

# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

JANUARY 2015



© Gail Skoff

*We import fine Burgundies from the likes of Jean-François Coche (above), Robert Chevillon, François Raveneau, Aubert de Villaine, Domaine de Chérissey, Domaine Roulot, and many others*

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BORDEAUX TREMBLES ■ LAPIERRE MORGON  
VALUE OF THE MONTH ■ ITALIAN CROWD-PLEASERS

# BORDEAUX TREMBLES

by Kermit Lynch

**O**R SO IT SEEMED TO ME a couple of weeks ago. I went to Bordeaux to taste and heard a lot of gossip in the cellars. The fear and trembling emanates from the elite, expensive, classified growths—expensive enough to price themselves out of the huge American market once the Bush recession hit in 2008. The châteaux turned their sights on the Chinese market, which was greedy for the wines even at unheard-of prices. One top château sold over 60% of its production to China! Ten other châteaux sold their vines, wines, even their châteaux to the Chinese. Huge profits were enjoyed by all. Everything was hunky-dory.

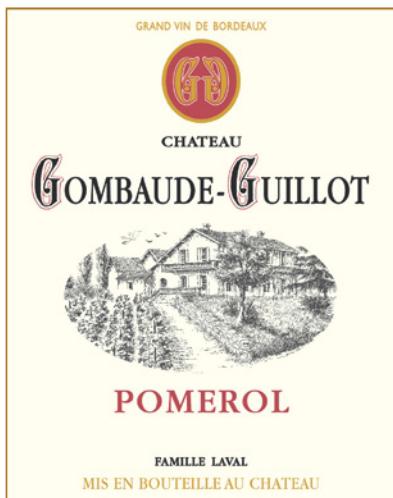
However, in 2014 the Chinese market simply closed. The curtain fell, boom, no one knows why, and sales stopped. The top châteaux must now be asking, where do we turn next? As if that weren't enough, they are worried about life without Robert Parker. No one ever enriched the Bordeaux coffers more than he has for the past thirty-three years. I'm not sure why, but his presence in the wine market is not as gigantic as before.

Those two absences, the Chinese and Parker, could have an earthquake-like influence on Bordeaux and its wines. Prices are sure to come down, perhaps drastically. Maybe, hopefully, their winemaking recipe (singular, not plural) will change. The sameness of the taste of the classified growths dulls my palate and my spirit. It's a downright shame. Shameful, too. Where is that impressively sinister, tannic bite that I used to love? Where the aromatic complexity? Where the vivid differences between the wines from one château to another? Where is a *goût de terroir*?

But what, me worry? When I go to Bordeaux, I don't go to visit the famed estates. I go to visit *vignerons*.

When a plutocrat or a bank or an insurance company or a dot.com firm buys a winery, they have no roots there. They don't live there or work there. Mostly they hire someone out of enology school to come and apply the one-hundred-point recipe of the year. Bah, humbug!

Let me tell you about a few of the Bordeaux producers I visited: Château Gombaude-Guillot is from the great Pomerol appellation. I remember the 1966



Trotanoy and the impossibly good 1961 Pétrus, both from Pomerol, that so thrilled me years ago. Gombaude is made by a mother-and-son team—organic viticulture since forever, an inch from being considered biodynamic, old vines with low yields, made without any market considerations. During my visit they told me they have a few 1997 and 1994 magnums left. I tasted both—not vintage chart favorites, by the way—but both drink beautifully and are AT THEIR PEAK! And don't miss their 2009 if you can age wine—dense, opulent, a considerable Pomerol at a great price. Buy a case for your old age and some to leave to your kids. Great idea!



CANON FRON SAC  
Appellation Canon Fronsac Contrôlée

wine bars here and in France. The couple who own it contacted me one day and said they were free, was I interested? Oh, yes, and you will be, too.

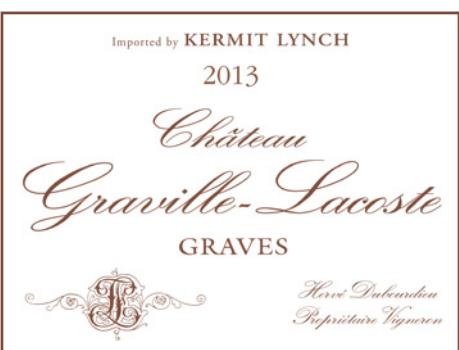
Bénédicte and Grégoire farm their vines organically. As for the wine, nothing is added, nothing taken out. That's as rare in Bordeaux as a sunburn in hell. When you taste it, don't think about a typical Bordeaux. It is far from that. It is wild with great fruit, an impressive tannin, and the finesse I always try to provide my clients when I'm buying.

