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- **NEW ARRIVALS**
- **QUICKSAND BLUES**
- **VALUE OF THE MONTH**

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

FEBRUARY 2006

— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

2003 **CORBIÈRES ROUGE**

DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE

ISN'T THE PRICE SHOCKING? You will agree once you taste this beauty. This is not just a good cheap wine; our price is nonsensically cheap. How do we explain such an underpriced wine?

The problem is not the black and gold label. No, the package, as we pros call it, is quite proper, even classic.

Nor is the price due to the appellation. No, I have seen wines from the Corbières region that were much higher in price. True, though, a Corbières over \$20 has usually had oak implants.

This 2003 Fontsaïnte is impeccable, satisfying every wine craving you can possibly imagine except snobbishism.

What is the winemaker's job? The great Joseph Swan said that "the winemaker's job is not to screw it up." That's right. You start with great grape juice and then do your best not to ruin it. Fontsaïnte has a quality *terroir*, old vines, and a wine that speaks to us with no static, no interference, speaks loud and clear. The winemaker did his job.

There is good deep fruit in the 2003, a little plum, some black cherry, a dash of black pepper. The palate is impressive. It seems round yet penetrating, and the lovely perfume persists well in the aftertaste.

Drink it now, and save some for the future, too.

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



FONTSAINTE'S OLD RELIABLE

Also now in stock, their 2005 Gris de Gris, which is, along with Domaine Tempier's great bottling, one of the most popular imported rosés in America.

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

RHÔNE

2004 CONDRIEU • PHILIPPE FAURY

Finding a good Viognier is not my idea of a good time. It is a grape that should have stayed home (in Condrieu) because once it leaves it seems to take the low road. Homesick Viognier can seem tacky and gaudy, an old harlot drenched in cheap perfume, but one who demands a high price.

Some will say I must have a prejudice against the grape variety. Others might trust me to deliver the real thing, a Condrieu that justifies the world's newfound interest in the Viognier.

Here is Viognier from its birthplace, with its peach pit and violets, its elegance intact, a dry white, rounded, freshening, deep, fine, exotic.

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

2003 GIGONDAS • LES PALLIÈRES

The weather at Gigondas was gloriously hot in 2003, and a lot of growers made beautiful wine. The sun intensified the taste of the *garrigue*, the taste of Provence. The vintage in the future will be identifiable by that telltale sign of smoky thyme and rosemary.

Les Pallières also shows violets and black cherry-tinged fruit, good intensity (it was a very small crop), and when you taste it, I want you to pay special attention to the wine's finish. Even in a ripe, hot vintage like this, the genius of the Pallières soil is obvious. No harsh tannin, no lack of finesse. Drink it now or over a couple of decades.

\$16.00 PER TENTH **\$345.60** PER CASE
\$28.00 PER FIFTH **\$302.40** PER CASE

2004 CÔTES DU RHÔNE VILLAGES DOMAINE SAINT LUC

Effusive, fresh, pretty, straightforward. This is no Gigondas or Châteauneuf substitute. It is the kind of Rhône you tasted at that little restaurant while traveling and wondered why no one imports it.

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

LA GRANGE DE QUATRE SOUS

GRANGE MEANS BARN. We import two, Grange des Pères and La Grange de Quatre Sous, both from Languedoc. One has an international reputation, the other deserves one. Hildegard Horat has Quatre Sous (not far from Mas Champart), an isolated old stone farmhouse in some of the most gorgeous terrain on earth.

2004 LE JEU DU MAIL

This blend of 65% Marsanne and 35% Viognier could cause a whole flock of northern Rhône whites to stampede in terror. To see it at its youthful best, decant it a couple of hours before serving. And two days later, it tastes even better, a good sign for the future. This is *grand cru* quality.

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

2003 LES SERROTTES

Vintage 2003 here gives us a full-bodied, luscious Syrah/Malbec blend, rather majestic. It is a bit like gorging yourself on a wild berry patch. And that fresh, ripe berry perfume lasts and lasts.

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

2003 LO MOLIN

A 50/50 blend, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc with a nice touch of new oak. Again, a big, luscious, juicy red, perfectly balanced, full of flavor, with friendly tannins. Lots of wine, lots of class.

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

2003 LA GRANGE

And I asked Hildegard to bottle some of the two reds blended. Yes, a blend of the two Cabernets, Syrah and Malbec. See what you think. Does it taste like a big Cornas/Pauillac blend or not?

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



La Grange de Quatre Sous

© Gail Skoff

QUICKSAND BLUES

SONGS BY YOURS TRULY

“HEY MOM, “the wine guy’s trying to sell us some music.”

Well, yeah, I guess you could look at it like that. In my pre-wine merchant days I was a frustrated rock ’n’ roller, and now, dream come true, a bunch of my songs have been recorded by some outstanding musicians on a CD titled *Quicksand Blues*.

