



KERMIT LYNCH  
WINE MERCHANT

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- **CELLAR TOUR**
- **2009 LES PALLIÈRES**
- **A TASTE OF SICILY**

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

FEBRUARY 2011

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— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

## 2009 MONFERRATO ROSSO BLENDED BY KERMIT LYNCH

by Dixon Brooke

**T**WO YEARS AGO, in June of 2009, Kermit and I were in the midst of the most ambitious tasting trip we had ever undertaken together. We started in Chablis, then worked our way down through Mâcon and Morgon, then drove over to the Savoie to see Michel Quenard. From the Alps we headed over into Italy, embarking upon a full tour of the northern half of the boot (making it as far south as Scansano, then driving north to Bandol by way of Liguria). In a small hole-in-the-wall trattoria somewhere near Aosta, we ordered a pitcher of Arneis. A spark of recognition raised our four eyebrows, as we instantly came to the same conclusion. This was a simple and honest wine, unmistakably and proudly Arneis, complete with a touch of playful sparkle. It was exactly what you'd hope to get at such a trattoria to accompany the local charcuterie. And,



most importantly, we agreed on the spot to pay a visit to the winery for a closer look.

A year and a half, several sample shipments, and two *azienda* visits later, we are finally ready to introduce our first custom Italian blend—a red. We wish it had not taken so long, but we were not willing to import something that didn't adhere to our vision. We feel that this bottling—a blend of Barbera, Freisa, and Croatina—is a throwback to the Piemontese wines of the past and a

nod to the classic food wines of northern Italy. It is a wine with the body, acidity, and character to complement a wide range of foods at your table and we hope it will become one of your everyday red wines, just as you've come to enjoy our Côtes du Rhône in the same fashion. Notice also the finesse, the perfume, the balance . . . rare in our experience in wines at this price.

**\$12.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$129.60** PER CASE

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# ITALIAN WHITES

by Dixon Brooke

## 2009 RIBOLLA GIALLA • LA VIARTE

La Viarte's vineyards are planted on a rugged, deforested slope right on the border between Italy and Slovenia, a unique corner of the world. Giulio Ceschin represents the generation currently in charge, and his father planted these slopes with an eclectic mix of Friuli's native grapes. Ribolla has thick skins and makes a relatively tannic white wine, with a texture you can chew on. Giulio's 2009 is deliciously fresh, with a wide array of salty, stony flavors adding complexity and definition.

**\$16.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$183.06** PER CASE

## 2009 VERMENTINO "ISASCO" • PUNTA CRENA

We told you we have been on a Vermentino kick, and we are not considering backing off anytime soon. Punta Crena's Ligurian version is one of our favorites. You have to take a very steep, winding road up the hillside behind the village of Varigotti, right on the Mediterranean, in order to access this vineyard. You will pass the estate's thousand-year-old olive groves on your way up. Chances are you will also find a number of the extended Ruffino family picking cherries from the trees surrounding these vines. This is Vermentino at its best: fresh, playful, and a delight to drink.

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

## 2009 LUMASSINA • PUNTA CRENA

They are truly self-sufficient at Punta Crena, raising all their own food and making all their wine and olive oil. To keep things interesting, they insist on having a wide variety of things to eat and drink. Their philosophy melds perfectly with ours, and we've yet to taste any of their *rosato*, white, red, sparkling, or sweet wines that we didn't like. Kermit and I fell in love with this Lumassina (freshly fermented in tank) from first taste at the winery during our visit. From an indigenous Ligurian varietal, it balances freshness and creaminess just perfectly, with a unique and delicious set of flavors. This is a lovely way to get the evening warmed up, and with a *frittura* of fresh seafood, there's nothing better.

