



The Wine and Cheese Cask

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September 15, 2019 – October 14, 2019

Great 2018s from the Loire & a 2015 Renaissance

After dealing with consecutive difficult vintages, growers in the Loire enjoyed a 2018 harvest of both quality and quantity. Adding to last month's bounty we have six different grapes delivering the delicious and fascinating diversity of the Loire Valley.

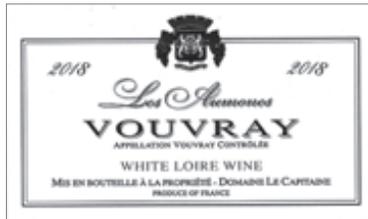
Le Capitaine

2018 Vouvray 'Les Aumones' (Domaine Le Capitaine)

Sale Price \$12.99 – \$132.50 case of twelve

Les Aumones is a Vouvray we have carried for decades. We will always remember the warm hospitality and the older vintages offered by Madame and Monsieur Villain. Today the estate is operated by Alain

Le Capitaine, who more than capably continues to make this delicious demi-sec Vouvray. The 2018 might be his best version of this cuvée. This off-dry Chenin Blanc with its honey-laced pear fruit and soft chalky earthiness is a Vouvray-only experience.



Pineau D'Aunis

2018 Coteaux du Loir 'Cuvée du Rosier' (Pascal Janvier)

Sale Price \$17.99 – \$183.50 case of twelve

Like last month's white Jasnieres, this red Coteaux du Loir from Janvier has benefitted from the excellent conditions of the 2018 harvest with an extra dose of concentration.

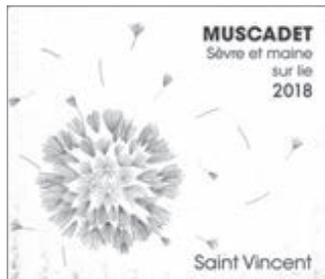
The Loir (no 'e') is a tributary of the Loire. With its raspberry and black pepper flavors, the ancient red grape Pineau d'Aunis invokes feasts of roasted game birds. It will also match the delicious contemporary combination of roasted beets, chèvre, and arugula.



Saint Vincent

2018 Muscadet Sèvre et Maine 'Saint Vincent' (Delhommeau)

Sale Price \$13.99 – \$142.70 case of twelve



The Delhommeau clan has seriously upped their game with the 2018 Saint Vincent. This 2018 Muscadet is ripe with orchard fruits and deep with fine mineral flavors. Muscadet of this quality is ideal for cod and haddock sprinkled with herbs and served with a simply dressed salad.

Chinon

2018 Chinon 'Les Lisons' (Château de la Bonnelière)

Sale Price \$17.99 – \$183.50 case of twelve



We are always pleased to offer a new Loire Valley Cabernet Franc, in this case a near-perfect rendition from Marc Plouzeau at Château de la Bonnelière. The vines in Les Lisons are southeast facing, fifty years old, and organically grown. The 2018 is gorgeous from start to finish. Aromas of mulberry fruit combine with lively tannins and an earthy, mineral finish. A lovely red with seared salmon and a bean salad.

Sauvignon Gold

2018 Sancerre (Domaine Raimbault-Pineau)

Sale Price \$19.99 – \$203.90 case of twelve

Whether Sauvignon Blanc originated in Sancerre or not, this Loire Valley village is the primal homeland of this deliciously popular grape. Its worldwide popularity ensures a decent price for all who grow it, but there is still value to be had when standards remain high. Our latest find is the ripe but evenly balanced 2018 from Raimbault-Pineau. It was awarded a gold medal at the Concours Mondiale du Sauvignon.



Romo Man

2015 Cour-Cheverny 'Cuvée Renaissance' (François Cazin)

Sale Price \$19.99 – \$203.90 case of twelve

To our knowledge, François Cazin is the best grower of the obscure white Loire varietal Romorantin. His regular cuvée is always a deliciously dry white with quince and pear fruit. In the best of vintages he makes a late harvest wine from his oldest vines. This, to our tastes, is one of the most fascinating white wines of the Loire Valley, and given its rarity one of its best bargains. François releases this wine late because Romorantin is capable of both high sugar and high acidity. The 2015 achieved the proper balance and delivered this zesty semi-sweet wine. It will age at a leisurely pace, but would be delicious today with a cheese course and spicy charcuterie.

The Rhone Report

2018 Côtes du Rhône 'Viognier' (Château du Trignon)

Sale Price \$14.99 – \$152.90 case of twelve

Viognier, once an expensive rarity, has now become an affordable delight. Trignon's 2018 is a full-bodied, richly aromatic white that has the ability to match well with spicy cuisines. Wonderful aromas of peaches and lime leaf lead to a weighted palate of intense yet crisp and dry flavors.