Before visiting Château Graville-Lacoste, I enjoyed the 2013 in two excellent restaurants in and near beautiful Saint-Émilion: La Terrasse Rouge at Château La Dominique and the bistro L'Envers du Décor. Both serve Graville by the glass from magnums, and I award them both the KL medal of honor for their brilliant choice.

At the humble château, Hervé and Sabine Dubourdieu had me to lunch after our tasting. It was a very special moment. They recreated the same menu Hervé's mother liked to prepare for me back in the late 1970s when she was in charge.

When asked what is our best white wine bargain, I always answer, the white Graves from Graville-Lacoste, and it has never been truer than right now with the 2013 vintage at \$18.00 per bottle and even less by the case.

Imported by another importer for years, Château Moulin Pey-Labrie always impressed me whenever I encountered it in natural



# BENCHMARK BEAUJOLAIS

by Jane Berg

## 2013 MORGON • M. & C. LAPIERRE

Among the things I love most about living in France is what the French call the *apéritif dînatoire*. A proper translation doesn't exist, though the concept is straightforward enough: A gathering of friends over an abundance of wine, *charcuterie*, and *fromage*. The ambiance is casual and spirited, and the wines—nicknamed *les vins de soif*—are those meant to be drunk with a healthy thirst and zero pretension. The king of wines for such occasions is without contest Lapierre's classic Morgon. Veteran Beaujolais drinkers know what I mean, while newcomers will catch on immediately upon draining their first glass. A word to the wise: You won't want to run out! For the real experience, pair with a slab of pork *rillettes*, slices of plump *saucisson*, and spoonfuls of soft Saint-Marcellin. *À votre santé!*

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE



Camille and Mathieu Lapierre

© Romain Renoux

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# THE STRUGGLE OF THE LANGUEDOC

by Chris Santini

**H**ARD TO IMAGINE but true, Gaddafi once sent a team of Libyan messengers deep in the hills of the Languedoc to meet with a group of angry and exasperated *vignerons*. The year was 1973, and a century of boiling tensions between these growers and the omnipotent local *négociants* had culminated in gunfights with local police. The *négociants* had amassed fortunes by importing boat tankers full of Algerian wine, mixing it with local wine and unsavory additives, calling it “Languedoc,” and then sending it up by rail to Paris to supply the working masses with their daily four liters of liquid strength. Gaddafi’s offer to these growers was unlimited armament and training camps in the desert in exchange for the group declaring war on the French government and launching a revolution. The growers promptly declined and sent the Libyans home. This wasn’t about revolution; it was about reclaiming the wines of the Languedoc. Still to this day, the battle rages on: a shadowy group called CRAV, armed with axes and hunting rifles, regularly sabotages oil-refinery-sized tanks of manipulated “wine.” They fight for the Languedoc that was once synonymous for stony *terroir*, *garigue*-infused air, and a distinct Mediterranean soul. True Languedoc is a wonderful thing, yet the name is still a broad cover for far too many cheap, industrial, and at times fraudulent wines of international ilk that continue to harm its reputation and make it difficult for honest growers to make an honest living. We can do our part by drinking our share of real Languedoc.

A good place to start is the Lascaux Languedoc *rouge*, fresh and full, an incredible value of pure, approachable limestone-grown organic juice. Then tackle the La Roque Pic Saint Loup *rouge*, an herbal, spicy, biodynamic wine that is a rare southern French wine to show minerality before fruit. And finally, save the Mas Champart *terroir*-driven Causse du Bousquet for a special meal. It’s a deep, juicy, long-aging wine from the pioneers of Saint-Chinian. As angry protesters once shouted in the streets of Montpellier back in 1907, “*Vive le vin naturel! Mort aux fraudeurs!*”

|   | PER BOTTLE | PER CASE |
|---|------------|----------|
| 2012 LANGUEDOC ROUGE • CHÂTEAU DE LASCAUX                                 | \$17.00    | \$183.60 |
| 2012 PIC SAINT LOUP ROUGE • CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE                              | 17.00      | 183.60   |
| 2012 SAINT-CHINIAN ROUGE “CAUSSE<br>DU BOUSQUET” • MAS CHAMPART . . . . . | 25.00      | 270.00   |



# BURGUNDIES

by Anthony Lynch

**O**UR BURGUNDY SELECTION runs from Chablis down to the Mâconnais, covering a wide range of producers in all styles at a variety of prices. To further encourage you to explore our Burgundies, we will take 15% off should you purchase a bottle of each of the following six wines together, for a total of \$262.

