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SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

- OYSTER BLISS XVI
- VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE 2005
- BURGUNDIAN *TERROIR*

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

APRIL 2007

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## 2005 NORTHERN RHÔNES DOMAINE PHILIPPE FAURY

Don't hesitate; hurry down and get some of these awesome beauties before they're gone. These particular unfiltered blends are unavailable in the rest of the world.

### 2005 SAINT JOSEPH *BLANC*

Marsanne 60%, Roussanne 40%. An unfiltered dry white from young vines and old, new barrels and old, early- and late-harvested grapes, creating the finest Saint Joseph *blanc*, bar none, since Faury's 2004.

The visuals in the wine glass start things off nicely. Then the bouquet. It smells complex and honeyed, with ample amounts of charm. There is a perfect combination of lusciousness and nervosity. Honey and pit fruits linger on.

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

### 2005 CONDRIEU

In my opinion, good examples of Condrieu or Viognier have been hard to come by over the years. Here is my idea of textbook. I'll start with what it is not: woody, cloying, flabby, showily shallow. Here are all the fireworks of Condrieu's Viognier without it going *too* far. Stunning.

**\$49.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$529.20** PER CASE

### 2005 SAINT JOSEPH *ROUGE*

Faury has two reds from Saint Joseph. This is the classic one, the pretty one, the irresistibly drinkable, dangerously delicious one. It is loaded with Syrah fruit, more concentrated than last year's popular 2004, and the texture is pure silk. Glug now.

**\$27.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$291.60** PER CASE

### 2005 SAINT JOSEPH *ROUGE* "VIEILLES VIGNES"

And this is like a Côte Brune from Côte Rôtie, the darker side of Saint Joseph, a wild, chewy, intense Syrah from Joseph Panel's fabled vineyard. When Panel retired, he rented the vines to Faury.

Conditions in 2005 were perfect. Saint Joseph has no *grand crus*, but it is difficult to find Cornas and Hermitage this special. It has all sorts of dark corners to explore over many years.

**\$28.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$302.40** PER CASE

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— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

2005 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE  
“LA CRAU” • DOMAINE DU  
VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

This one's a no-brainer, a must-buy, but I want to say a few words about it and let you hear from Daniel Brunier, too.

Vieux Télégraphe's 2005 Télégramme has never been so Vieux Télégraphe-like. The vintage vaults Télégramme into another class. And the 2005 Vieux Télégraphe itself is monumental in one sense, yet imbued with great finesse and striking minerality, too. I was especially struck by how it grows and grows and crescendos on the palate. Beethoven would have dug it.



Daniel wrote to me after the bottling of the 2005:

*For me it is without a doubt the greatest vintage since 1998, and our third grand vintage in a row. If I had to choose my favorite three wines of the last three decades, I'd say 1978, 1998, and 2005. The color is deep and complex. The wine is at once pleasure, richness, depth, and freshness. The body is velvety and not at all aggressive. You smell the stones, the minerality, a smokiness, the magnificent old-vines Grenache fruit ... I believe that the tannins are better integrated than in any previous vintage. It is as powerful as any we've made, but more elegant, more noble. It is ageworthy. How long? A client brought us a superb 1933 Vieux Télégraphe the other day, so who knows.*

If you are curious, by the way, Daniel and Frédéric Brunier make Vieux Télégraphe together. Frédéric makes the family's other Châteauneuf domaine, La Roquette, and Daniel is responsible for our Domaine les Pallières at Gigondas.

PRE-ARRIVAL PRICE: **\$624** PER CASE

*Also available in tenths, magnums, jeroboams,  
methuselahs, salmanazars, and nebuchadnezzars.*

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

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## LOIRE REDS

### 2004 CHINON “LA CROIX BOISSÉE” BERNARD BAUDRY

This bottle reminds me of the profound, complex 2001 reds I imported from the Loire’s Cabernet Franc. But the two Baudrys, father and son, think that this is even better. Better for what? I asked. They said that this 2004 is riper, harvested at 14°, which is exceptionally ripe for the region. Whatever makes the 2001s so good, the Baudrys think the 2004 has even more of it. It will be fun to follow the two vintages and see them perform.

If you wanted, you could drink this one until 2020, at least.