**\$16.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$183.06** PER CASE



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— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

## 2009 LES PALLIÈRES

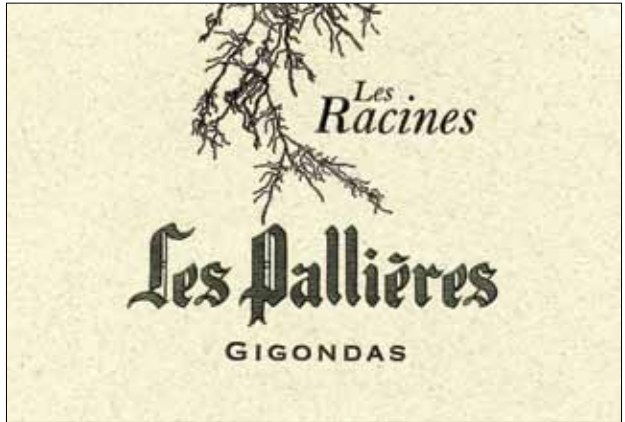
SINCE BUYING PALLIÈRES with the Bruniers in 1998, I have often bragged in these pages that in the vineyard there are nothing but old vines. In 2009, that came back to bite us. Normal yields at Pallières are always low, but vintage 2009 gave us half a normal crop. Our yields were not much greater than at Château d'Yquem! We aren't doubling the price, but we have had to increase somewhat.

Now, imagine the juice the miniscule yields yielded, so to speak. The spontaneous comment in my notebook when I tasted Les Racines reads, "It's a nuke!" Folks, I don't believe I wrote that, but in 2009 we made wine that incites the emotions.

Les Racines is an enormous aromatic and mouthfilling extravaganza of cornucopian fruit. Can a normal palate contain it? There is an exuberance to it.

Terrasse du Diable boasts a tannic character that makes me want to say, "Beat that!" There is a perfection to the tannin that we may never again be able to equal, because it required some help from Mother Nature.

Both cuvées show infinitely dark, complex depths and deliciousness.