## 2013 MÂCON FARGES “VIEILLES VIGNES” HENRI PERRUSSET

Thanks to a fateful chance encounter, we began importing Henri Perrusset’s delicious Mâcons, like this old-vine bottling from his *cru* village of Farges. The fossil-strewn limestone soils here give a Chardonnay with rich flavors of ripe white fruit, backed by a wiry mineral feel. It is a definite crowd-pleaser—perfect for kicking off an evening among friends—that delivers considerable value for such a fulfilling and refreshing white Burgundy.

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

## 2012 SANTENAY BLANC 1ER CRU “LE BEAUREPAIRE” • JEAN-MARC VINCENT

A gem from a small, under-the-radar producer in an undervalued appellation. Who doesn’t like that? The aroma is rich yet delicate: hawthorn blossom, hazelnut, and layers of white fruit. Very fine with a lingering chalky, mouth-watering finish. From Santenay’s highest-altitude *premier cru*, this rare white is not to be missed: exuding elegance and class, it will drink gloriously for at least ten more years.

**\$57.00 PER BOTTLE      \$615.60 PER CASE**

## 2012 AUXEY-DURESSES ROUGE CHRISTOPHE BUISSON

This man’s wines are always smokin’ hot right out of the gate. His Auxey-Duresses offers loads of immediate pleasure with its fresh juiciness and lively perfume evoking ripe red fruit. While its depth of flavor will allow it to age, the deliciousness factor may well trump any aspirations of patience you might have. Those looking for a pedigreed red Burgundy to drink tonight will be very pleased.

**\$40.00 PER BOTTLE      \$432.00 PER CASE**

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## **2012 ALOXE-CORTON DOMAINE FOLLIN-ARBELET**

Domaine Follin-Arbelet's wines, especially from the great 2012 vintage, are a revelation. This red's vibrant acidity gives it an edge of bright freshness, while the beautiful Pinot Noir fruit is sensationally smooth and graceful. Burgundy enthusiasts will appreciate the total purity and finesse in this translation of Aloxe's *terroir*. It can certainly be cellared for a few years, though I appear to have appended to my tasting notes, in awe, "Drinkable now—very much so!"

**\$60.00 PER BOTTLE      \$648.00 PER CASE**

## **2012 SANTENAY ROUGE 1ER CRU “LES GRAVIÈRES” • JEAN-MARC VINCENT**

In 1966, Hugh Johnson recognized the quality of the *premier cru* Les Gravières, calling it Santenay's “best vineyard . . . good and strong, with a tender softness about it.” Around the very same time, the Pinot Noir vines that now produce this wine were planted. Johnson would certainly commend the Vincents for their 2012 Gravières. It expresses the softness he wrote of in the form of a gorgeous floral sensation, as well as a gravelly strength that validates his description almost fifty years later. Great *terroir* transcends time—cellar a few bottles to see the proof.

**\$55.00 PER BOTTLE      \$594.00 PER CASE**

## **2011 VOLNAY 1ER CRU “LES ANGLES” LUCIEN BOILLOT & FILS**

Pierre Boillot's family originally hails from Volnay, so it is natural he owns vineyards here along with his holdings in Pommard, Nuits-Saint-Georges, and Gevrey, where the domaine is based. Each of Pierre's wines is true to its appellation, while reflecting the intricacies of an individual *climat*. “Les Angles” is high-strung with plenty of bright aromatics, hinting at sour cherry and red currant. In the Burgundian tradition and the Boillot house style, patient cellaring will bring out its full brilliant potential.

**\$75.00 PER BOTTLE      \$810.00 PER CASE**



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# A TRIO OF GRANDS VINS BLANCS

by Dixon Brooke

## 2011 VOUVRAY “LE PORTAIL” • CHAMPALOU

The Champalous produce this wine from a walled-in *clos* around their home on the limestone plateau above the town of Vouvray. It is a dry Chenin Blanc fermented and aged in oak (rare in Vouvray these days!) for 12 to 18 months and then aged in bottle for another year or more before being released. Portail is a tale of two characters: smooth, opulent fruit cascades across the palate in layers, while a chalky streak tightens up the finish and leaves you refreshed and coming back for more. Its versatility with cuisine is one of its most exciting qualities, and it is a great cellar candidate as well.

