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SEPTEMBER 2011

PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER

TUSCANY'S GRAND BRUNELLO

by Dixon Brooke

I LOGGED SOME SERIOUS HOURS exploring the hills of Montalcino this year, getting to know the wines and the region a bit more intimately. I came away convinced that the greatest wines of Italy today are being made here. There are a lot of producers; the region is relatively young and has grown quickly. You really have to pick and choose, as the temptation to make modern-styled wines here has been great, as elsewhere in Italy and beyond. Thankfully, a number of staunch traditionalists understand that the greatness of Sangiovese is best realized through a long aging in large, Slavonian oak *botti*, and they certainly would never dream of blending other international varietals with their beloved native grape. The growers below are making the greatest pure Sangiovese in the world, wines that compete with the best of the best anywhere. We've always advised you to follow producers, not vintage charts. The 2005s of Montalcino are brilliant at all of the estates below. These are the Brunellos that you want to buy for your cellar, before you consider any others. We've made the selection easy.

SALVIONI

Giulio Salvioni and his children, Alessia and Davide, tend their family vineyards, on the most prized slopes of the region, just southeast of the hilltop town of Montalcino in the hamlet of La Cerbaiola. Their production is very small and in high demand, with only a few *botti* of their precious nectar bottled each year. These are statuesque Brunellos, powerful, dense, and layered, evolving endlessly in the glass and in your cellar. The 2005 is richer and darker, less tightly knit, while the 2006 is a coiled spring that will make the hair on the back of your neck stand up. The 2006 will probably age a bit longer, but the 2005 has a standout personality that leaves a lasting impression. After tasting these for the first time with Kermit, he insisted upon having a case of each vintage for his personal cellar, the ultimate compliment around here.

	PER BOTTLE
2009 Rosso di Montalcino	$49.00
2006 Brunello di Montalcino	142.00
2005 Brunello di Montalcino	135.00

POGGIO DI SOTTO

Piero Palmucci makes an incredibly Burgundian Brunello. I have been awe-struck by the sensuality of these wines: highly perfumed, very silky textures, deep, long, complex flavors, impeccable balance, finesse! These are truly great wines. All Poggio di Sotto wines demand time in a decanter before consumption, but all are ready to be opened and enjoyed. That is the beauty of wine aged five years plus before release, although Piero guarantees that all of his Brunello can age at least twenty years. He is also proud of the fact that his wines are all 100% organic. Don't miss a rare opportunity to buy three vintages of his Rosso in a limited-edition six-pack wooden case. This is not a young-vine selection or a selection of inferior *terroirs*. It is exactly the same wine as his Brunello, aged in cask for three years less. The estate is positioned on a hillside of ancient oceanic marl, overlooking the Orcia Valley and Mount Amiata to the south. After seeing the *terroir*, it is much easier to understand why and how the magic happens.

	PER BOTTLE
2008 Rosso di Montalcino	$65.00
2006 Brunello di Montalcino	139.00
2005 Brunello di Montalcino	129.00
2005 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva	179.00*

**Very limited*

Rosso di Montalcino six-packs
2 bottles each of the 2008, 2007, and 2006 vintages, packed in wooden boxes

$390 per six-pack

SESTI

After discovering the full range of new Sesti wines at the estate this year, I sat in my car shaking my head—I couldn't believe what I'd been tasting. Giuseppe Sesti and his daughter Elisa continue to make better and better wine every year from their picturesque estate in southern Montalcino at Castello Argiano. Not one to be pigeonholed, Giuseppi is an astronomer by trade and takes a cosmic approach to managing his vineyards. There is a certain aura around the estate and their wines as a result; I encourage you to visit them to see what I mean. Their 2005 Phenomena is a glittering jewel, with nuances to discover lurking around every corner. We drank their 2001 Phenomena at dinner during my visit earlier this year and it started out a closed fist but later blossomed and exploded as the stars came out after dinner . . .

	PER BOTTLE
2009 Rosso di Montalcino	$35.00
2006 Brunello di Montalcino	78.00★
2005 Brunello di Montalcino (In Stock)	70.50
2005 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva "Phenomena"	112.00

★*Inquire about magnums*

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

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SPOTLIGHT ON DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE

by Dixon Brooke

We keep talking to our national distribution partners around the country about the incredible response you've given to Thierry Boucard's Cabernet Francs here in the shop. Great reds; great prices. What's wrong with that? The prices are as good as a Christmas gift, given the wines' quality, consistency, and proven track record for long-term aging. Both Kermit and I continue to be puzzled as to why these cuvées are ignored by the rest of the wine world. Take advantage of the situation.