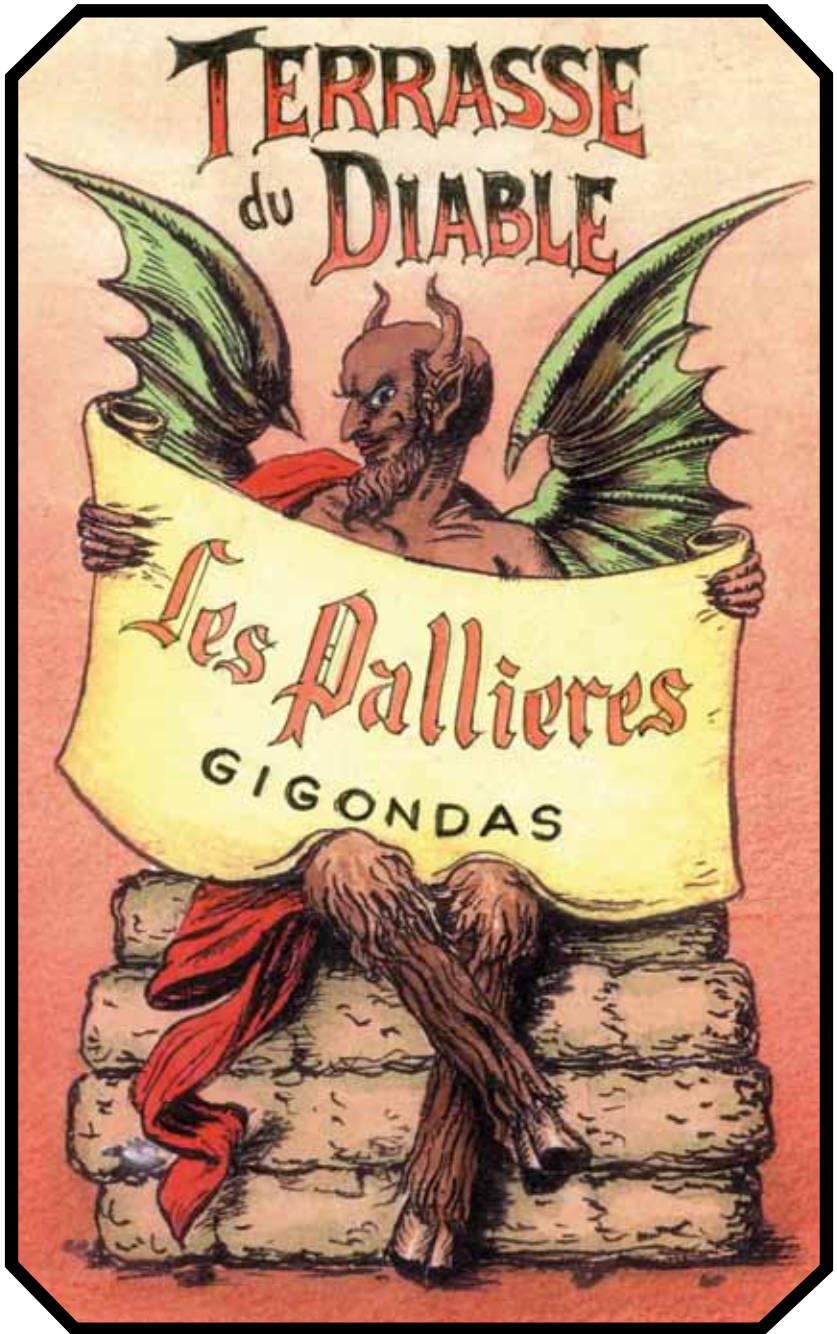


	PER BOTTLE
2009 GIGONDAS LES RACINES . . . . .	\$39.00
2009 GIGONDAS TERRASSE DU DIABLE . . . . .	39.00

*Inquire about availability in tenths, magnums, jeroboams,  
methuselahs, and salmanazars.*

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

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*Artwork by Ruth Marten*

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# INTRODUCING J.F. GANEVAT

## CÔTES DU JURA

by Dixon Brooke

**H**ERE'S ANOTHER STORY from *la route du vin* with a happy ending. It all started off with a ski trip several years ago to the mountains of the Jura with a friend from Burgundy. On our way back home, we stopped in a wine shop in the neat village of Poligny. We were on a mission to pick out a few local wines for our dinner that evening, and the resident sales lady was quite fond of the wines of Jean-François Ganevat. So fond, in fact, that we wound up leaving with a bottle of his white *and* a bottle of his red wine. Back in Meursault at table, I knew immediately that this was the Jura wine I'd been looking for. The white is a Chardonnay from ancient vines that just exudes the Jura. It is the Jura in liquefied form: the fresh air, the mountain streams and wildflowers, the striking limestone outcroppings. All this, yet it retains its undeniable identity as a member of the noble Chardonnay family. And it has been unmistakably imprinted by the hand of a master. Far from the oxidized style that characterizes many wines from the Jura, this is downright Burgundian. The red is from the native Poulsard, a beautifully delicate, perfumed rendition, with the finesse of a great Pinot or a *cru* Beaujolais while preserving its own unique character.

Several years of letters, faxes, and phone calls later, I finally caught up with the elusive J.F. Ganevat in the early spring of last year. During a fierce downpour, I

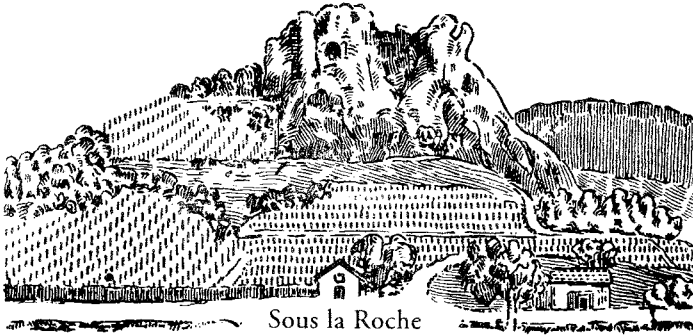


© Dixon Brooke

pulled into his native village of La Combe, a commune of nearby Rotalier that takes its name from the amphitheater-shaped fin of limestone dominating the hillsides above the town. I grabbed my notebook and tucked into a wooden shed marked by a sign showing the age of several generations of Ganevats. Once inside, my senses were overwhelmed with a blaze

of activity—a whole family was abuzz simultaneously potting and sealing homemade head cheese in glass jars and bottling wine on a small machine. Eureka!

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Later, armed with a pipette, Ganevat gave me a lengthy tour of all the family cellars, and we tasted a large portion of his forty-plus micro-cuvées of parcel-specific indigenous varietals from a kaleidoscopic variation of soil and stone. I left many hours later with firm confirmation of what I already knew: this is a master who will truly put the Jura region on the map. Today we are thrilled to be able to offer you miniscule quantities of a few of these exciting wines. We think it is the beginning of a long and exciting collaboration.

