

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

SEPTEMBER 2021



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A PRODUCER FROM OUR PAST
JEAN-CLAUDE MARSANNE

GUIDE TO CABERNET FRANC ■ BEST VALUES
QUINTARELLI NEW ARRIVALS ■ ROSÉ TIME CONTINUES

BEST VALUES

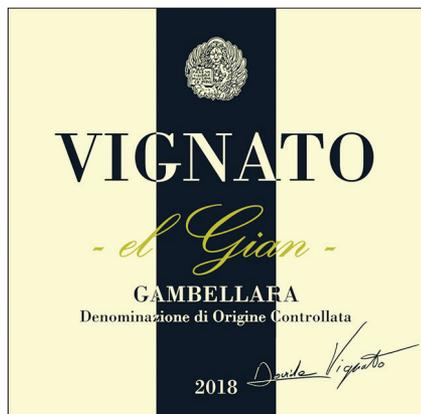
by Anthony Lynch

2020 VAL DE LOIRE SAUVIGNON BLANC “UNIQUE” • DOMAINE DU SALVARD

If only every Sauvignon Blanc could taste like this! Nothing grassy or tropical about this little number from the eastern part of the Loire’s Touraine region. Instead, picture lime blossoms delivered via a lightning bolt of minerally refreshment, with more zippy citrus and blossoming flowers leaving your palate cleansed and utterly charmed.

\$17.00 PER BOTTLE

\$183.60 PER CASE



2018 GAMBELLARA “EL GIAN” DAVIDE VIGNATO

Faintly floral, featuring aromas of almonds and crisp apple, this light, bracing Venetian *bianco* checks all the *aperitivo* boxes. An almost gritty salinity—surely derived from volcanic soil—tickles the taste buds, inducing hunger and more thirst. Pair it with a parched palate.

\$18.00 PER BOTTLE

\$194.40 PER CASE

2020 PAYS D’OC CABERNET SAUVIGNON “LES TRAVERSES DE FONTANÈS” CHÂTEAU FONTANÈS

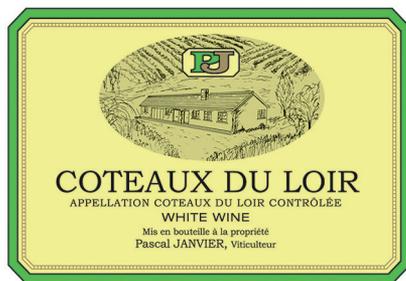
How about a grape from Bordeaux, grown in the Languedoc, that drinks like Beaujolais? If you fancy a big gulp of plump, juicy fresh fruit—think blackcurrant and other ripe berries and brambles—then this is the wine for you. Unlike most Cabernet, it has almost no tannin and takes well to a chill. Zero pretense, pure deliciousness!

\$17.00 PER BOTTLE

\$183.60 PER CASE

2018 COTEAUX DU LOIR *BLANC* PASCAL JANVIER

The sloping banks of the *Loir*, a tributary of the *Loire*, are home to the northernmost vineyards of the entire Loire Valley. Notwithstanding the apparent laziness of France's River Naming Committee, this area produces fantastically undervalued Chenin Blanc that bears a unique aromatic signature. Exotically perfumed with hints of guava, musk, and clove, it finishes dry and quite flinty.



\$20.00 PER BOTTLE

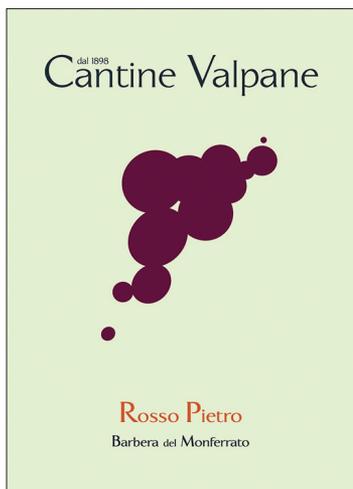
\$216.00 PER CASE

2020 BEAUJOLAIS “CHARRON” QUENTIN HAREL

From young Quentin Harel, a relative newcomer on the Bojo scene, we have a Gamay designed entirely for quaffing, simply bursting with playful red berries and bright, perky acidity. Organically farmed, whole-cluster fermented with native yeasts, no oak, no filtration, and only the tiniest smidge of sulfur . . . You know the drill: store it cool and serve it cool!

