 1970s in comparison, when only 1971, 1978, and 1979 rose above average. Any vintage between 1998 and 2007 (except 2002), if it had actually been from the seventies, could have battled 1978 for greatest vintage of the decade. Our glass runneth over.

The three cuvées of Domaine de la Charbonnière show off what is so great about the 2005 vintage at Châteauneuf-du-Pape: it is the iron-fist-in-the-velvet-glove vintage, plus there is a freshness to the wine's fruit that is remarkable. The wine press in France and here at home has picked up on the achievement at Charbonnière. Never has there been this level of excitement, and it is merited.

| | PER CASE |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 2005 MOURRE DES PERDRIX | \$432.00 |
| 2005 LES HAUTES BRUSQUIÈRES | 537.00 |
| 2005 CUVÉE VIEILLES VIGNES | 537.00 |

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

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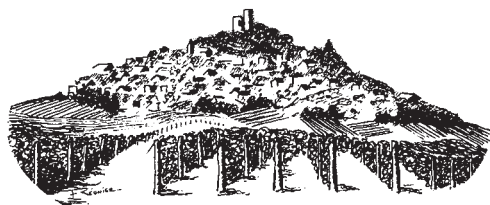
2006 SANCERRE • DOMAINE CHOTARD

Daniel Chotard is a party kind of guy, but not little get-togethers. No, he arranges soirées with wine, food, and live music. He's a winemaker who plays jazz, too. He pulled a good one on me, drove me out into the countryside far from Sancerre to a tiny Moroccan restaurant. We were talking and downing Sancerre when some music entered my consciousness, something strangely familiar. My god, I said, that's my CD! Yes, he had slipped a copy of *Quicksand Blues* to the waitress, who discreetly put it on the sound system. It was a treat to hear my own songs out of context!

Oh yeah, his 2006. He likes to harvest just a little later than most, so you'll find less acidity and grassiness in his Sancerre. His silex *terroir* gives a mineral note.

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE

\$259.20 PER CASE



2006 VOUVRAY "FONDRAUX" DOMAINE CHAMPALOU

This is from the Champalou's favorite vineyard parcel, silex again, but they don't price gouge, thank goodness. Lovely fruit perfume, discreet and fine; suave, round, and let's call it tender on the palate; incredibly fresh and alive at the finish. I had it with Indian curry the other night. Wow.

\$18.95 PER BOTTLE

\$204.66 PER CASE

2006 CHINON "LES GRANGES" BERNARD BAUDRY

Here is another big vintage for Loire reds, in the style of 2005 and 2003. Nice vivid color; deep aroma of blackberry, black currant, and raspberry; mouth-filling but not aggressive; a lovely texture.

\$18.50 PER BOTTLE

\$199.80 PER CASE

BORDEAUX

by Dixon Brooke

2006 LUSSAC SAINT-EMILION

“LES GRIOTTES” • CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE

Vigneron André Chatenoud had a good idea when he decided to begin bottling a separate cuvée starting with the 2004 vintage. Les Griottes is not made every year, only when André’s tastings inspire him to do so. He likes to release a precious, young, fruit-driven Bordeaux in advance of his traditional Château de Bellevue bottling. The *griotte*, pictured on the label, is a type of small cherry with very concentrated acidity that is popular in France, especially for making preserves. The wine itself sports a good imitation of the *griotte* on the nose, in addition to a floral side. The palate is playful and enlivening with bright, fresh berry fruit, then a chalky streak on the finish from the pure limestone *terroir* completes things nicely. As intended, Les Griottes makes great current drinking, and I can’t wait for spring and summer barbecues.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE

\$237.60 PER CASE

2004 LALANDE-DE-POMEROL
CHÂTEAU BELLES-GRAVES

The Château of “beautiful stones” does indeed sit atop vineyards covered by a striking array of small stones of all colors, mostly silex, quartz, and mica. The château’s various parcels of mostly Merlot enjoy a very complex *terroir*, and the differences between the parcels are immediately apparent by looking at the color of the stones. Founded in 1938 and run by the third generation in the hands of Xavier Piton, Belles-Graves sits just across a small river from the first-growth châteaux of Pomerol. I couldn’t help but notice that he has a perfect southerly exposure whereas some of the property across the river is facing directly north. The house style is finesse, and these are subtle yet complex wines of considerable refinement and character. The 2004 is supple on the palate and perfectly balances fruit and mineral components.