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

## 2013 CHIGNIN-BERGERON “LES TERRASSES” ANDRÉ ET MICHEL QUENARD

I learned during my last visit that Michel’s father André still insists on pruning the vines on these terraces perched on the steep slopes all by himself. Nobody else is allowed to take *séateur* to vine on this hallowed ground. André is now in his eighties. These terraces are home to some of the Quenards’ most prized Roussanne vines. These vines, firmly rooted in mountain limestone, produce an intriguing, delicious, and noble white that ingeniously marries the honeyed, apricot richness of Roussanne with alpine freshness.

**\$33.00 PER BOTTLE      \$356.40 PER CASE**

## 2012 RIESLING GRAND CRU “BRAND” ALBERT BOXLER

Boxler’s Riesling Brand is an imposing presence—bone-dry, serious, grandiose. I just tasted the recently bottled 2013 with Jean Boxler at the winery and it, too, is cut from the same cloth (or stone). The *grand cru* Brand is composed of granite, and Boxler’s parcel is in the center of the rather steep slope, the historic center. The style is masculine and powerful, with a very direct personality. It is both fine-grained and big-boned. I expect it to flesh out over time, so those who are willing to be patient with it will be rewarded handsomely.

**\$79.00 PER BOTTLE      \$853.20 PER CASE**

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# UP AND DOWN THE RHÔNE

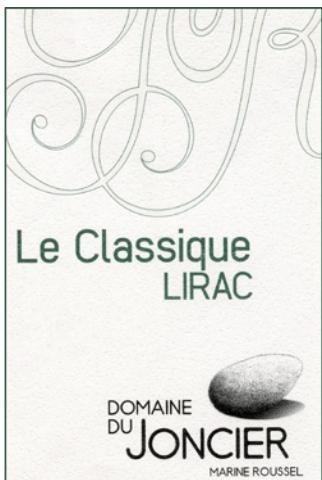
by Anthony Lynch

## 2012 LIRAC “LE CLASSIQUE” DOMAINE DU JONCIER

Imagine a middle ground between a juicy Côtes du Rhône and a grandiose Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and then throw in organic plus biodynamic farming. You have just landed in Joncier’s cellar, glass of Lirac in hand. The *garrigue*, *régisse*, and chewy black fruit are all there, delivered accessibly enough for everyday drinking but bearing the complexity of a more sophisticated pleasure.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE

\$270.00 PER CASE



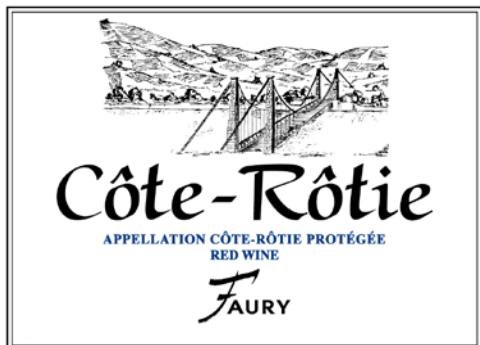
## 2012 CÔTE-RÔTIE • DOMAINE FAURY

I often reminisce about old bottles of Côte-Rôtie from my father’s cellar. These wines have always inspired fascination: powerful yet fresh and ethereal, they feature never-ending aromas of eucalyptus, menthol, game, leather, violets, spice . . . an exotic, earthy bouquet expressed with subtlety and grace. Sadly, these prized bottles have dwindled with each cork pulled, as traditionalist *vignerons* on the unforgiving Roasted Slope have proven elusive. Domaine Faury

represents a rare exception, and I envision this Côte-Rôtie following a similar evolution to the wines I contemplate with nostalgia. Its depth on the palate, along with the already revealing perfume, suggests a Côte-Rôtie of the old school, to drink over the next decade and a half.