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE

\$216.00 PER CASE



2018 BARBERA DEL MONFERRATO “ROSSO PIETRO” CANTINE VALPANE

The wines of Valpane earned gold medals at tastings in Dijon and Bordeaux in 1898, and I'll add two more prestigious awards of my own: *Top Pizza & Pasta Wine* and *Bargain of the Century*. Luscious, mouth-filling cherry fruit, a strong soil signature, and smooth tannins make this the perfect Barbera to cure your weeknight Italian craving.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE

\$172.80 PER CASE

2020 ROSÉS

by *Dustin Soiseth*

2020 REUILLY PINOT GRIS DOMAINE DE REUILLY

To me, Denis Jamain's sunset-hued rosé always contains an Alsatian tinge. While firmly rooted in Reuilly's Kimmeridgian limestone soils—the same as Chablis—it has the silky viscosity, stone fruit, and floral notes reminiscent of Alsatian Pinot Gris to go along with the refreshing acidity and minerality I love in Loire whites. This unique combination pleases year after year.

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

2020 BANDOL ROSÉ DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE



Many rosés can delight on their own, but a great one is as enjoyable at the dinner table as it is on the patio. And Terrebrune's Bandol rosé is most definitely great. The leanest, driest of our Bandol rosés, it features a distinct herbal note that shines with food. A bottle of the 2020 paired with grilled steelhead trout, roasted green beans, and buttery steamed carrots was so blissfully delicious that it made up for my kids bellyaching about having fish for dinner.

\$39.00 PER BOTTLE **\$421.20** PER CASE

2020 CORSE CALVI ROSÉ “E PROVE” DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

Can a rosé be rugged? Maybe I'm projecting here, but the first sip of Maestracci's Corsican rosé—made from Niellucciu, Sciaccarellu, and Grenache—evoked images of berries growing in the island's craggy, mountainous interior. A sniff conjured hot granite and wild herbs. The finish is as brisk as a breeze blowing in off an alpine lake. I think I've found the perfect wine for a camping trip.

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE **\$259.20** PER CASE

NEW ARRIVALS FROM QUINTARELLI

by Anthony Lynch

2013 ROSSO CA' DEL MERLO

Producing a bottle of Quintarelli is no simple task. After harvest, while half of the fruit—in this case, a diverse blend made up mainly of Corvina, Corvinone, and Rondinella—is crushed and fermented like a traditional red wine, the remaining grapes are set to dry for two months in a process known as *appassimento*. After the two lots are blended, the wine is then passed over the pressed skins from the family's Amarone, a powerful wine made entirely from dried grapes. During this *ripasso*, the sugars left over in the Amarone pomace set off a small secondary fermentation, slightly boosting alcohol content and, crucially, contributing additional texture and rich, complex flavors. Only after all this has taken place is the wine racked to massive Slavonian oak *botti*, where it rests for no fewer than seven years before bottling.

And now here it is: the fruit of all that labor, a product of local tradition and clever innovation perfected over many decades by the Quintarelli family. Edition 2013 of the Ca' del Merlo is a vibrant and tightly wound beauty with a dense, elegant core of luxurious black fruit and sweet spices, the whole showing class and restraint. Treat it as you would a fine Barolo: decant it young, cherish it old, and serve it alongside full-flavored, savory dishes such as braises, wild mushrooms, and hearty pastas coated in slow-cooked *ragù*.

\$100.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,080.00 PER CASE

2011 ALZERO CABERNET

Have you ever wondered what first-growth Bordeaux would taste like if subjected to the great Venetian tradition of producing wine from dried grapes? The Alzero is just that, combining the leather, tobacco, and blackcurrant of the Left Bank with the concentration and intense notes of ripe fruit acquired from *appassimento* in this powerful monument to northern Italian viticulture. The sublime flavors persist on the epic, never-ending finale to what is essentially an Amarone made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot.