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

### 2005 BOURGUEIL “VIEILLES VIGNES” DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE

I am sounding like a stuck record (remember those?), but what can I say? Global warming is making its presence felt in our wine glasses. Here is another big vintage, and this is the most impressive old-vines cuvée I have ever imported from Boucard. Why? Because it has everything and lots of it. Enough juicy flesh, for example, to balance out its gorgeous tannins. Old man Boucard says it is the best ager he’s made since his 1947!

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

### 2005 CHINON “CUVÉE TERROIR” DOMAINE CHARLES JOGUET

Biggest ever, finest ever, best ever ... will it never end? Well, here’s what I wrote about this 2005 the first time I tasted it: I have never seen such a great Chinon so cheap.

I wish I had said inexpensive. It’s not right to call such a classy wine cheap.

Beautiful dark raspberry color. Great depth to the delicious Cabernet fruit. As with the Bourgueil above, you will marvel at the plenitude, the intensity, and at the same time its stylishness and finesse.

Take my word for it, cellar 2005s from the Loire.

**\$17.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$183.60** PER CASE

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2002 BOURGUEIL “LES PERRIÈRES”  
 CATHERINE & PIERRE BRETON

Medium-dark unfiltered purple color that has lost its baby-blue tints. The nose at five years has wised up, if you know what I mean. Aromatically, it is no longer kicking and screaming. You might say that it is entering its mellow, sage, elegant period. It smells ravishing! The wine is mellow on the palate, too, for about three seconds. Then the stony (*les perrières* comes from *les pierres*, the stones) upper slope (limestone) asserts itself: firmness, solidity, rusticity. The aftertaste fades away slowly, enchantingly, as spices and black pepper emerge from the lovely fruit.

**\$28.00 PER BOTTLE      \$302.40 PER CASE**

**VISITORS FROM BOURGUEIL**

Pierre and Catherine Breton work their winery together, a joint venture. They are likeable, too! They will be here in the shop on Saturday, April 28, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to meet you and explain what makes their wines so special. No one makes a more natural wine, so I expect some interested winemakers might show up for this tasting.

The Slanted Door restaurant is a great fan of the Bretons’ wines, and a great place to enjoy drinking them while you watch that big ol’ moon over the Bay Bridge. The Slanted Door/Breton combination is unforgettably good.

Wines available from Catherine & Pierre Breton:

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2002 BOURGUEIL “LES PERRIÈRES” . . . . .	\$28.00	\$302.40
2002 CHINON “LES PICASSES” . . . . .	28.00	302.40
2003 BOURGUEIL “CLOS SÉNÉCHAL” . . . . .	17.95	193.86
2003 BOURGUEIL “LES PERRIÈRES” . . . . .	28.00	302.40
2003 CHINON “LES PICASSES” . . . . .	28.00	302.40
2004 CHINON “BEAUMONT” . . . . .	16.95	183.06
2005 BOURGUEIL “CUVÉE TRINCH!” . . . . .	14.00	151.20
2005 BOURGUEIL “LA DILETTANTE”. . . . .	18.95	204.66



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—BURGUNDY *TERROIR* SAMPLER—

## DOMAINE RÉGIS BOUVIER

**T**he other evening after closing, the staff and I tasted through this intriguing sampler and wow, what a treat. Tasting these exciting, pleasure-filled reds, you will be witness to the intricacies of Burgundian *terroir*. Let's call it painless research and development. Yeah, look at it like that.

The idea for this sampler came to me in Bouvier's cellar in Marsannay, at the top of the Côte-de-Nuits. He served a series of his 2004s, then in the same order his 2005s. He explained that the first red, his Bourgogne "En Montre Cul," is from a Dijon vineyard, that there used to be a lot of Pinot Noir just south of Dijon but that now one sees houses there instead. Then came his red from Marsannay, the first village south of Dijon, followed by his Fixin, Gevrey Chambertin, and Morey Saint Denis. Five villages, five distinct wine personalities even though the five are all from Pinot Noir made in exactly the same way by the same winemaker in the same vintage (except the Bourgogne, because the 2004 is sold out). You really see the vivid role of *terroir* in Burgundy, and it is a fascinating experience.

To round off the sampler to an even six bottles, we include Bouvier's Marsannay rosé. Start with it in order to stimulate your taste buds and brain cells.

Please try to arrange to taste the reds side by side in geographic order as listed below. Don't mask the labels, because in this tasting you want to know which wine is which.