2017 Côtes du Rhône Villages 'Terre d'Argile' (Domaine de la Janasse)

Sale Price \$24.99 – \$254.90 case of twelve



The last three vintages of Janasse's Terre d'Argile have all been excellent. We always marvel at the attention to detail that this branch of the Sabon family put into this Côtes du Rhône Villages. Aside from the absolute deliciousness of the wine, they bottle it in heavy glass, use an expensive long

cork, and sell it in a wooden box. This is their not-so-subtle way of advertising the vineyard as the equal of many producers of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The blend features a healthy dose of Mourvedre (30%), giving it more structure and spice.

2015 Gigondas (Domaine du Cayron)

Sale Price \$27.99 – \$285.50 case of twelve

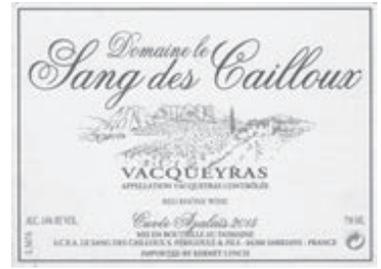
Way back in 1997 Robert Parker gave Domaine du Cayron five stars, making it one of only three properties in the Gigondas appellation to receive his highest rating. A lot has changed in Gigondas since then. Prices have shot up and many producers now make single-vineyard special cuvées to justify these prices. But not at Domaine du Cayron. For over 175 years the Faraud family has made this one wine. It is a dark, lusty red with plenty of rustic charm. The 2015 vintage probably tastes just like the 1978 vintage (both were great years). Parker concludes his profile of the Domaine by stating that "Properly served and matched up with the right culinary offering, they are memorable wines that can take one on a pleasant trip to the nineteenth century." We interpret this as a suggestion to open the bottle a couple of hours before serving with a fine cut of beef or lamb. That is, if you don't have a source for venison or boar.



2015 Vacqueyras (Domaine le Sang des Cailloux)

Sale Price \$27.99 – \$285.50 case of twelve

The Sang des Cailloux always lives up to its poetic name. The 2015 does taste like the blood of stones from this biodynamic estate in Vacqueyras. Grenache dominates, with its plummy fruit accented by herbs of the garrigue and a stony, dry finish. If you feel anemic and want a deep, dark Southern Rhone experience here is your transfusion.



Chilean Pinot Noir

2018 Valle del Itata Pinot Noir (Terra Pura)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$101.90 case of twelve



Chile's Valle del Itata is a rediscovered area to the south of the main growing areas. The 2018 Terra Pura Pinot Noir has a depth of fruit and a cool, dry finish. It represents extremely good value in Pinot Noir.

Weiss Bianco

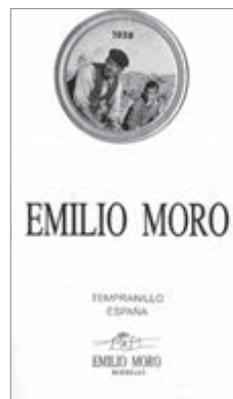
2017 Pinot Bianco/Weissburgunder (St. Michael-Eppan)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$101.90 case of twelve

This model winery in Alto Adige makes extraordinary Pinot Bianco. Their Schulthauer is legendary and now back in stock. And for some reason we don't need to know our wholesaler reduced the price of the basic Pinot Bianco. At this price it is an extreme bargain.



Emilio Moro



2016 Ribera del Duero (Emilio Moro)

Sale Price \$27.99 – \$285.50 case of twelve

There are darker, heavier, and more dramatic Ribera del Duero Tempranillos in the market, but this version from Emilio Moro is what we most enjoy. The 2016 is so impeccably balanced between fruit and oak, structure and tannin, that it is our go-to Spanish red for a stew of pork and red beans along with piquillo peppers and Manchego.

Sanguineto

2016 Rosso di Montepulciano (Sanguineto I e II)

Sale Price \$17.99 – \$183.50 case of twelve

The Sanguineto estate is not a monoculture wine property like many in Tuscany. Here the land also produces wheat and olives. The wine produced is an ultra-traditional blend of Prugnolo Gentile, Canaiolo Nera, and Mammolo. There is no new oak, only natural yeast fermentation and very little if any sulfur. This way of winemaking has been passed down from generation to generation with little deviation. The 2016 starts with lively cherry fruit and spicy tannins. After some breathing time the wine unfolds with waves of richness, ripeness, and a full, long finish. This is a delicious red that a bit of patience will reward.