\$450.00 PER BOTTLE

\$4,860.00 PER CASE



(RE)INTRODUCING DOMAINE JEAN-CLAUDE MARSANNE

by *Chris Santini*, KLWM BEAUNE

KERMIT spent a lot of time in the 1970s combing through the northern Rhône, a region given scant attention then in France and abroad, where the stars of today were little known beyond their village. One of the places that drew Kermit's particular attention was Mauves, the historical center of Saint-Joseph, whose intense terroir of ancient terraces cut across impossibly steep slopes. During his time there, Kermit noticed impeccably tended old vines on some of the steepest terrain, farmed by hand, revealed to belong to the Marsanne family. The Marsannes were two brothers of a certain age, weathered vigneron with small holdings and an even smaller cellar, who enjoyed a loyal local following. Their cellar, located in the heart of the village, was as basic as they come: a hard dirt floor with old, dusty barrels, where a hands-off approach was really the only method one could follow. Indigenous yeast, sulfur-free fermentations, and long aging on lees did most of the work. Kermit found his way to the brothers, and out of the barrels he discovered dark, truffled, aromatic Syrah and a Saint-Joseph *blanc* that finely balanced richness, minerality, and bitter notes. The *blanc*, of course, was made from the Marsanne grape, highlighting the family's deep connection to the land. Kermit managed to get his hands on a few bottles to import, but given the brothers' small production and their focus on local clientele, Kermit and the domaine soon moved on along separate paths.

Three decades later, while dining in Paris, Kermit noticed a Marsanne bottle and fondly remembered what he had tasted in their cellar all those years before. The bottle was ordered, uncorked, and an old collaboration renewed. The terroir, the balance, the expression were all perfectly preserved and showing their best. Soon we were in touch with Jean-Claude Marsanne, who long ago had taken over from his father and uncle and added several choice parcels to the domaine's holdings. The farming, the terroir, and the vinifications today remain unchanged—besides the old vines being that much older. Jean-Claude, now joined at the domaine by his two daughters, holds tightly to his family's traditions, including hand-farming the steeper parcels, slow fermentations, and long aging on fine lees to release each wine at its most expressive. Our reunion with the Marsanne family is one of great pride on both sides.



*Jean-Claude Marsanne and
his daughter Clémence*

2018 SAINT-JOSEPH BLANC

Apricots, almonds, and, above all, finesse. If I had to pick a single wine to show how great a Marsanne (in all senses of the word) can be, this would be it. The long, inviting, bitter notes on the finish are truly remarkable. Quantities are sadly small.

\$59.00 PER BOTTLE

\$637.20 PER CASE



2017 SAINT-JOSEPH ROUGE

This is wonderful, real-deal, old-school Saint-Joseph here. It offers a fresh, graphite mouthfeel and a light, peppery nose, with hints of olive and tapenade as it goes down.

\$55.00 PER BOTTLE

\$594.00 PER CASE

2018 CROZES-HERMITAGE

This small parcel, which once belonged to Jean-Claude's grandmother, has a fruit-forward, approachable style, yet with intense spice and licorice in there as well, perhaps from the deep-rooted old Syrah vines, planted in 1967.

\$42.00 PER BOTTLE

\$453.60 PER CASE



2019 ARDÈCHE SYRAH "SYRAH MAUVE"

Young vines in Mauves, short maceration, stainless-steel aged . . . but definitely no simple Syrah! The parcel is quite well exposed, giving warm, black fruit with a full, juicy body.

\$35.00 PER BOTTLE

\$378.00 PER CASE

THE FANTINO FAMILY

by Tom Wolf

ALESSANDRO FANTINO spent two decades working at one of Barolo's best-known *aziende* before teaming up with his brother Gian Natale to produce a lineup of wines that bear the family name. But while this Fantino operation is small and modest in terms of manpower and marketing reach, the brothers' wines are grand. They represent the pinnacle of Barolo from the slice of the region called Bussia (boo-SEE-uh), just north of Monforte d'Alba. Their Nebbiolo vines are planted exclusively in this *cru*, in a section called "Dardi," a hillside with perfect southern and southeastern exposure in the geographic center of Bussia. These wines offer textbook, traditional Piemontese pleasure.