Wine does not play a featured role in terms of subject matter on the CD. It is not a collection of wine songs, although wine does appear in the lyrics now and again. Wine entered into it mainly in terms of how many bottles I brought in to fuel the recording sessions, mainly old white Burgundies and red Rhônes. If a 1985 Jobard Meursault or a 1978 Côte Rôtie doesn’t inspire some down-in-the-alley guitar pickers to do some fine pickin’, I give up.

And one more thing, one critic described the music on *Quicksand* as “unfiltered.” That is definitely wine related.

I almost titled it *Wine, Women, and Song*. I mean, they are songs, and often the subject seems to be a woman. “Dirt Road,” for example, is sort of a rock ’n’ roll anthem to infidelity. The title cut, “Quicksand Blues,” might seem to be about a lover, but it is a song I wrote when I gave up my non-career in music, a blues from me to the blues. There is more about all this in the CD booklet.

The leader of the pack in this enterprise was Boz Scaggs. I have loved Boz’s music since I heard him play in Berkeley in the sixties, but I did not meet him until a Domaine Tempier dinner at Chez Panisse about five years ago.

Boz brought some great rock ’n’ roll talents into his San Francisco recording studio and helped realize the songs on CD as I heard them in my imagination.

The band is *hot!* The foundation is the rhythm section, Ricky Fataar and Hutch Hutchinson. Their steady gig is playing behind Bonnie Raitt, but they are also session musicians who have appeared on countless great recordings. Hutch just played bass on a new Jerry Lee Lewis CD. That makes him aristocracy, right?

There are three singers, but most of the vocals are by Alvin Youngblood Hart. Boz plays some guitar, including the beautiful solo on “Awake For The Count.” Berkeley’s Laurie Lewis plays some honky tonk fiddle and backs me up singing on “Country Living.” Jimmy Pugh from the Robert Cray Band plays a knock ’em dead piano solo on “It’s Cold.” And much more!

If you like rootsy American music, you might like it. But it will be hard for music stores to bin. Three different singers, several genres, yes, a rough one to bin. You can order it from kermitynch.com or Amazon.com. It is stocked by Down Home Music in El Cerrito, CA, or purchase it here at the shop. It is \$12.95 and we will ship it free.



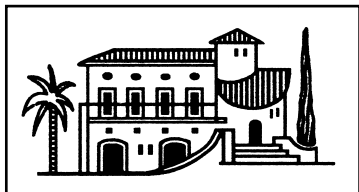
Boz Scaggs, Ricky Fataar, and Kermit Lynch

© Aengus McGiffin

BANDOL

2004 BANDOL BLANC DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON

I met a young mother several years ago at my kids' grammar school near Bandol, which they attended half the year. One day she told me that she had a winery. Would I like to drop by and taste her wine?



Actually, I put off going, because what if she wanted to sell some, but I did not want to buy? I hate for anyone to begrudge me anything. After a couple of years I learned that she was a friend of Marcel Lapierre and our Gang of Four, so it seemed silly not to go taste.

She makes this very unusual dry white Bandol in small quantities, 100% Rolle, a grape that is called Vermentino in Italy and on Corsica. It is a variety native to the Mediterranean rim.

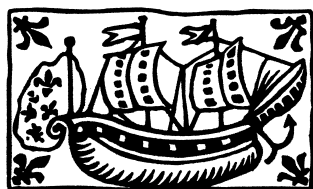
Ask my staff about this wine. They oohed and aahed when we uncorked it right off the boat the other day. The nose is fresh and pretty with a burst of honey, citrus, and pear . . . sort of. It is a versatile dry white, round and proportioned.

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

2003 BANDOL "LA TOURTINE" DOMAINE TEMPIER

Daniel Ravier makes Domaine Tempier's wine. When he called to congratulate me on being named *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur*, I told him I was writing this brochure and wanted to quote him on his 2003 Tourtine.

"It was nice and hot all summer, remember? But even so," he said, "there is freshness to the wine. The vintage smells of the *garrigue* under the sun, you know, but paradoxically the wine cools down your throat. Tourtine is especially big and round in 2003. I love it with grilled meat cooked well done, or, like our friend at Gros Noré does it, nearly raw. It would be ideal with an American barbecue. Tell everyone hello."



\$47.00 PER BOTTLE **\$507.60** PER CASE

BORDEAUX / SOUTHWEST

2001 HAUT-MÉDOC • CHÂTEAU ANEY

For those who have my first book, *Adventures on the Wine Route*, re-read the Bordeaux chapter before tasting these 2001s, and you will know what I am thinking when I go to Bordeaux looking for wine.

And those of you who know what I mean when I say “sinister bite” won’t want to miss this 2001 Château Aney. The robe has noirish glints and the nose is deep and dark, too . . . *Nose from the Underground*. You descend into its sinister depths. Got that?

Not at all a “little” wine. Lots of character.