**2008 CHARDONNAY**  
**“LES GRANDS TEPPES VIEILLES VIGNES”**

**\$46.00 PER BOTTLE**

**2008 SAVAGNIN**  
**“LES CHALASSES MARNES BLEUES”**

**\$52.00 PER BOTTLE**

**2009 PINOT NOIR**  
**“CUVÉE JULIEN”**

**\$44.00 PER BOTTLE**

*Three-bottle limit per wine.*



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# ALSACE

by Dixon Brooke

## 2009 RIESLING “E” • DOMAINE OSTERTAG

Ostertag’s Riesling “E” is the rock of his production, solid and never missing a beat from year to year. Fresh off the boat, this vintage is a show-off, and one of the things that most impresses me is the freshness and nerve considering the relatively warm growing year. This bottling exudes class and refinement from the striking nose to the mineral-infused palate.

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

## 2007 RIESLING “WINECK-SCHLOSSBERG” GRAND CRU • MEYER-FONNÉ

And here is Félix Meyer’s flagship *grand cru*—his family happens to own a decent-sized portion of this great site. Very well-exposed and typically harvested early, Wineck is extremely stony (mostly granite). The wine shows power and restraint, both abundantly evident in this great Alsatian vintage. Open and relatively accessible now, this Riesling will continue to dazzle for well over a decade. The layer upon layer of flavor complexity and the underlying stature of this bold *grand cru* are truly grandiose. Allow yourself the pleasure of one of France’s finest *crus*—it delivers.

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

## 2008 AUXERROIS “TROIS CHÂTEAUX” KUENTZ-BAS

The relatively new Trois Châteaux bottlings from the historic Kuentz-Bas estate were created in order to highlight a new direction the domaine has taken with their highest-quality estate fruit. New winemaker Samuel Tottoli has converted these vineyards over to biodynamic agriculture and has a focused range of varietal wines that show unbelievable purity and class. Auxerrois, a white grape of the Pinot family, is rarely seen solo, and this freshly arrived 2008 excites the taste buds. Highlights include elegant floral aromas, a dry, crisp palate, and a very serious finish of chalky, stony complexity.

**\$24.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$269.46** PER CASE





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# LOIRE

by Dixon Brooke

## 2009 ANJOU ROUGE “CLOS DE LA CERISAIE” CHÂTEAU D’ÉPIRÉ

We have always traveled to Épiré to buy our beguiling Savennières, our *cuvée spéciale*, from the Bizard family. A few years ago I discovered that they produced a very small quantity of Cabernet Franc from the same schist soils that characterize their noble Pineau de la Loire. It hails from the “Clos of the Cherry Tree.” In 2009 the results were too exciting to ignore. The Franc from these soils is completely unlike the wines we buy in Chinon and Bourgueil. There is a distinct vein of graphite-like minerality cutting through the ripe fruit, a *goût de terroir* immediately apparent from the first whiff. Attention: this is not a casual pre-meal sipper, but a serious food wine.

**\$16.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$183.06** PER CASE

## 2009 VOUVRAY “LA DILETTANTE” CATHERINE ET PIERRE BRETON

The Bretons of Restigné have developed a well-known and well-deserved reputation for their red wines, principally from the appellation of Bourgueil but also from Chinon. Catherine Breton has devoted significant energy of late to making white wine from the great appellation of Vouvray, her birthplace. She makes three of them, of which two are sparkling. Her dry Vouvray is a beautiful testament to the noblesse of this superb *terroir*, bright and fresh with a striking limestone influence. It is a virtual looking glass into the subsoils of Vouvray that remains approachable and fun to drink. Keep up the good work, dear Catherine—we’re with you!

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

## 2008 BOURGUEIL “VIEILLES VIGNES” DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE

We can’t speak enough about the value in these beautiful wines from Thierry Boucard. The consistency, the pleasure, the complexity, the fun . . . he is pretty much unrivaled when it comes to red wine at this price point. It won’t take you long to discover that, wow, *this* is Cabernet Franc and, wow, *this* is Bourgueil. This recent arrival is from a blend of Thierry’s oldest vines in several *lieux-dits* around his winery in Benais. The price is only one of its attractions.

