



# Tim's Wine Market

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We are all familiar with the information a wine label gives us; who makes it, where does it come from, etc... However, most pay little attention to important information that is often found on the back label. Here you may find a bit more detail about the winery, or the method of production, but on any non-domestic wine you will always find an "Imported By" statement. This gives the name of the person, or their company, who brought the wine to the US. This can often be equally relevant because knowing the style and tastes of a specific importer goes a long way in telling you what to expect from the wine. This quarter I have made three selections from specific importers, well, sort of, that give you a hint to what the wine is like before you even pull the cork.

## **Regis Bouvier Marsannay Clos du Roy 2019 - \$50**

This is not the first wine from Regis Bouvier to earn our spotlight, I also selected the 2012 Gevrey-Chambertin back in the spring of 2015. While the wines of Gevrey are more famous than those of Marsannay, this example from the lieu-dit site, Clos du Roy gives 90% of the character, but at roughly half the price. After all, the name means this was once the king's private vineyard so it must be good! More important for our theme, this wine is imported by Kermit Lynch, a name that has graced this club more than a few times. What is important here, besides the amazing wine, is understanding Kermit's relevance to the modern wine business.

Kermit Lynch was born in Bakersfield, California, and raised in San Luis Obispo. In the late 1960s he traveled to San Francisco to join the hippie movement and was making a living fashioning carpet remnants into bags for other semi-homeless denizens of the Haight-Ashbury to keep their belongings. Then in 1972 he borrowed \$5000 from his ex-wife to open a small wine store in Berkeley. Fascinated by the process of winemaking he journeyed to France and was surprised at how different the wines tasted in the cellars of the producers, compared to what he had on the shelf in his store. He quickly realized that the journey from France to California involves a boat trip through the Panama canal, where the heat was cooking the wines. At that point he decided to begin importing his own selections using refrigerated containers in order to ensure the quality of his wines. This year he celebrates his 50th year in business and I strongly suggest reading his book, ***Adventures on the Wine Route***, about the strong relationships he has with the people with whom he works.

Part of Kermit's process for selecting wines is to not get involved in the cellar process of the winemakers, except when it comes to filtering the finished wines. He lets the winemaker make all the technical decisions, then goes into the cellar and selects the vinified vineyard parcel, or specific barrels, that he wants to buy. He has worked with Regis Bouvier for years and makes no comment to his process here, but my guess is that there is little to decide in this exemplary cellar.

Starting with this vintage the wines are now made by Bernard Bouvier, Regis' brother, who produces this wine from the famed Clos du Roy vineyard. This site is currently only a lieu-dit, but is up for elevation to Premier Cru status in the near future. Given the steepness of this vineyard it amazes me it was passed over initially. Bouvier's parcel is made up of 40 year old vines, which also explains why this wine has superb concentration.

Even though it is not the most expensive wine in this offering I begin here because this is the most approachable. After a half hour in the decanter it offers a red fruit focused nose of rhubarb, hibiscus, blood orange and tart cherry. On the palate it shows moderate concentration, with high toned acidity and nice clarity and focus. Drink 2022-2032 and Kermit suggests that no meal involving game meats should be consumed without a bottle of this wine.

## **Albert Morot Savigny-les-Beaune La Bataillère 2020 - \$75**

In the opening paragraph I mention that it is the strip label that tells you who the importer of each wine is, but in this case the story is a bit more nuanced. I first visited this property in 1993 with importer Bobby Kacher. Kacher was born in South Florida but moved to Washington, D.C. after high school. Eventually he went to work with a wine importer, World Shippers, then in 1984 he opened his own company, Robert Kacher Selections. For the first few years of his career Bobby lived in France six months each year, working with producers to refine their production. In those days winemaking was still rudimentary, and unlike Kermit, Bobby would often push producers to clean up their cellar practices. Bobby would even go so far as to buy the barrels he wanted his wines to be aged in, to ensure they were not spoiled with brettanomyces.

This spoilage yeast, which smells like a dirty horse blanket, was very common in Burgundies pre-2000, so-much-so that many renowned critics errantly thought it was just part of the wines.