Thierry's young-vine "Alouettes" cuvée is very popular every year, and delicious, while the two cuvées below, from much older vines and better *terroirs,* command almost no price premium! I've been adding to my stash yearly, and reaping the rewards. Beauvais is from *tuffeau* or chalk soils and always has a bit more structure than the VV, needing a bit more time to round out. Both of these pure Cabernet Francs can be drunk now or aged for up to . . . well, the 1976 is still outstanding! I'm with Kermit, who believes that the great Loire reds of today are aging better than the new style that has taken over Bordeaux. An older Boucard has depths to plumb and a whole lotta soul.

2009 BOURGUEIL "VIEILLES VIGNES"

$17.95 per bottle **$193.86** per case

2009 BOURGUEIL "BEAUVAIS"

$17.95 per bottle **$193.86** per case

BORDEAUX

by Dixon Brooke

2010 GRAVES *BLANC*
CHÂTEAU GRAVILLE-LACOSTE

There could be no better way to enjoy this crisp, invigorating Graves than with a platter of fresh seafood. Raw oysters, fresh shrimp, clams, scallops, crab, langoustines . . . the more the merrier. If you want to try a Bordelais specialty, serve these ice-cold, briny creatures alongside smoky, hot-off-the-grill sausages and a crusty baguette.

This Graves is distinguished by its high percentage of Sémillon, sourced from vineyards in the greatest white wine *terroir* in all of Bordeaux.

$18.00 PER BOTTLE **$194.40** PER CASE

2010 SAUVIGNON GRIS • CHÂTEAU BELLEVUE

It's been a lot of fun to follow this project with André Chatenoud, from the genesis of his idea to plant white vines, then a three-year waiting period, then his first wine in 2009 (beginner's luck?), and now this gem. Yes, it is official: André knows what he is doing. This refreshing dry white soars from the ordinary in Bordeaux, offering a complex, mouthwatering wine scented with mint, jasmine, anise, grapefruit, and lime. How's that for original?

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

2008 MONTAGNE SAINT ÉMILION
CHÂTEAU TOUR BAYARD

WOW. The quality of wines currently produced by this humble cellar above Saint Émilion really makes you stand up and take notice—you can't help it. The winemaker claims that the talent is in the *terroir* (have we heard that before??). In a sea of wine with many of the vines planted on inferior soils, it does pay to know your grape provenance in Saint Émilion. At Tour Bayard, the source is a high-altitude limestone amphitheatre with very old vines. The completeness of this wine, from a so-called "*petit millésime*," is glorious to behold. Very, very impressive. Definitely worth a detour.

$21.00 PER BOTTLE **$226.80** PER CASE

MORE '09 RED BURGUNDIES

by Steve Waters

JEAN-MARC VINCENT

The 2009 vintage has been highly touted by the wine press and compared to the 1959s by the Burgundians themselves. The winemakers love it because it has brought a lot of interest to the region. Economically consequential for both producer and consumer would be a precise statement—the 2009 vintage has already put a big smile on Jean-Marc Vincent's face, and hopefully on yours, too. These *premiers crus* are from his oldest vines, fifty years and more, with a clay and limestone *terroir* providing impressive purity of fruit and depth for the long haul. The Santenay Les Gravières is particularly distinctive, and, just like the name says, it does express gravel and stones. By the time these reds are ready to drink, I think you will find a significant return on your investment.

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2009 Auxey-Duresses *Rouge* "Les Bretterins" *1er Cru*	$45.00	$486.00
2009 Santenay *Rouge* "Les Gravières" *1er Cru*	48.00	518.40

CHRISTOPHE BUISSON

Christophe Buisson's wines are as effusive as his outgoing personality—always fresh, bright, and eminently approachable, and with plenty of depth to dive into. Saint-Romain is a beautiful hamlet tucked away from the rest of the Côte de Beaune, and, thanks to Christophe, the village is gaining attention.

The Sous Le Château vineyard is remarkably stony—thus the sophisticated personality. Impressive fruit, concentration, and character? Yes! Christophe Buisson is the man.