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

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## SICILY

**E**ARLY LAST JUNE, Robert Camuto, the author of *Palmento: A Sicilian Wine Odyssey*, agreed to show me around the island. Maybe he thought he owed me for the extravagant blurb I wrote for his lovely book, or maybe he likes me. Don't ask me. But I packed for volcano weather and hit the road with him. He allowed me to bring along my wife and Aubert de Villaine, the Burgundian winemaker.

Robert selected the wineries to visit and the restaurants, including a dinner at the Nero d'Avola, named after the Sicilian red grape variety. It is in the ancient, must-see town of Taormina, on a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean.

Dear Robert, that was one of the two or three most satisfying, dazzling displays of talent I have ever seen from a chef, and I have an expert witness, Alice Waters. She was vacationing on the island and joined us for dinner. Platter after platter of bounty from the sea, rendered so beautifully, I was dumbfounded—what a night! Maybe chef Turi Siligato knew Alice was coming and decided to go all out? Who cares. He had us loony with gastronomic rapture.

Plus, I brought a wine home for you. A Nero d'Avola, by coincidence. Its history reminds me of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. In the old days Nero d'Avolas were shipped to northern Italy to doctor their reds. Only now are they gaining raves for their color, body, tannin . . . but there's a catch. Like certain Châteauneufs, their power is sometimes overdone. Always true to my school, the one I selected to offer you shows some restraint, some semblance of discretion. What I mean is, it's not a big, vulgar, alcoholic monster.

My notes: aromas quite noble—ripe cherry, plum, and berry. The palate has a lovely tannin, a very fine tannin, in fact. It will obviously age beautifully but drinks well now, too.

In fact, Robert told me I had selected the “finest” of Sicily's Nero d'Avolas, and said I could quote him. It is a big wine, but balanced and elegant all the same.

We have the good fortune to begin with the estate's gorgeous 2007.

### 2007 NERO D'AVOLA “SCIAVÈ” CANTINA RIOFAVARA

**\$29.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$313.20** PER CASE





© Gail Skoff

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# RHÔNE

by Lori Varsames

**M**Y FIRST DISCOVERY of the Rhône unfolded from the seat of a bicycle—a magical way to catch the vibe of a place. Slowly rolling along vineyard roads under the radiant sun was a full sensory experience in this region where everything grows with abundant, energetic intensity. The summer landscape is a work of art painted with some of the most magnificent colors I’ve ever seen; entire meadows swathed in fragrant lavender, brilliant yellow sunflowers, vibrant red poppies, and verdant vineyards. At any given moment, when a powerful gust of the mistral wasn’t threatening to blow me over, it carried scents of wild rosemary, sage, and thyme (the aromatic bushes that the French call *garrigue*). And all one need do to take it all in is pedal.

Tasting the wines from the Rhône can be a gratifying way to experience the diversity of the native essences. If you’ve never traveled there before, I hope that popping a cork on one of these selections might inspire you to go. Bicycle not required.

## 2009 SAINT JOSEPH BLANC DOMAINE FAURY

At KLWM, it is tough to avoid getting excited about wines made the old-fashioned way, and that is what is so great about the cuvées from Philippe and Lionel Faury. This father-and-son team do nothing in haste, and it is evident in every wine they lovingly bottle. Their 2009 Saint Joseph *Blanc* is a triumph! Blended with mostly Marsanne and a touch of Roussanne, its complex, smoky nose gives way to hints of blooming white flowers. The texture is out of this world; luscious, succulent, and reminiscent of ripe peaches. I feel guilty drinking it!

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

## 2008 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE “CYPRESS CUVÉE” BLENDED BY KERMIT LYNCH

Kermit teams up with Gigondas dynamo Louis Barruol to blend this fabulous, easy-to-love, and completely irresistible cuvée. It reminds me of the wines of Hermitage, a much more prestigious appellation from the northern stretches of the river, because of its unique aromas of pine resin and *garrigue*. The difference, though, is that the Cypress Cuvée audaciously proclaims its birthright without the highfalutin pedigree or the high price tag. Drinking this wine is a full-palate experience that promises big bang for your buck.