While he was occasionally criticized by some of his contemporaries for meddling in the cellars of his producers, Bobby defended his actions by emphasizing the quality and value associated with his name. For many years, we sold a small ocean of Kacher Selections, with many of our customers insisting on buying only wines that carry his label. Some of you may have attended a dinner we hosted with Bobby in 2015, in what was his unannounced farewell tour before his retirement. Today he divides his time between fishing in Bradenton, Florida and his cabin in the woods of Oregon.

For our feature, I visited the estate of Albert Morot during that fateful trip in 1993. The estate of Albert Morot was founded in 1820 and remains in the family to this day. For much of their history they were negotiants, buying wine from other properties and bottling under their label. In 1980 the then owner, Françoise Chopin, closed the negotiant business to focus on their estate wines. When I visited in 1993 it was apparent they had great vineyards and potential, but the cellar was old and badly in need of updating. This was the first place where Bobby sent barrels to age his selections. I can remember Françoise even complaining that he deducted their cost from her bill. Today the estate has been modernized by her great-nephew, Geoffroy Choppin de Janvry, who has also converted their 20 acres of vineyards to certified organic farming.

This wine is from a 3 acre Premier Cru vineyard that lies north of the village of Savigny, on a southeast facing slope with vines that age from 20-50 years old. Geoffroy crops a very low yield and performs a 4-7 day cold soak of the grapes before fermentation begins using native yeast. This is important to note when you see the color of this wine compared with Bouvier's. I urge you to decant this wine for at least a half-hour, even longer if possible. Then you are greeted with notes of kirsch, raspberry puree, black licorice, dark chocolate and dried brush. On the palate this wine shows incredible concentration, with tannins that grip quickly and carry to the finish. Drink 2025-2035.

### **Foradori Teroldego 2021 - \$42**

This wine could be an entire newsletter by itself. Elisabetta Foradori is one of the most important winemakers in the world, from her groundbreaking beginning, cracking the boys club of Italian winemaking, to her challenging the powers-that-be of conventional winemaking, and her revolutionary study on the genetic source of Teroldego. Heck, this could probably morph into an entire book! Unfortunately, due to limited space I have to glance over all these juicy bits, but I will offer a few websites to visit if you want the deeper stories.

This wine is imported by Louis/Dressner, which was founded by Joe Dressner and his wife, Denyse Louis. Joe was primarily a writer, spending the summers each year at a farmhouse in the Mâconnais region of France owned by his wife's family. After a few years the couple struck on the idea of importing the wines of the friends they had made in the area. In 1988 they began their small import company, focusing primarily on New York City, where they lived the remainder of the year. I met him in the mid-1990's when he was starting to expand beyond the city.

Where Joe made his first mark on the wine business was to use the internet as a sales tool. As a writer he posted frequently on his blog, before the era of social media, giving great detail about his producers and their winemaking techniques. While this is standard now, in the early 2000s it was revolutionary. He also focused on the way the wines were made, eschewing producers who manipulated their wines just to receive higher ratings, or striving for mass consumer appeal. Today he is recognized as the OG of the natural wine movement, although he rarely used the term himself. I encourage you to visit their website, [louisdressner.com](http://louisdressner.com) for more information, or read Eric Asimov's tribute to Joe in the New York Times. Sadly he died of cancer in 2011.

One of his first excursions outside of France was to the estate of Elisabetta Foradori, who crafts otherworldly wines in the Dolomites region of Italy. This estate started in 1939 when Vittorio Foradori, Elisabetta's grandfather, purchased an existing winery. She took over in 1984 and immediately began shifting focus to indigenous varieties, Teroldigo, Manzoni Bianco and Nosiola. After an extensive genetic study she has identified the original source clone of the Teroldigo variety, which has been produced in the region since the 1300s. Post WWII, clonal selection emphasized volume over quality and Elisabetta felt much of the wine produced was a poor example of the variety.

For this wine I encourage you to decant it a full hour before serving. 2021 was a very cool year so this example is a bit lighter than normal, but it still takes a little while to unwind. Once you give it time the nose is a summer berry basket mix of fresh blueberries and blackberry, graphite, dried sage and bay leaves. On the palate this wine shows good concentration, with forward and obvious tannins to start, then the fruit pushes through on the finish. Overall I find the 2021 less rustic than previous vintages, so drink 2022-2028.