2018 BARBERA D'ALBA SUPERIORE

The Barbera grape is a bit of a chameleon, able to produce bottlings that are light and lunch-friendly as well as more complex and robust. The Fantinos have made Barbera both ways in the past—the result really comes down to which way the vintage points. Vintage 2018 guided them to craft a more structured and refined Barbera that will reward you many times over the next five years. Check out our September newsletter online to find a recipe for squab and brussels sprouts created by chef Chris Lee as a perfect pairing for the Fantinos' Barbera.

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE \$259.20 PER CASE

2013 BAROLO "BUSSIA CASCINA DARDI"

This Barolo easily clears the bar of the 2013 vintage's high expectations. What a complete and mesmerizing wine! Its soaring aromas of cherries, roses, iron, and spices will have you wanting to revisit the glass over and over.

\$57.00 PER BOTTLE \$615.60 PER CASE



2012 BAROLO RISERVA "BUSSIA CASCINA DARDI"

The Riserva sees longer fermentation and aging than the Barolo above, spending five years in Slavonian oak barrel as opposed to four. Of the three wines here, this is the most enthralling, profound, and age-worthy, and it's versatile enough to pair with all kinds of heartier dishes, from grilled venison to braised oxtails. You'll be happy you bought a case to enjoy over the next decade or two.

\$67.00 PER BOTTLE \$723.60 PER CASE

CHABLIS

by Anthony Lynch

2019 CHABLIS “VIEILLES VIGNES” ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

From their sixty-year-old vines, brothers Arnaud and David Lavantureux have captured the boiled-down essence of Kimmeridgian limestone in this stunning bottling. Everything about this cuvée, from the delicately briny scent of slick oyster shells to the concentrated, pristinely focused sensation on the palate, is a demonstration of why this domaine has become one of Chablis’ very best. That they can channel razor-sharp freshness with such silky-fine touch is a remarkable—and positively mouthwatering—feat.

\$37.00 PER BOTTLE

\$399.60 PER CASE

2017 CHABLIS 1^{ER} CRU “VAILLONS” HENRI COSTAL

Made from old Chardonnay grown organically on rocky vineyards loaded with marine fossils, Costal’s Vaillons displays an intensity not commonly associated with this typically delicate, floral *premier cru*. Uncorking a bottle today offers a glimpse at the magic of aged Chablis: it is rich—unctuous, even—yet remains incredibly dynamic, with plenty of lip-smacking acidity. Currently at its peak, it offers a smoky, lightly honeyed bouquet along with a trademark suggestion of salted butter that only perfectly mature Chablis can provide.

\$42.00 PER BOTTLE

\$453.60 PER CASE

2018 CHABLIS GRAND CRU “BOUGROS” ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

One of Chablis’ sunniest *grands crus*, Bougros is known for full-bodied, opulent wines that pamper the palate with their lavish fruit. The Lavantureux brothers’ 2018 rendition does exactly that: its generous fragrance prefaces a grandiose white whose imposing presence is nothing short of regal. The nervy, stony finish assures an elegant balance suggesting that as good as this is today, it will be all the more spectacular in seven to ten years’ time.

\$101.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,090.80 PER CASE



GUIDE TO CABERNET FRANC

by Tom Wolf

IN *ADVENTURES ON THE WINE ROUTE*, published more than thirty years ago, Kermit wrote about how one of Chinon's great vigneron, Charles Joguet, had recently purchased a vineyard called Le Chêne Vert (the Green Oak), a plot of land where monks planted Cabernet Franc vines in the eleventh century. The abandoned parcel was gnarly, uncommonly steep, and overgrown, and Joguet's only competition in the auction to bid on the land was a shepherd who wanted it as grazing pasture. Still, when Joguet won it for a relative pittance, he told Kermit that it would one day produce his finest wine.