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

2001 LALANDE-DE-POMEROL CHÂTEAU BELLES-GRAVES

Do the French really believe all this *terroir* stuff? Well, why else would you name your château Beautiful Gravel? And yes, I have been there. I am an eyewitness, and their vines are planted in some pretty good-looking gravel all right.

Here is altogether another character from the Haut-Médoc, though it too is dark-toned. (It was that kind of vintage.) But here the palate is plump and luxuriously textured, and it crescendoes in the aftertaste.

Drink now to 2020.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE **\$270.00** PER CASE

2003 IROULEGUY ROUGE “CUVÉE LEHENGOA” DOMAINE ETXEGARAYA

Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Tannat make up this fabulous old-vines cuvée from the Basque country. Dare to get off the beaten path, folks. If this wore a California label and a sawdusting of new oak, the wine scorers would have everyone scampering to pay a fortune for a bottle of it.

Beautiful black robe. The aroma is stunning; grilled black fruits, if you can imagine that. You can rave about its intensity, its deliciousness, and wow, is it ever built. Yes, you can find gold in the unlikeliest places.

\$19.00 PER BOTTLE **\$205.20** PER CASE

NORTHERN FRANCE

2003 CHINON “LES GRÉZEAUX” BERNARD BAUDRY

No, you do not yet have too many 2003 Loire reds. It is an exceptional vintage at Chinon and Bourgueil that will be remembered for a long time.

This cuvée is from sixty-year-old vines located at the bottom of a gravelly slope. The roots go deep into the earth there, very important in a drought year. (Remember, the French are not allowed to irrigate.) Les Grézeaux is impeccably balanced with good freshness, plus a bunch of other good stuff, in the Cabernet fruit.

The texture is rich and smooth, and the flavors include hints of chocolate and roasted coffee beans. Everything about it is pure pleasure, and Baudry says we can enjoy it over the next fifteen years.



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

2004 VÉZELAY *BLANC* “LA CHÂTELAINE” DOMAINE DE LA CADETTE

This great white Burgundy value is a new addition to the KLWM roster.

The vineyard is farmed biodynamically. No machine harvesters. No chaptalization. A blend of *cuvés* and barrels. Native yeasts. Unfiltered. Minimal SO₂.

Does that sound good so far?

The *terroir* is stony and the climate is, well, south of Chablis. Between Chablis and Meursault sort of sums it up. You have a Chardonnay that is mineraly and discreetly floral. The palate is dry and crisp with good nervosity, and that hint of the sea must come from the decomposed oyster shell soil.

You will find it refreshing and untiring. At this price we can all afford to enjoy it often.



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

CORSICA'S DOMAINE LECCIA

2004 VIN DE TABLE ROUGE

Right off the bat, these are two of the most exciting young reds I tasted this past year. Have you ever seen one of the great van Gogh paintings in person? The vividness? That is how I feel with these wines in front of me.

Yves Leccia and I put together this blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Niellucio especially for this unfiltered bottling. It doesn't exist in France. It does not have enough Niellucio for the bottle to wear a Patrimonio label, so it says Vin de Table. The blend is so spectacular, I don't care what the label says.

The cuvée of pure Grenache...wow, one of the most *terroir*-influenced Grenache cuvées of my life. A whole lotta soul, folks. Loaded! It is big and dark and it delivers. Intense and expressive!

The 20% Niellucio we added gives it just the right kind of tannin and an intriguing tinge of bitterness in the finish, just a tinge, like the best Sangiovese wines. (Niellucio is the Corsican descendent of the Sangiovese.)

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

2004 PATRIMONIO ROUGE

Very deep, complex aroma here, a blood-of-the-stones aroma, eked out of the seaside Patrimonio chalk. The nose is followed by a completely unexpected palate that is not chunky and aggressive but quite velvety, unctuous, and harmonious. I ran into the same kind of shockingly supple tannins in Coche Dury's 2004 reds.

I hope you are following Leccia's wines. I started with the 1997 vintage, and I still have a few bottles of it in my cellar. Leccia's legend is growing, especially after his fabulous 2001. But in 2004 he has flown off into the wild black yonder, rarified air, masterpieces.

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

ROSÉ DISCOUNT

THE 2005 ROSÉ WINES BEGIN TO ARRIVE NOW. Any rosé you find in our stock previous to 2005 is on sale: 20% discount. Some think "the younger the better." Not true. Many rosés need a little time to fully blossom.

CORSICA'S YVES LECCIA



© Gail Skoff

WINEMAKER VISIT

YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY to meet and taste with Giulio Ceschin from La Viarte in the Friuli, the guy my kids voted their favorite winemaker (and they aren't even old enough to drink yet).

Caffè Venezia will feature Giulio's wines and the appropriate cuisine on Thursday, February 9. They are at 1799 University Avenue in Berkeley. Call 510-849-4681 to reserve. Chef Cindy Deetz likes to keep things casual, so there won't be any speeches or blind tastings. Enjoy!