© Steve Waters

Christophe Buisson

2009 Saint-Romain Rouge
"Sous Le Château"

$39.00 PER BOTTLE

$421.20 PER CASE

PATRIMONIO'S YVES LECCIA

2010 PATRIMONIO *BLANC*

If you have never tasted the Vermentino from Patrimonio's unusual decomposed oyster-shell soil, you can start here with a classic—one of the two or three best I've encountered, and I began hunting wines there in 1981. To miss it is to miss a vinous work of art. The aroma combines minerality (it's the stones) and salinity (the Med is visible right over the hill). The palate zings at its core—perfect acidity and more minerality. The ripeness of the fruit is right on the mark. This wine is actually exciting to drink—one of the vintage's best whites.

$38.00 PER BOTTLE **$410.40** PER CASE

2010 VIN DE PAYS *ROUGE*

A Grenache/Nielluccio blend from Patrimonio, delivered by Yves Leccia at the top of his game. Vintage, soil, winemaker—a combination made in heaven. Medium robe; the aroma leaps out, yet it shows depth, too. Loads of flavor on the palate, no heaviness, delicious freshness to the dark fruit—a *régal*!

If you cook Mediterranean-style, stock up, because this will deliver everything you need.

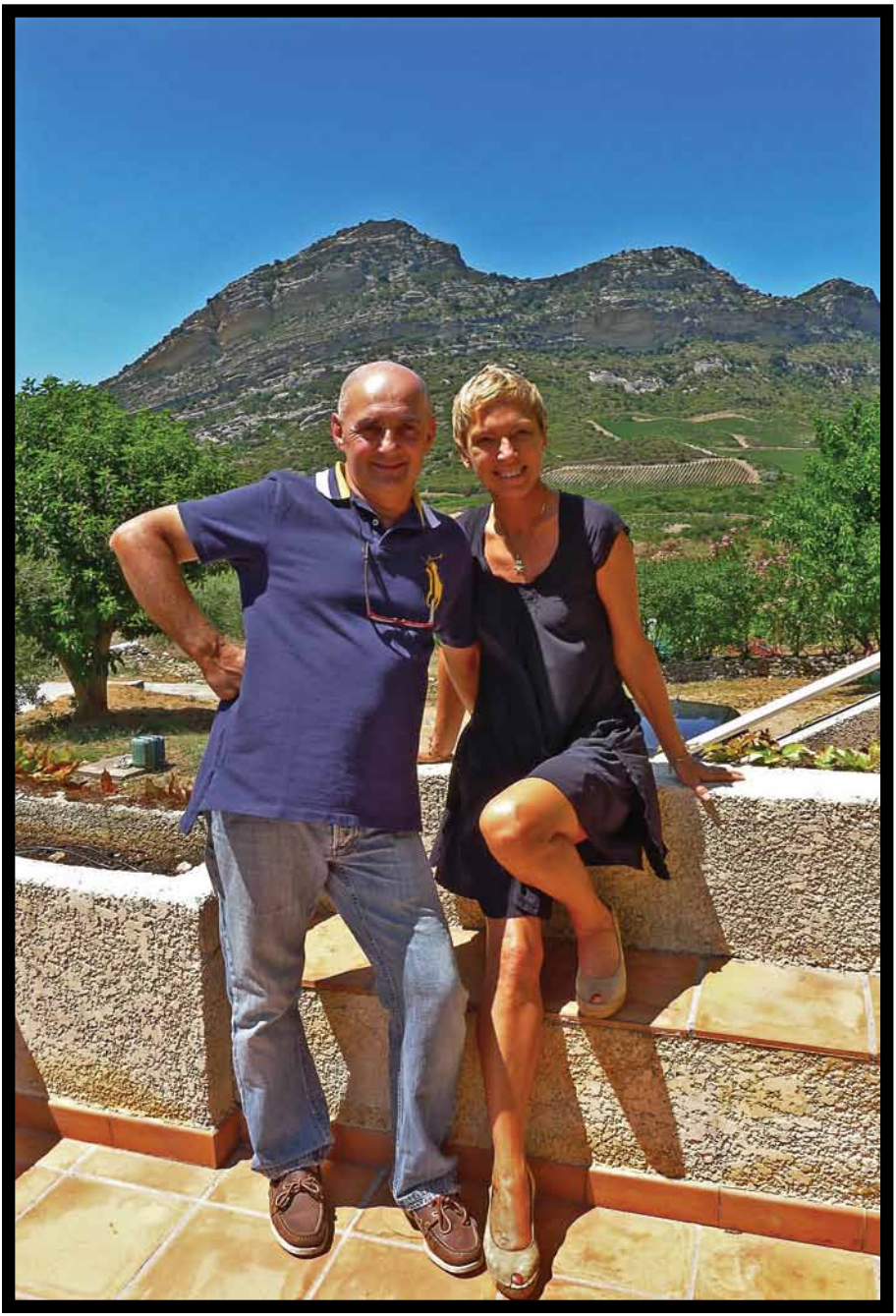
$26.00 PER BOTTLE **$280.80** PER CASE

2009 PATRIMONIO *ROUGE*

I will drink this one during any of the four seasons, but the best is going to be winter—many winters, because this one's a keeper.