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

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2009 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE “SIERRA DU SUD”  
DOMAINE GRAMENON

Michèle Aubéry-Laurent seems to excel at intoxicating aromatics, and her Sierra du Sud is certainly no exception. This is Côtes-du-Rhône as you’ve rarely had it before. Bottled in the village of Vinsobres, with 100 percent, entirely destemmed Syrah grapes—you might as well be dipping your nose into a bouquet of roses and violets instead of a glass. Smooth, southern lushness is balanced by firm, textured tannins. Here’s a little ray of that generous sunshine from 2009 for your dark winter days of 2011.

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

2008 LIRAC • DOMAINE DU JONCIER

The feisty Marine Roussel is one of our favorite *vignerottes*. She has a way of infusing her own vivaciousness into her wines. Farming biodynamically helps her achieve wonderful balance in an appellation that can sometimes yield overly tannic grapes. This is the dark horse of the lineup, with a textured blend of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, and Cinsault. Quintessential aromas of *réglisse* and *olives niçoises* made my imagination run wild to sunny Provence. Notes of perfectly ripe blackberries and hints of cocoa powder take you through a long, insistent finish. I plan to have it with olive tapenade and then a richly flavored beef stew. It will be right at home.

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

2009 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE ROUGE  
AUGUSTE CLAPE

*Shhh...* I’m divulging a secret entrusted to me by colleague Sam Imel. It’s one of his favorite wines in the store—a bold statement given that all of them are so dang good. Auguste Clape is the Master of masters in the northern Rhône and the unofficial King of Cornas. Much to our delight, when he’s not making Cornas, he’s declassifying some of his fruit to vinify more affordable jewels like this. Earthy, sun-kissed aromas, violets, leather, and tobacco represent *everything* there is to love about the northern Rhône, all in one bottle. When checking it out, I’d propose lamb alongside it.

**\$37.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$399.60** PER CASE



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# LANGUEDOC

by Lori Varsames

**O**FTEN REGARDED as one of the final frontiers for winegrowing in France, the Languedoc shares many similarities with the southern Rhône, yet it still remains wild, largely untamed, and less exposed to the throngs of summer tourists. This region, once known only for its bulk wines, has seen dramatic improvement in the last few decades, all while maintaining terrific value year after year. Ideal growing conditions have also made the Languedoc *the* hotbed for organic farming in France, as in the case of all three of these envelope-pushing *terroir*-ists.

## 2009 VIN DE PAYS D'OC • CHÂTEAU FONTANÈS

Cyriaque Rozier grows the noble Cabernet Sauvignon varietal in the vineyards of Pic Saint-Loup, yet he must take the Vin de Pays designation instead of an A.O.C. because the grape is not authorized for *crus*. Fortunately, he sells it to us at a great price. Make no mistake; this Cab is no Bordeaux wanna-be—it is chock-full of Languedoc's raw, rocky soil, where deep fruit provides an elegant backdrop for dusty spices, *garrigue*, and a brambly finish. Burgers, anyone?

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

## 2009 “CAMPAGNÈS” • MAXIME MAGNON

Simply stunning. *Garagiste* Maxime Magnon's single-vineyard Corbières is sourced from vines over one hundred years old! Floral aromatics prime the palate for great expectations, and the Campagnès certainly delivers. Characteristic Carignan spice and grip are artfully complemented by unusually fresh notes of fleshy, dark cherry fruit. Try chilling it for a few minutes to see what I mean.

**\$35.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$378.00** PER CASE

## 2008 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC

### “MONTPEYROUX” • DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC

Sylvain Fadat proudly conducts players Mourvèdre, Syrah, Grenache, and Carignan as they interpret the score set by Montpeyroux, an exceptional vineyard of old vines growing in four geological eras of subsoil. The earliest era dates back 245 million years—talk about *terroir*! Despite farming such incredibly rocky terrain, he still manages to coax beautiful suppleness out of his grapes with tannins that just melt into the finish. Another masterpiece from Maestro Fadat.