\$30.00 PER BOTTLE

\$324.00 PER CASE

ITALY

by Dixon Brooke

2006 BARDOLINO ROUGE “LE FONTANE” CORTE GARDONI

My good friend and colleague Steve Waters and I often compare notes on our picks for “quaffer of the month,” although we normally use the phrase “quaffer of the century,” ignoring both the fact that we are probably exaggerating and the fact that we know there will be others just as quaffable soon to come. I recently e-mailed Steve after my wife and I quaffed a bottle of the new vintage of Gianni Piccoli’s classic Bardolino with a pasta dish featuring garlic, anchovies, tomatoes, and olives. I gleefully declared it the uncontested quaffer of the century. Truly delicious, food-friendly, and look at the price.

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

2006 INCÒ BIANCO • LA VIARTE

We wanted to write this up as a full-page Value of the Month, but we have so many new wines to present and the value is so obvious, we decided we wouldn’t take up an entire page. The value and quality will be immediately obvious from the first whiff of this expertly crafted Friulian white from our friend Giulio Ceschin, whose La Viarte winery is carved into a hillside along with his vineyards on the Slovenian border. His Incò Bianco is mostly Tocai Friulano with a touch of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Grigio. Priced like an everyday white, it satisfies on every level, from its big, fresh, pretty bouquet to its smooth, easy-to-down palate.

\$12.95 PER BOTTLE **\$139.86** PER CASE

2007 MOSCATO D’ASTI • TINTERO

Now our best-selling Italian wine and an old reliable for many of you, Marco Tintero’s Moscato d’Asti will not disappoint with this fresh, newly released vintage. Everything you could want in a Moscato, Marco’s is special because it comes from a perfect little micro-*terroir* for the Muscat grape. An incredibly steep, limestone amphitheater falls precipitously around his winery that is perched (practically hanging) in the middle of the hillside. Hope they don’t have earthquakes. Everyone has a blast with his Moscato at the end of a meal, and its super-low alcohol is an additional virtue.

\$9.95 PER BOTTLE **\$107.46** PER CASE

WHITE BURGUNDY

2006 CHABLIS • ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

Talk about an Old Reliable: the quality and true Chablis character has kept me going back to buy every vintage chez Lavantureux since the mid-seventies.

Talk about an old reliable: after I tasted through his cuvées and selected this very 2006 to be bottled for us, Roland pulled out a dusty bottle of the 1986 version. Still good? Well, how about dazzling. I was amazed, really, that an appellation Chablis, not *premier* or *grand cru*, could age so long and so well. It was so tasty, I did not leave his cellar as soon as I had intended.

His 2006? Never fear! It is ripe, generous, fresh, fleshy, and flashy.

\$23.00 PER BOTTLE **\$248.40** PER CASE

2005 CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET

“EN REMILLY” • DOMAINE COLIN-DELÉGER

The Colin-Deléger label is now reserved for the three or four wines that Michel Colin still makes. I guess we can call him semi-retired.

He has crafted a masterpiece from his *premier cru* vineyard, En Remilly, which nestles right up against Le Montrachet. Here at KLWM where we uncork so many samples, whether new arrivals with staff or with sommeliers, retailers, and journalists, there are certain unfinished bottles that are take-homers. Take-homers have nothing to do with baseball, but a home run is not a bad way to describe this classic.

\$82.00 PER BOTTLE **\$885.60** PER CASE

2005 MONTAGNY “SOUS LES FEILLES” DOMAINE PHILIPPE COLIN

Like father like son? Not exactly. Philippe has his own style and touch.

But first I want to call your attention to our group of lesser-known white Burgundies, the finest values I can see in the “Chardonnay-for-connoisseurs” market, appellations like Marsannay, Saint Romain, Saint Aubin, Montagny, and so on. The quality/price ratio can’t be matched anywhere.