Its style was influenced by lots of sunshine and small yields. The grape, 100% Nielluccio, is a descendant of Tuscany's Sangiovese—with Patrimonio's sea air, the complexity of the wild maquis, and flawless winemaking. It is deep and grandiose, penetrating on the palate, and harmonious from start to finish.

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



Yves and Sandrine Leccia *© Gail Skoff*

NOTES FROM LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

by Lori Varsames

A RECENT TRIP to Languedoc-Roussillon has left me in awe. These *terroir*-loving, pragmatic, and independent *bons-vivants* play the wine game differently than in most regions throughout France. As the appellation system continues to evolve and the methodology increasingly returns to ancestral practices, these rebels are not afraid to walk their talk. We have the finest selection in the U.S., and here are a few new arrivals.

2010 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC *BLANC* CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE

I'm not shy about singing praises for Cyriaque Rozier, because he makes wines of terrific finesse. This white shows an intriguing restraint that made me wish for a glass instead of a taste. Though the sun is strong, the winds of the Cévennes work to keep the grapes cool, leaving them with plenty of zest. The intensely rocky, limestone soils certainly play their part, as does Cyriaque's biodynamic farming. A *blanc* this clean, crisp, and lemony deserves applause.

$17.50 PER BOTTLE **$189.00** PER CASE

2010 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC "LOU MASET" DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC

Bright, red fruit, aromatic spicy *garrigue*, stony depths, and supple tannins are all ripe for the taking in this entry-level cuvée from the Master of Montpeyroux, Sylvain Fadat. He's named it for the little stone huts (*lou maset* in Occitan) that dot the vineyards of l'Hérault. In the days when vignerons would have to walk long distances to work the vineyards, the *masets* were shelters against the elements. With a flavor so generous and a price so affordable, Lou Maset is a perfect house wine. Maybe that's what Sylvain was trying to suggest when naming it?

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

2008 CORBIÈRES "RÉSERVE LA DEMOISELLE" DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE

Christiane and Yves Laboucarié are the essence of southern hospitality—generous, warm, and fun-loving. Yves sat at his desk with a charming little twinkle in his eyes, eager to ask if I had heard the story of how La Demoiselle

vineyard first earned a separate bottling. "It was Kermit!" he declared emphatically. If only there was more space to retell his colorful tale of Kermit showing up late on their doorstep, years ago, in a wet trench coat, a soggy hat, and mud-caked boots after having found this old Roman parcel in the rain! Spicy, rich, and silky, Carignan such as this knows no equals. A historic parcel of 100-year-old vines at *this* price? You can't beat it.

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

2010 CORBIÈRES "ROZETA" • MAXIME MAGNON

With a Cheshire cat grin, a team of fine animals to work his vineyards, and some of the best land in the Haut Corbières, Maxime Magnon is making a bold mark on the natural wine movement without any of the sad flaws or clichés. My notes read, "Wanna drink it all day long," and that's due to the highly unusual amount of buoyancy he is able to achieve with Carignan, Grenache, and Cinsault. I walked into his cellar sleep-deprived and road weary. I walked out feeling revived and refreshed. Some call it wine; I call it a schist and limestone miracle tonic.

$29.00 PER BOTTLE **$313.20** PER CASE

2009 PIC SAINT LOUP "TOUR DE PIERRES" ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP

In France's most organically farmed region, the Ravaille brothers are serious biodynamic farmers, but not because they have any environmental agenda as many of their cohorts do. They are really just old-fashioned pragmatists who use this method of farming to achieve lower soil pH, which instills the final wines with more freshness. A balanced level of alcohol aside, Tour de Pierres is still in touch with its savageness. Drink it now or tame it in your cellar.

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

2009 BANYULS RIMAGE DOMAINE LA TOUR VIEILLE

After learning from Christine Campadieu and Vincent Cantié how to properly pronounce "Banyuls" like a Catalan…it's BANH-*YOULS*, by the way . . . we tasted their sweet, complex, and utterly succulent *vins doux*. The 2009 Rimage was one of my favorites. Similar in style to a ruby port, this cuvée is rich in schist minerals, ripe with notes of raspberries, and beautifully infused with Mediterranean Sea breezes. Absolutely gorgeous, before *or* after dinner.