### 2005 MARSANNAY ROSÉ

Marsannay is to Burgundian rosé what Bouzeron is to Aligoté; it is the only rosé in Burgundy with its own appellation. It is all Pinot Noir. As with a white Burgundy, Bouvier's rosé completes its malolactic fermentation, which gives it a nice, deep, textured feel on the palate.

**\$18.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$194.40** PER CASE

### 2005 BOURGOGNE ROUGE "EN MONTRE CUL"

These Pinot Noir vines are 55 years old. It is an exceptional Bourgogne *rouge*, loaded with Pinot fruit, and it makes me wonder what we lost when Dijon's housing ate up the vineyards that had flourished there for centuries.

**\$22.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$237.60** PER CASE

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## 2004 MARSANNAY ROUGE “LES LONGEROIES”

The 50-year-old vines are on the slopes. More tannic and structured than the Bourgogne, the Marsannay seems to my palate quite generous and fun to drink now. And it seems less rustic, too. I don't want to go too far, don't want to tell you what to think. See how your palate differentiates them.

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

## 2004 FIXIN

Excellent dark color. Does it seem more tightly knit, more promising an age than the first two, somehow more “serious” a wine? You should be impressed by the impeccable winemaking, too, which allows us to concentrate on the individual character of the *terroirs*.

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

## 2004 GEVREY CHAMBERTIN

Gevrey is famous, Fixin is not. Why? Is the answer in your wine glasses?

This 2004 is so very Gevrey, in my opinion. Here is the depth, the complexity, and perhaps it has more secrets to divulge than the previous wines as it ages? It gives a good, rich, delicious noir-ish swallow and shows, as Clive Coates likes to put it, good grip. Now think about it. How much is better grip worth?

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

## 2004 MOREY SAINT DENIS

To me, the four previous reds lead stylistically right up to the Gevrey in a pretty straight line, but now there is an emphatic detour when we get to Morey Saint Denis. It anticipates its southern neighbor, Chambolle-Musigny. The Gevrey seemed solid and firm, dense and tannic, the Morey deep and velvety. Some might call it more feminine. If Bouvier had a Chambolle, it would be the logical next step after the Morey, I'm sure. More satin, more charm.

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

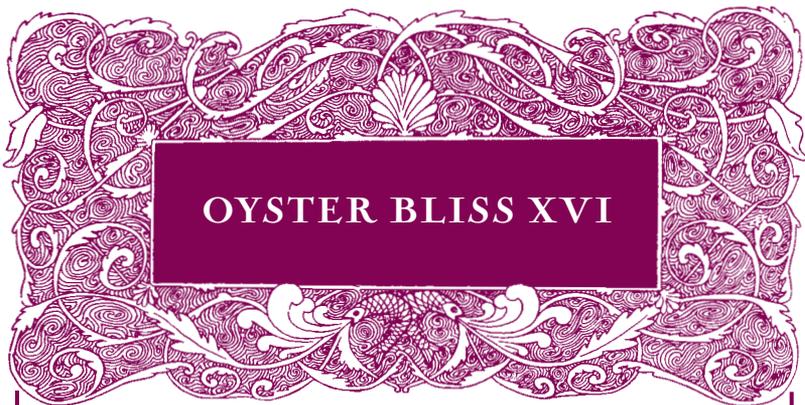
## SIX-BOTTLE *TERROIR* SAMPLER

*Normally \$176*

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$140**

*(20% discount)*

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## OYSTER BLISS XVI

**D**id winter happen? Here we are, April. Fire-in-the-fireplace days were few this year, nor was it a winter cold enough for pulling out great old bottles of aged reds, but I've been through a bunch of raw oysters. And oyster wines. The Cheverny from the Loire, for example. The Vézelay from La Cadette. Chablis from Savary and Lavantureux, and even a Raveneau now and then. A minerally Montée de Tonnerre with oysters? *Mais oui*. It works. Too bad we don't have enough Raveneau left for Oyster Bliss.

Speaking of Oyster Bliss, it is almost upon us, folks. Iced oysters on the half-shell and the wines that go with. "Bring 'em on," in the words of our courageous Decider. When I say bring 'em on, I mean oysters, lots of 'em, and maybe some hot little grilled sausages on the side. As for some crisp, cold, minerally white wines, leave that to me.

