



Tim's Wine Market

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No other region is as synonymous with the concept of terroir, a wine's sense of place, as Burgundy. This narrow stretch of land which separates central France from the Jura and the Alps has produced fine wines since the days of the Roman occupation, though the region first attained prestige under the rule of Charlemagne. Nearly 1300 years ago, the Frankish emperor encouraged local monasteries to propagate wine grapes throughout the region, and over hundreds of years the "modern" vineyards of Burgundy began to take shape. The monks' system of classifying vineyards based on terroir (village wines, Premier Cru, and Grand Cru) would be adapted in many forms throughout the Old World. It is no exaggeration to say that much of the modern wine world owes a great debt to Burgundy!

Over the past 40 years, the wines of Burgundy have experienced a global resurgence, largely due to a string of quality vintages and improvement of winemaking techniques. Also playing a major role is the now-widespread use of organic and biodynamic viticulture, which has improved the vine and soil health of the region, resulting in higher quality fruit. While the wines of the region have seemingly never been better, the obvious trade-off is increased demand, resulting in skyrocketing prices for many producers in Burgundy. Although this phenomenon affected only the high-end "cult wineries" at first, the heavy frosts and low yields present in the 2020-2021 vintages compounded this problem, making many Burgundian wines expensive at best and, more often than not, virtually inaccessible.

As a cooler climate region prone to frosts and high humidity, Burgundy is more susceptible to vintage variation than regions such as the Bordeaux or the Rhône. However, the good news is that the 2022 and 2023 vintages have provided some respite, being warmer and drier with higher yields in the vineyards. As a result, we are seeing increased volume and prices have come down a bit. This month, we will showcase a few offerings from the dynamite 2023 vintage, both produced by the Comtes de Saint-Martin négociant project.

A négociant is a winery which purchases fruit from multiple wine growers and blends them together, producing wines under their own label. Keep in mind that most Burgundy in the 20th century was actually made in this manner, allowing growers without on-site winemaking facilities to be paid fairly for their work. In this case, Comtes de Saint-Martin works with a handful of producers from Chablis in the far north to the great appellations of the Côte d'Or in order to produce quality, terroir-driven burgundy. Overseeing the winemaking is none other than Arnaud Baillet, whom European Reserve club members may recognize for his spectacular Volnay which was featured last year. Arnaud is something of a favorite here at Tim's Wine Market, and these two wines represent the excellent quality and value a good négociant wine brings to the table, particularly when a talented winemaker is in the driver's seat.

2023 Comtes de Saint-Martin Bourgogne Blanc - \$25

This wine is sourced from growers located throughout the Côte d'Or and the southern appellation of Saint-Veran. The result is a patchwork of different soil types and terroirs, including limestone, calcareous clay, granite, and even chalk, which all serve to increase the wine's aromatic complexity. Each producer who contributes fruit to this wine is committed to sustainable viticulture and the vast majority of fruit is harvested by hand. Once brought to the winery in Beaune, Arnaud takes over the process and puts his signature touches on the blend. These include a long, slow fermentation at cool temperatures and a six-month maturation in French oak, predominantly new barrels.

When you open this wine, I definitely recommend decanting for up to half an hour as it is a young Burgundy and needs a minute to stretch its legs. In addition, this wine benefits from a slight chill, around 50-55 degrees Fahrenheit. Once this wine has some time to open up it delivers notes of yellow apple, fennel pollen, white flowers, and wet stone. Drink now through 2027 with baked chicken thighs, salmon with mustard and dill, or tuna poke with avocado.

2023 Comtes de Saint-Martin Bourgogne Rouge - \$25

For the Bourgogne Rouge, all fruit is sourced from the clay-limestone vineyards of the Côte d'Or, sometimes coming within yards of its more well-known cousins (the bulk of this fruit comes from just outside Volnay, for instance). Similar to the Bourgogne Blanc detailed above, all fruit is sustainably grown and harvested by hand whenever possible. In the cellar,

the fruit is de-stemmed and treated in a similar manner as the Blanc, with six months aging in a mixture of stainless steel and gently-used oak before bottling.

When you open this wine, I would again suggest decanting for up to half an hour. In addition, though it does not need to be served quite as chilled as the Blanc, it performs nicely when served at cellar temperature, between 55-60 degrees Fahrenheit. Once this wine has some time to open up it delivers notes of tart red cherry, dried strawberry, hibiscus petal, and earth. Drink now through 2028 with black bean burgers, grilled bratwurst with sauerkraut, or baguette with soft cheeses such as Port Salut.

Beef Bourguignon

Beef Bourguignon is nothing more than a fancy name for beef stew, except the French take it up a notch using a full bottle of wine for the braising liquid. Please do not use the featured wine for this dish. I don't think Pinot Noir is heavy enough to cook with so use a cheap bottle of Côtes du Rhône or Rioja instead. Also, you can omit the anchovy paste in this dish but it lacks the depth if used and does not taste fishy at all.

1 (4-pound) boneless beef chuck-eye roast, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2- to 2-inch pieces, scraps reserved
Salt and pepper
6 ounces Salt pork, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 pound cremini mushrooms, trimmed, halved if medium or quartered if large
1 1/2 cups frozen pearl onions, thawed
1 tablespoon sugar
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
4 cups beef broth
1 (750-ml) bottle red Burgundy or Pinot Noir
5 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 teaspoon anchovy paste
2 onions, chopped coarse
2 carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch lengths
1 garlic head, cloves separated, unpeeled, and crushed
2 bay leaves
1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns
1/2 ounce dried porcini mushrooms, rinsed
10 sprigs fresh parsley, plus 3 tablespoons minced
6 sprigs fresh thyme

Toss beef and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt together in bowl and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Adjust oven racks to lower-middle and lowest positions and heat oven to 500 degrees. Place salt pork, beef scraps, and 2 tablespoons butter in large roasting pan. Roast on lower-middle rack until well browned and fat has rendered, 15 to 20 minutes.

While salt pork and beef scraps roast, toss cremini mushrooms, pearl onions, remaining 1 tablespoon butter, and sugar together on rimmed baking sheet. Roast on lowest rack, stirring occasionally, until moisture released by mushrooms evaporates and vegetables are lightly glazed, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer vegetables to large bowl, cover, and refrigerate.

Remove roasting pan from oven and reduce temperature to 325 degrees. Sprinkle flour over rendered fat and whisk until no dry flour remains. Whisk in broth, 2 cups wine, gelatin, tomato paste, and anchovy paste until combined. Add onions, carrots, garlic, bay leaves, peppercorns, porcini mushrooms, parsley sprigs, and thyme to pan. Arrange beef in single layer on top of vegetables. Add water as needed to cover three-quarters up side of beef (beef should not be submerged). Return roasting pan to oven and cook until meat is tender, 3 to 3 1/2 hours, stirring after 90 minutes and adding water to keep meat at least half-submerged.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer beef to bowl with cremini mushrooms and pearl onions; cover and set aside. Strain braising liquid through fine-mesh strainer set over large bowl, pressing on solids to extract as much liquid as possible; discard solids. Stir in remaining wine and let cooking liquid settle, 10 minutes. Using wide shallow spoon, skim fat off surface and discard.

Transfer liquid to Dutch oven and bring mixture to boil over medium-high heat. Simmer briskly, stirring occasionally, until sauce is thickened to consistency of heavy cream, 15 to 20 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, stir in beef and mushroom-onion garnish, cover, and cook until just heated through, 5 to 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Stir in minced parsley and serve. (Stew can be made up to 3 days in advance.)