$25.00 PER 500-ML BOTTLE **$270.00** PER CASE

MY FIRST TIME IN THE LOIRE

by Anthony Lynch

2010 POUILLY-FUMÉ "VIEILLES VIGNES" RÉGIS MINET

Régis Minet's house on the banks of the Loire would serve as the ideal spot to fish for an all-local, do-it-yourself lunch. This is all the more true when a bottle of his Pouilly-Fumé awaits in the refrigerator. In 2010 Minet strikes the perfect balance between classic Sauvignon Blanc fruit and a gorgeous minerality that brings the *terroir* straight to your glass. The luscious feel over your tongue is contrasted by a lively, flinty acidity on the finish.

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

2010 SANCERRE • DANIEL CHOTARD

On a recent tasting trip to Sancerre, Monsieur Chotard dazzled my music-loving ears with his accordion playing. Before my eyes, his warmly decorated home transformed into a Parisian bistro and the Sancerre I was nursing soared out of my glass and into my pleasure zone. For dinner he served a Loire specialty: *tête de veau* (veal's head), cooked so slowly that the pieces fell apart at the touch of my fork. While this traditional dish made about as much sense to me as how Daniel could coordinate his fingers on his accordion to create such lovely melodies, his wine did not perplex me. Each baby bite of calf cheek I took (with three sauces to choose from) was followed by a generous gulp of Sancerre loaded with aromas of grapefruit, gooseberry, and blossoming flowers.

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

2010 PINOT NOIR "UNIQUE" DOMAINE DU SALVARD

My tasting notes from my visit to Domaine du Salvard consist of "Domaine du Salvard" centered at the top of the page, followed by blank white paper. It was difficult to take things too seriously when surrounded by such fun people serving such fun wines. Like their Sauvignon Blanc by the same name, this Pinot doesn't ask for too much besides a group of friends and some glasses. A sip will reveal soft and inviting Pinot flavors, and will likely be followed by another sip. This is yet another casual, very drinkable wine from the Delaille brothers that will put you at ease. That's the way they make them! Perfect for picnics or light meals.

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

OPEN YOUR EYES TO ALSACE

by Clark Z. Terry

DISCLAIMER!

THIS SAMPLER DOES NOT ONLY CONTAIN WHITE WINES.

One common belief is that an Alsatian wine is white and sweet. With this six-bottle Sampler, I plan to shatter this flawed truism by including whites and a red, and wines that are completely dry and off-dry. The honest truth is that there is a wide range of styles produced in Alsace, and you'll find almost all of them in this Sampler. Contained within your carton are entry-level, obscure, noble, dry, and off-dry wines from our three exceptional Alsatian producers.

What best accompanies Alsatian wines is a common question, but I don't like making specific recommendations. Still, the Pinot Blanc is sensational with campfire trout. Try Alsatian wines with lighter meals, something perhaps with a little spice, or even without food—as an apéritif.

I've included a rating of perceived sweetness for each wine. We use this system in the shop to guide our customers through our Alsatian section. We evaluate our Alsatians for perceived sweetness (very different than grams of sugar) on a scale of 1 (completely dry) to 5 (sweet like a dessert wine). The staff all concur that the numbers below—and the wines—give you the best guidance for entering into the wonderful world of Alsatian wines.

	PER BOTTLE	PERCEIVED SWEETNESS
2009 Pinot Blanc • Kuentz-Bas	$16.95	1
2008 Auxerrois "Trois Châteaux" Kuentz-Bas	24.95	1
2009 Riesling Vignoble de Katzenthal Meyer-Fonné	26.00	1
2006 Pinot Gris "Dorfburg" Meyer-Fonné	29.00	2
2009 Pinot Noir "E" Domaine Ostertag	28.00	1
2007 Gewurztraminer "Vignoble d'E" Domaine Ostertag	32.00	3

Normally $156.90

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **$118**

(a 25% discount)

PROVENCE IN BERKELEY

After a rainy winter (and two rare snowstorms), this has been a summer of persistent mistral—the legendary wind of Provence. Wind doesn't begin to describe it. The mistral roars down the Rhône Valley and seems to take a left turn as it approaches Marseille. From the west, then, it attacks my place near Bandol. It is known to drive people stark raving mad.