Here is our recipe: close our parking lot to cars, set up tents and tables, call up Monterey Fish to select the best available oysters, call in chef Christopher Lee of Eccolo restaurant to mind the cuisine, bread by Acme, and let's have some live music, too.

Come on, everybody!

Note the date:

SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 11 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

*The event is presented by Café Fanny.*

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## WHITE BEFORE RED

I've been asked if I really write these newsletters. Yes, if someone else contributes, they are credited, like Jim Harrison last month and Steve Edmunds this month.

It surprises me that anyone could think that these brochures are the work of an ad agency. Aren't these notes on my wine selections obviously personal? This page, for example, is the result of my own incapacity to fully enjoy a red wine without a white or rosé to precede it. And a meal with white wine only, no red? Yikes.

The two wines below are not new arrivals. They are here purely because I have grown to love this very progression at meals, Epiré to Belles-Graves, and I want to recommend the pairing.

Your part of the equation is simple. You just buy the two wines, serve the white before the red, and enjoy yourself. Both will still be good the next day if you don't finish them. Simply recork the bottles and don't allow them to get warm or in too much light. In fact, there is a half-empty bottle of Belles-Graves on my dinner table from last night as I write.

### 2004 SAVENNIÈRES "CUVÉE SPÉCIALE" CHÂTEAU D'ÉPIRÉ

For one thing, this is a dry white that I believe, given its quality and aging potential, should sell for three times its price. Is that fair? No, their price is unjustly low. While it shows the depth of interest and versatility of a great white Burgundy, it tastes only of Epiré. Old vines in schist, low yields, fermented in cask, bottled unfiltered. Plus, it is a wine that grows on you. Believe it or not, back in the 1920s and '30s, Epiré sold in Parisian catalogs at the same price as Yquem.

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

### 2003 LALANDE-DE-POMEROL CHÂTEAU BELLES-GRAVES

The important words are Pomerol and Graves. This tastes like a Pomerol/Graves blend. What a super claret in 2003. Dark color; deep, expressive perfume with a hint of roasted thyme; flavorful palate; chewy enough, but not excessively concentrated. It absolutely thrives at table. Action-packed from start to finish.

**\$28.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$302.40** PER CASE

*(Discount: six bottles each at 20% off equals \$240)*

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# FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THE ADORATION OF THE MAGIC)

*by Steve Edmunds of Edmunds St. John winery*

So, there I was, tasting my way through several dozen battalions of wine one Sunday morning last December, with Kermit, Bruce Neyers, and David Schildknecht. We'd just moved through a string of five 2005 Loire Valley white wines made from the Sauvignon Blanc grape, one from Reuilly and two each from Pouilly-Fumé and Sancerre, and it began to dawn on me that as I'd moved from one wine to the next, my whole nervous system seemed to undergo a series of changes that followed each change of wine. The first thing I formulated to myself about it, in words, was how different each of the wines was from the others, even those from the "same" place. The other thing that registered was that I'd gradually begun to feel almost as though I could fly.

I should probably mention that this was the second straight day we'd convened to taste, and that on the first day we'd tasted an awful lot of wines, slightly less than a hundred of them. There are those, I suppose, who might read the previous sentence and think, "Oh, what fun!" And there may have been a time much earlier in my wine days when I would have concurred. (These days I think I'd just say: Warning! Don't try this at home!) It's probably worth mentioning, too, that since none of these wines is likely to be the subject of headlines like "Judgment at Paris," nor linked forever with a numeric score from a famous wine writer, each is thus free to become merely something nice to drink with dinner, maybe something to spark a fond memory some years hence. Thus the work of tasting through so many of them becomes worth every sniff and every sip.

Amid so many wines, these five beauties each seemed to have what it takes to energize a weary taster, to take hold of one's soul and give it wings for a few moments. The effect was astonishing. Without thinking about it, I said (or perhaps it might be more accurately stated that I heard these words come from my lips), "Kermit, maybe I should write something about these wines for your newsletter!" Kermit took note of my sudden enlivenment and reminded me by phone a couple weeks later, letting me know he looked forward to my exposition of this "epiphany."

An epiphany isn't something you can explain, even if you write a book about it (even though you could, as Yogi Berra once suggested, look it up). And you may already know how hard it is to talk about wine in a way that makes any sense to someone who may not talk about wine for a living.