Consider this finely polished gem. What a pristine expression of the world’s favorite white wine grape.

Montagny is in southern Burgundy. Some of you might remember the Montagnys I imported from Jean Vachet in the seventies and eighties. I remember Aubert de Villaine introducing him to me. Vachet retired and had no one to follow him. I have been looking unsuccessfully for a replacement all these years.

Lo and behold, Philippe Colin found vines there and this first release is a marvel. It might spoil you and make a whole lot of expensive “Chardonnays” seem like hound dogs who can’t even catch a rabbit, as Elvis might have put it.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE

**2005 BOURGOGNE BLANC
DOMAINE VINCENT**



My cellar space is dominated by white Burgundies. I love 'em. There is nothing like the grandeur, the breadth and depth of a *premier* or *grand cru* in the hands of a master. But I don't reach for the grandest all the time, and it is not a question of price. I'm the boss; I can take home whatever I'm in the mood for. And most often I am in the mood for one of these lesser appellation gems I am talking about.

Here the toasty oak topping is subtle and just right with the Chardonnay fruit. The balance and weight is perfect. Fresh, crisp, dry, a marvelous product of the 2005 vintage. Twenty bucks, folks. As I say, no other country can provide you with such a classy Chardonnay anywhere near this price.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE

\$215.46 PER CASE

**2005 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET
PHILIPPE COLIN**

The impeccability and pure Puligny-ality here is ravishing. Plus, notice the elegance, the downright scrumptiousness of it all.

Let's say you are exploring a hitherto unknown region in the roasted Australian outback where no refrigerated container has ever traveled, and you strike up a friendship with one of the natives. Sitting around the evening campfire, you exclaim out loud, "A glass of Puligny-Montrachet sure would hit the spot right now."

"What is a Puligny-Montrachet?" your new friend asks, so you reach into your backpack and pull out a chilled bottle of this beauty, you pour a glass, and you say, "This is Puligny-Montrachet."

\$54.00 PER BOTTLE

\$583.20 PER CASE

RED BURGUNDY

by Dixon Brooke

2005 CÔTE DE NUITS-VILLAGES GACHOT-MONOT

The theme continues with more than reasonably priced *French* wines, even from the highly praised 2005 vintage in Burgundy. Damien Gachot crafts a very fine red Burgundy from his numerous parcels just south of the appellation of Nuits-Saint-Georges. In today's weird market, he would probably get a better price if he labeled it Pinot Noir, right? He gets the balance just right in 2005, classic stuff—juicy, concentrated Pinot fruit, aromatic, its tannins already silky. A pleasure to drink right now, don't wait on this one, experience a classic Burgundy vintage in its youthful generosity. Pinot Noir, yes, but the proximity of Nuits-Saint-Georges is evident.

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

2005 SANTENAY “VIEILLES VIGNES” BRUNO COLIN

Bruno must have really paid attention growing up at Domaine Colin-Deléger, because, MAN, can this guy craft some gorgeous Burgundy, red and white! He is gifted with the magic touch, and his wines show real finesse and character. His old vines in Santenay, just south of his home base of Chassagne-Montrachet, produced this classy red that can be enjoyed now or cellared for three to five years for additional complexity.

\$34.00 PER BOTTLE **\$367.20** PER CASE

2005 MOREY SAINT DENIS “EN LA RUE DE VERGY” • RÉGIS BOUVIER

Hopefully you are getting to know the wines of Régis Bouvier, a real talent based in the village of Marsannay that Kermit discovered just a couple of years ago. This cuvée, from a *lieu-dit* vineyard just above the *grand cru* Clos de Tart, is classic MSD and classic Bouvier. A rich, sweet, tender nose of ripe black cherry leads into a spicy, smoky, meaty palate with just the right amount of acidity. Impeccably balanced right now, it will continue to dazzle for another ten years and is the kind of wine that is perfect for wild game. Vintage 2005 is extraordinary.

\$52.00 PER BOTTLE **\$561.60** PER CASE