Richard Olney told me that at times he'd stay in bed with pillows over his head trying to escape the howl of a raging blowhard.

You don't go to the beach, no grilling outdoors, branches flying by, broken vines, forest fires, and when you open your door, every other door in the house slams shut.

Yesterday I was, er, up to here with a big one. Company due, chops to grill—impossible. I phoned Alain Pascal at Gros 'Noré.

"Hey, Alain. This mistral . . ." I actually growled—grrrrr!

"Don't gripe. The mistral is our doctor," he said.

It took me a moment, then I recalled Lucien Peyraud saying, on one of my earliest visits to Tempier, "The mistral is God's gift to the vignerons here—when the nights are humid or it rains, the mistral blows the grapes dry so we don't have to worry about rot."

Don't let me scare you away from Provence Day—we will not re-create a mistral, however poetic or beneficial some consider it.

But we will fire up the grill, peel some garlic, and uncork a bevy of delicious Provençal wines. We'll block off our parking lot, set up tables and tents, and have a natural blast! Oh yeah, almost forgot the live music. What more do you want, fer chrissake?

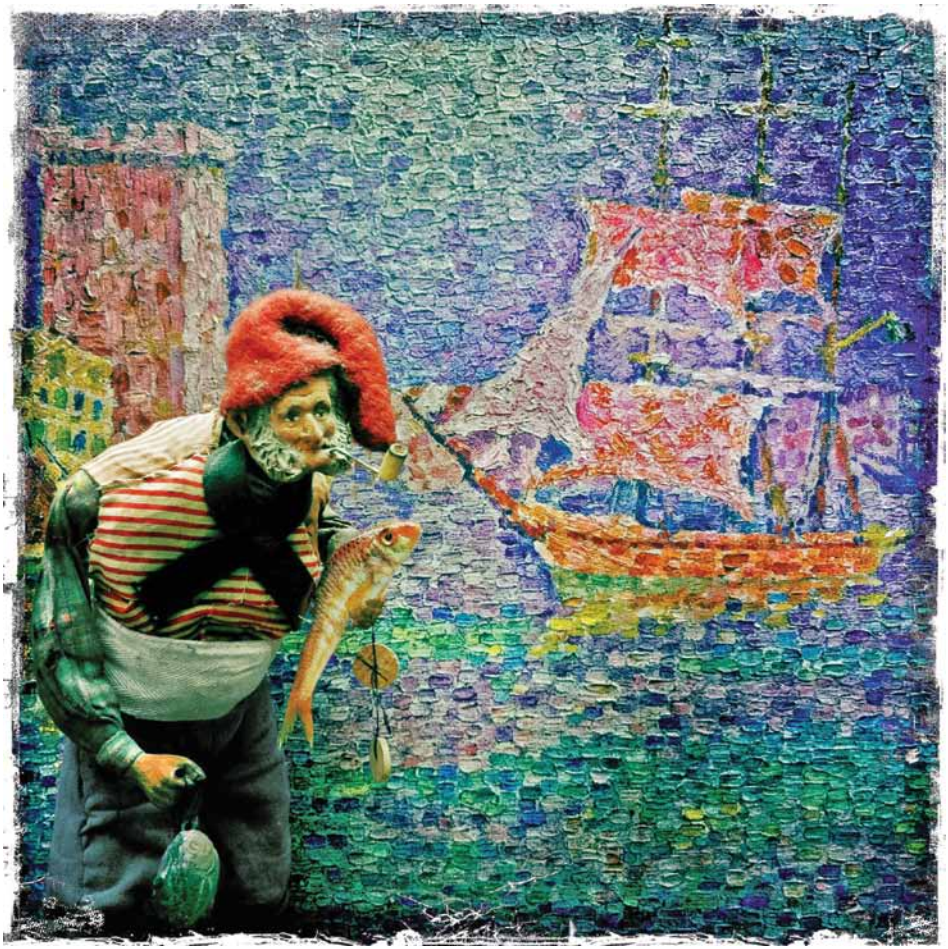
The event is presented by Café Fanny and our chef is, ta-da, Christopher Lee, with his pal Samin Nosrat. The price will be more than fair, as usual—we wouldn't want to bug anybody—and the spirit of Provence and good times will prevail. Amen.

Note the date:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

11 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

Event presented by Café Fanny



Santon de Provence posed in front of Paul Signac's Port de Marseille *© Gail Skoff*

Photographs from Provence *© Gail Skoff*

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.