And of course after those couple of weeks had passed and I tried to think back

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on the event, it was all too apparent that recapturing my experience in words would require more than the few quick notes I'd written that Sunday morning. I pinned my hopes on tasting the wines again.

Since I was going to have all five of these wines open at once, it seemed like a good idea to invite some other people to help empty the bottles. It also seemed like it might illuminate things even more if there was food involved, so we decided on a dinner party. Lo and behold, as they used to say, back when wine was still a miracle, the only available date for this gathering turned out to be January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, also known in some quarters as Twelfth Night.

So we invited four other couples. Cornelia made the house look festive and beautiful. I whipped up a ceviche with sea scallops and salmon, using juice from the abundant crop of Meyer lemons on the tree behind our house, a whisper of ginger, the tiniest bit of jalapeño, and so forth. There were crab cakes with a red-pepper aioli. A petrale sole dish called "Fish Elvira." Some ravioli with goat cheese, and ravioli with peas and zucchini, served with pear and bitter greens.

After the guests arrived and we opened some Champagne (a tender, marvelous *premier cru* pink from Veuve Fourny et Fils), I excused myself to taste the evening's white wines in solitude to try to revisit what it was that had excited me a month earlier. I began with the Reuilly *blanc* from Denis Jamain, a forthright, high-strung wine that surprised me with the smell of fresh spearmint. It was satiny on the tongue, and yet ethereally light, just as I'd found it on first tasting, a series of precise, elegant flavors, suspended along a high-tension wire running from fat to lean, like silk underwear on a North Berkeley clothesline on a sunny day in winter.

Next came the Pouilly-Fumé from Jacques Carroy. Such a pretty nose, floral, almost face-powdery. Yet like all these wines, there's an underlying sense of something like iron at its core, and the flavors are in even finer focus than in the Reuilly, though the wine seems nearly weightless on the palate, and, for that, even more seductive.



The Pouilly-Fumé "Vieilles Vignes" from Régis Minet is marked by the added depth, amplitude, and authority of aroma and flavor that seems to come from

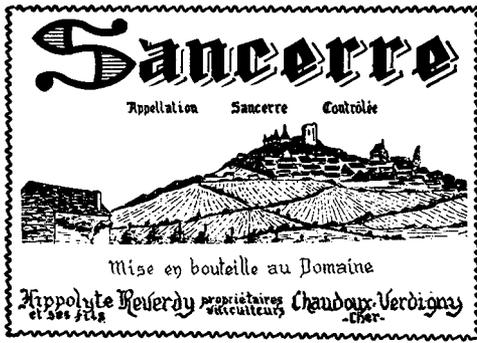
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older vines. Makes sense, doesn't it? You get to a certain age, and when you speak, everybody knows just what you mean, and you're taken seriously. The water's getting deeper here, and it feels good.

At this point I'm reminded of a conversation some years ago with an old friend who had always been fascinated to hear the things I might say about whatever



wine we were drinking, and who thought it would be great if I would try to describe, in a similar way, my experience of sex. Now, I don't know whether it would be great or not, but when I found myself thinking about *how* I would describe it, I thought of being at the edge of a vast river, in a shallow place where the flow was gentle and easy, then gradually drifting in deeper and eventually finding my-

self carried away by forces much greater than I'd ever imagined. Each of these wines seemed to carry me farther from the starting place, and each changed the way the world looked to me. The Sancerre from Daniel Chotard was immensely classy and fine. The Reverdy was even better. You know, after you get in to a certain depth, you just have to swim. (Hallelujah! Maybe this wasn't epiphany. Maybe it was baptism.)

I don't know how many years they've been making wine in that stretch of the Loire where the Sauvignon reigns, but there is a mastery at work there, such that the experience of tasting each of these wines carries with it a profound sense of meeting with an "other," a living presence as substantial and legitimate as one's own. And a sense, too, of feeling, in that presence, the weight of the past, of the steady, devoted practice of countless generations of human souls, tending their vines, and watching the river flow. Of marking the births of children and grandchildren, and the passing of elders, and shepherding the spirit of their village, through the endless risings and settings of Sun and Moon, and the raising of many glasses in ceremony and remembrance. Something for a California winemaker to chew on, no?