\$62.00 PER BOTTLE

\$669.60 PER CASE



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# ITALIAN CROWD-PLEASERS

by Julia Issleib

## 2013 SYLVANER • MANNI NÖSSING

The majority of the roughly 280 acres of Italian Sylvaner (versus 3,600 acres in France and almost 13,000 in Germany) is located in the Valle Isarco, where it benefits from the steep slopes and high elevations of the Dolomites. Manni Nössing cautions, “The mountains give force but they can also oppress.” Count on the free-spirited and energetic Nössing not to let his Sylvaner, planted in vineyards at around 2,200 feet of altitude, suffer from any confinement—it is bright, mineral, and elevating.

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE

\$324.00 PER CASE

## 2013 LAMBRUSCO SECCO • FATTORIA MORETTO

Let’s make one thing clear: we’re in the presence of a serious wine here. The deep purple color is a first hint; the profound aromas of earth, dark fruit, and violets, the second. By the time the tannins and minerality hit your palate, there is no doubt about the intensity of this wine. And yet, appearing suddenly is a joyful sparkle that makes the wine dance on your tongue—like a red wine refusing to grow up, clinging to its boyishness.

This bone-dry Lambrusco is pleasure-wine at its best. Served with Parmesan cookies (equal parts of Parmesan, butter, and flour; fifteen minutes in the oven at 300°F), it is the proverbial crowd-pleaser to start any dinner party. You might forget to move on to more thought-provoking bottles, so we suggest you stick to this thirst-provoking one!

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE

\$215.46 PER CASE

## 2013 DOLCETTO D’ALBA • GUIDO PORRO

If Moretto’s Lambrusco is an adult refusing to grow up, this Dolcetto is a youngster wanting to chime in at the grown-up table. Well-mannered, surprisingly complex for its young age, it won’t come at you with the unchanneled energy of a teenager but rather expresses itself softly, with restraint, making its point thoughtfully yet assertively. This translates into not only floral aromas and velvety texture but also a tannic structure that keeps you on your toes. For now, it’s the perfect companion for an apéritif, but you get a glance at the animated dinner conversations you will have in a few years.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE

\$215.46 PER CASE

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# WHITE AND RED

by Anthony Lynch

## 2012 CASSIS • CLOS STÉ MAGDELEINE

Clos Sainte Magdeleine's white impeccably captures the essence of the Mediterranean. The nose alone, with its delightful hints of fennel, honeysuckle, and fruit

ripened by the Provençal sun, conjures images of this colorful fishing village. The palate reveals sea-air salinity and the freshness of a coastal breeze—the perfect counterpoints to its southern generosity. Pair it with seafood—your favorite type, prepared the way you like. Its purpose will be fulfilled.



**\$32.00 PER BOTTLE**

**\$345.60 PER CASE**

## 2012 PATRIMONIO ROUGE • YVES LECCIA

While Patrimonio may not be a household name to most wine drinkers, talented *vignerons* like Yves Leccia are likely to change that. This hilly appellation on Corsica's northwest coast features some of the only limestone to be found on the rugged, granite-dominated island, giving nervy whites and structured reds. Leccia's *rouge*, made up of Niellucciu with a splash of Grenache, shows off the briary, brambly side of Corsica. Gritty and grippy, yet noble, the 2012 asserts Patrimonio's place among southern France's great *terroirs*.



**\$36.00 PER BOTTLE**

**\$388.80 PER CASE**

### KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT—TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Title to all wines sold by Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant passes to the buyer in California, and the buyer is solely responsible for the shipment of wines. We make no representation as to the legal rights of anyone to ship or import wines into any state outside California. In all cases, the buyer is responsible for complying with the laws and regulations, in particular those relating to the importation of alcohol, in effect in the state to which the buyer is shipping alcohol. 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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## VALUE OF THE MONTH

### 2013 KERMIT LYNCH CÔTES DU RHÔNE

*by Anthony Lynch*

THE WAIT IS OVER—our custom Côtes du Rhône is back in stock! While the last vintage may seem hard to top, the 2013 hits the ground running with an explosive aroma, generous flavor, and texture that is both juicy and chewy. Dark cherry, wild blackberry, black pepper, and rosemary let you know right away you're in the Rhône. Versatile doesn't even begin to describe this unfiltered red, which will complement virtually anything you put on the table. In fact, it will even make the leftovers that have been sitting in the back of your fridge for slightly too long taste good. Gulping will become second nature, so don't hesitate to stock up on this reliably tasty, exceptionally affordable Côtes du Rhône.

**\$12.95 PER BOTTLE**

**\$139.86 PER CASE**