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

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## CELLAR TOUR

THE RETAIL STAFF gathered around the island in my kitchen to visit some older bottles of what they sell now in younger vintages. We began with several *premier cru* 2001 white Burgundies. The 2000s and 2001s are tasting good these days, while the 1999s and 2002s are still not mature enough to suit me.

We began with Raveneau's "Butteaux," then Roulot's Meursault "Luchets" (oops, which is not *premier cru* but acted like one). Then de Cherisey's Meursault-Blagny "Les Genelottes," Jobard's Meursault "Genevrières," Amiot's Chassagne "Les Vergers," and Michel Colin's Puligny "Les Truffières."

Those were followed by Coche-Dury's Corton Charlemagne, also 2001, the only *grand cru* of the tasting, and worthy of the honor. We didn't rate them or give them scores, but I did ask everyone to name their favorite. The Charlemagne was the unanimous choice.

Going from Raveneau to Roulot was fascinating, because each was so representative of its *terroir*. After the Coche, I fell for the de Cherisey because it perfectly combines voluptuousness with a stony, vibrant core.

From there we switched to the Loire—three dry Savennières, then three Vouvray "Moelleux." The 2003, 2002, and 1997 Château d'Épirès were so different—the 1997 showing an unusual, intriguing spiciness—but all were showing their stuff.

Upon opening the sweet Vouvrais, the staff experienced a moment of revelation about vintage chart mentality. A 1986 "Clos du Petit Mont" from Allias provided aromatic fireworks, the palate focused, steely, racy. The 1990 "Cuvée CC" from Champalou was delicious nectar. No one could pick a favorite. We had the ideal progression—first the zingy, austere example, then the unctuousness. Vintage charts would have had me avoid cellaring the 1986.

I had cellared a dozen 1971 Vouvray "Moelleux" from Loyau. There were two left—both corked!

We moved on. We were ready for some reds:

2005 and 2004 Saint Joseph V.V., Faury  
1995 Côte Rôtie, Jasmin  
1992 Cornas, Clape  
1991 Côte Rôtie, Gentaz  
1990 Cornas, Clape  
1988 Saint Joseph, Trollat  
1988 Hermitage, Chave  
1988 Cornas, Verset

There was no consensus favorite and no disappointments, but the mind bender was the showing of the three Saint Josephs. The two from Faury were gems—deep wells of Syrah deliciousness. What a winemaker! When I consider the

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prices, I have to say that the wine world underestimates Saint Joseph. Which means . . . bargain alert! That 1988 Trolat, by the way, did not suffer next to the Chave and Verset!

Our tasting—and spitting—was over. *À table!*, as the French say.

Mark Congero is part of our retail sales team. He and his wife, Melissa, worked for years at Chez Panisse. They supplied the slow-cooked (fifteen hours!) wild boar and accompanied it with a potato gratin.

Here's the part I love. What shall I pull out of my cellar? I poked around in the bins looking for something that might follow the array of beauties we'd been tasting. I decided to serve two magnums, the 1988 Bandols, La Migoua and La Louffe. Domaine Tempier bottled La Louffe (a part of Migoua) only in 1987 and 1988.

We finished with a magnum of 1980 Vieux Télégraphe, a vintage I have enjoyed over the years just as much as their legendary 1978. It delivered a masterly, stone-filled conclusion to a great evening.

What is the point of this recap? To improve your life by making you envious enough to start your own cellar. Drinking wines at various stages of their evolution—that is the most fun my career affords me. Make the experience your own. Liquid assets will provide pleasure for the rest of your days. Some wines will become old friends that you can visit again and again. And don't believe you can't afford it. We have numerous inexpensive wines that will evolve into treasures. Out of professional interest, I cellar a lot of our imports. You won't need such a variety. We're here to help you get started intelligently.



© Clark Z. Terry

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#### KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT—TERMS AND CONDITIONS

*All wines purchased from Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant are deemed sold in California and title passes to the buyer in California. We make no representation relative to the customer's right to import wine into his/her state. In placing an order, the customer represents to Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant that he/she is at least 21 years of age and the person to whom delivery will be made is at least 21 years old.*

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