The Land of Pomerol

2016 Lalande-de-Pomerol (Château Beaulieu)

Sale Price \$17.99 – \$183.50 case of twelve

To the north of the famous village of Pomerol lies the value appellation of Lalande-de-Pomerol. Here one gets an earlier drinking window and much of the incredible quality of the Merlot grape grown in this part of Bordeaux. Château Beaulieu's 2016 is a gorgeous dry red with fresh raspberry and plum fruit and an earthy truffle-scented finish. The soft tannins and ripe flavors will match well with a dish of sautéed mushrooms and a seared tenderloin.



Specialty Foods

Cowgirl Creamery Hop Along \$27.99 per lb (Regular Price \$30.99)

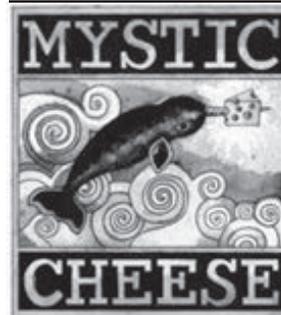
Cowgirl Creamery was founded in the 90s by two friends with extensive experience in San Francisco's restaurant industry. When Sue Conley and Peggy Smith paired up to launch a specialty food distribution business, they found themselves renting a space north of San Francisco that included a cheesemaking room, so, naturally, they started making cheese. Years later they have a national presence and an established reputation for their award-winning cheeses. As they continue to innovate, one of their newest products is Hop Along, a semi-firm cheese made from organic cow's milk. Washed in cider and aged for 45 days, the texture is smooth and pliant. With a bright, grassy aroma and rich flavors of sweet cream and honey, it's a perfect fall cheese to pair with cider or beer.



La Marquesa Servilleta \$14.99 per lb (Regular Price \$15.99)

Servilleta is the Spanish term for "napkin," referring in this case to the cheesecloth used to press and drain the curds. This process results in the distinctively rustic, uneven shape of this traditional Spanish goat cheese. Made with pasteurized goat's milk, it has a bright and clean flavor to complement its rich, creamy texture. The exterior is lightly dusted with paprika, giving it a vibrant color and lightly peppery tang. Pair with fresh fruit or Serrano ham.

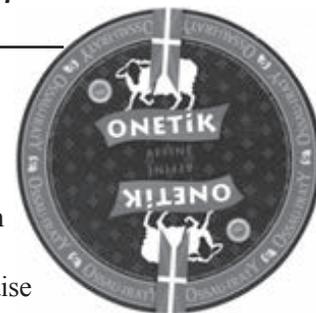
Mystic Cheese Co. Finback \$21.99 per lb (Regular Price \$23.99)



Last month we featured Mystic's new blue cheese, Bowhead Blue. This month we have another new offering from them: Finback. Comparisons to English classics like Lancashire or Caerphilly are apt for this cow's milk cheese, which has aged for around 3 months. The texture is dense and extremely crumbly, and the flavor is clean and tart with an underlying brown butter sweetness. And as with the Bowhead Blue, a salty finish evokes the creamery's seaside location. Try this drizzled with honey.

Onetik Ossau-Iraty Affiné \$17.99 per lb (Regular Price 19.99)

Granted AOP status in 1980, Ossau-Iraty is a traditional sheep's milk cheese from the Basque region of France. Though AOP regulations govern key facets of production (such as specifying that milk must come only from Manech and Basco-Béarnaise breeds of sheep), there are slight variations depending on the region and producer. Onetik is a smaller producer of traditional Basque cheeses, located in the town of Macaye at the foot of the Pyrenees. Theirs is aged 6 months and is an exemplary Ossau-Iraty, balanced and complex. Flavors of sweet cream, caramel, and hazelnuts mingle in the alluringly smooth and creamy paste of this semi-firm cheese.



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Wines of the Month — September 15, 2019 through October 14, 2019

2017 Chianti Montalbano (Pierazuoli)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$107.89 case of twelve

Montalbano is one of the lesser known Chianti areas, but this 2017 from Pierazuoli shines. It's pure Sangiovese with dark cherry fruit and a woody spice. Try with a bean soup or any flavorful pasta dish.

2016 Côtes du Rhône 'Elégance' (La Bouvade)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$107.89 case of twelve

It's a good idea to always have a ten-dollar Côtes du Rhône around. La Bouvade's 2016 is fruity and spicy with enough earth and tannin to keep it focused and dry. Lovely with ratatouille and lamb.

2018 Rueda (Marqués de Cáceres)

Sale Price \$8.99 – \$97.09 case of twelve

Cáceres now makes this delicious, dry, and affordable white from Verdejo grapes. The 2018 is fresh and lively with green, plummy fruit. Great for a paella with seafood and artichokes.

2018 Pinot Grigio (Gorgo)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$107.89 case of twelve

Our favorite ten-dollar Pinot Grigio is back. Gorgo's 2018 delivers the soft ripe appeal of the grape while maintaining a serious dry finish.