Le Chêne Vert (as well as many of Joguet's other vineyards) lives up to Joguet's vision, producing today an elegant, age-worthy, and, yes, epic red wine whose centuries-long history could easily be a tale from Burgundy. And yet, while Burgundy has soared to the top of common wine enjoyment and knowledge, the Loire Valley's remarkable reds from Chinon, Bourgueil, and Saumur Champigny—just to name the region's Big Three appellations—remain largely uncharted territory. In Chinon alone, Joguet's vineyards differ highly not only from each other but also from those of Domaine Baudry, whose cuvées and their respective terroirs offer a scintillating study of contrasts. Such diversity extends throughout the stretch of the Loire Valley between Orléans and Nantes, where Cabernet Franc is king.

In this collection, you will find that every bottling—all made from a single grape variety—is different from the next, from fresh and playful to structured and complex. With this 20% discount, there is no better time to acquaint yourself with the possibilities of Loire Valley Cabernet Franc.

Now through Sunday, October 3, use promo code

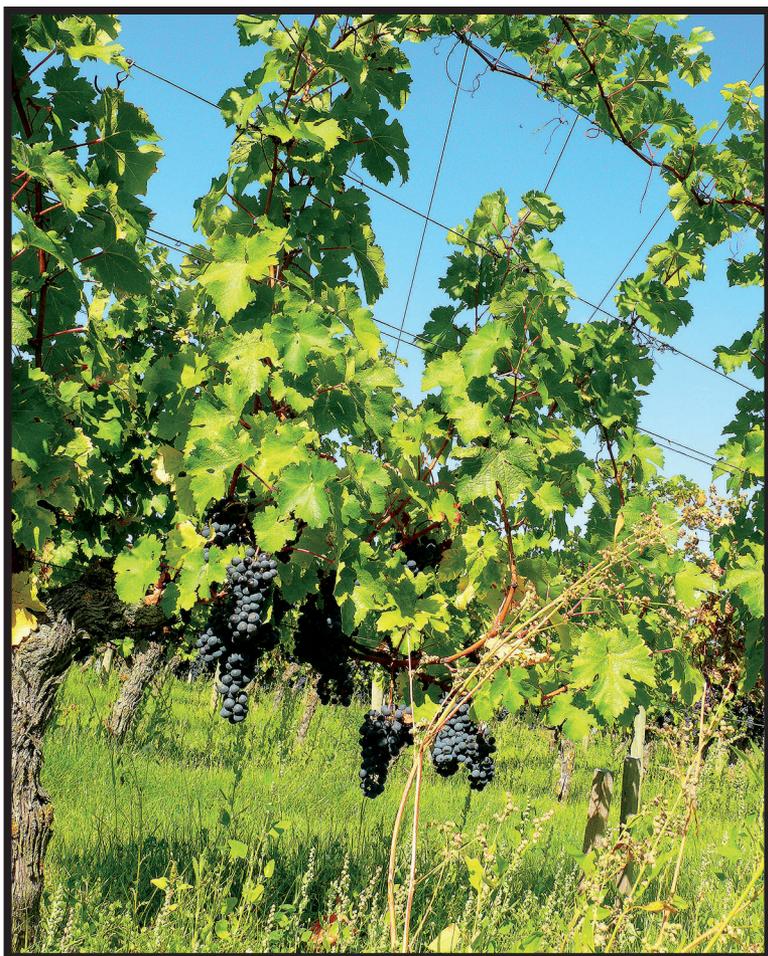
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DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE	14.40
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2019 CHINON “LE DOMAINE” • BERNARD BAUDRY	23.20
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2017 CHINON “LA CROIX BOISSÉE” • BERNARD BAUDRY	45.60
2020 BOURGUEIL “AVIS DE VIN FORT”	
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THIERRY GERMAIN	38.40
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Mixing research with supper, I asked the proprietor to bring up his best Loire red. He poured a Bourgueil. The price was painless, the color a promising bluish purple, the aroma loaded with berrylike fruit, the flavors original and delicious, so delicious that I asked him to prepare a few tenths to take along in the trunk of my car to share with friends and winemakers along the route. Thus began my love affair with the Cabernet Franc of Chinon and Bourgueil.

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