

ANSONIA NOTEBOOK

OCTOBER 2015



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NOTES FROM HARPSWELL

October 2015 | Mark Wilcox

LIKE KISSING THE SEA ON THE LIPS, says the calling card of Portland's Eventide Oyster Bar. For our money there's no better way to describe the sensual pleasure of oysters on the half shell. A just-opened briny oyster is freshness itself, and requires nothing more than a slurp to deliver one of life's great gustatory experiences.

Not that we discovered the pleasure. Oysters are as American as apple pie, and grew in remarkable profusion all along the east coast from the earliest days that Europeans came to these shores. In fact, as New York City grew into a great commercial center during the 19th century, oyster restaurants and oyster markets were among its most celebrated features (with street vendor carts of the day offering oysters on the half shell instead of dirty-water dogs). Philadelphia provided oysters from its own estuary to the authors of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; the Chesapeake Bay's oyster fishery stretches back beyond Colonial times; and New Orleans has long made oysters a focus of its cuisine.

Perhaps it's the glow of our new home, but we think Maine's oysters are the best we have known anywhere in the world. Down the coast in Portland, Eventide displays a dozen or so different kinds of oysters at a time on a huge slab of granite, scooped out to make a place for the bed of shaved ice that holds them. A chalkboard identifies the oysters (like French wines they usually bear the name of their origin), including a few from as far away as the west coast. You can order them by the piece, and the shuckers will produce a plate that arrives with a key to the location of each oyster on the plate. The side-by-side approach fits right in with our wine-tasting habits, and a visit can make for a wonderful time sampling them side by side, exploring the subtle differences in texture, salt, and sweetness.

Eventide also offers some of the best oyster accompaniments we have seen. Our taste tends to minimal accoutrements, like a squeeze of lemon juice, particularly when the oysters are just-harvested and juicy. Traditional American cocktail sauce of

horseradish and ketchup quickly overwhelms the flavor of an oyster, as does the mignonette of shallots and vinegar that is popular in France. But Eventide offers a wonderful series of flavored shaved ices – horseradish, Tabasco, pickled red onion, and kimchee among them – that allow you to add just a soupçon of flavor. We're working on finding a way to make them at home, and will let you know when we succeed.

Why is Maine an extraordinary place for oysters? It's the cold and pristine waters. The unusually high tides (9 feet on the average at our house) flush the coastal estuaries far upstream twice a day. The oysters grow more slowly in the cold water, and their meat is plump and firm. Over the last few decades, growing recognition of the quality has inspired more oyster farming, and the best known farms – Pemaquid,





2013

VIN FIN DE BOURGOGNE

Bourgogne

APPELLATION D'ORIGINE CONTRÔLÉE

CHARDONNAY

Mis en bouteille

GPV

a la Réserve

WHITE WINE

DOMAINE GASTON & PIERRE RAVAU

VIGNERONS A LADOIX-SERRIGNY, CÔTE D'OR, FRANCE

PRODUCE OF FRANCE

Glidden Point, and Dodge Cove among others -- send their oysters to top restaurants across the country. Like many Mainers, these farmers tend to be careful stewards of the natural places that support their living, and there seem to be only good things ahead for the fishery.

Of course we don't have to drive down to Portland for fresh oysters. Local markets usually have at least one batch on hand, whether wild-caught or farmed. We like to pick up six each of two different kinds -- as in wine-tasting comparing one to another makes for rapid education and greater appreciation. We haven't yet found a place near the house to forage for ourselves, but perhaps the best plate we've had yet were picked up in Harpswell Cove, at the northern end of Harpswell Sound (our front yard). We are intrigued by the idea of raising our own oysters, and find ourselves inching closer to trying it out.

What is more, the Damariscotta River is just up the road from us. This estuary is home to many of Maine's top oyster farms, and has

been a source of oysters for millennia. (The Glidden Point Oyster Farm takes its name from the Glidden Midden, and ancient pile of oyster shells thought to be 2100 years old.) The growth of aquaculture in the estuary has

Why is Maine an extraordinary place for oysters? It's the cold and pristine waters.

produced another dividend: the re-emergence of a population of wild oysters that are increasingly foraged by individuals, much like the steamer clams and mussels that appear in the markets around here. We often pick up wild-caught Damariscottas at our local markets.

As you might expect, we have a great time matching oysters with our wines. The classic match is oysters and Chablis, and indeed can be inspired, with the brisk minerality of the Chablis playing off against the fresh meatiness of the oyster. There's another lesson in this, which is that unoaked or little-oaked wines fit oysters better than those raised in more oak. Perhaps it's the purity of the flavors in each that makes them pair so happily, but the principle informs our favorite matches. For Chardonnay, you don't have to stick with Chablis. Maillet's beautifully pure wines from the Maconnais are just delicious with oysters, as is the 2013 Bourgogne from Ravaut with its bright punch of acidity (despite having seen some older barrels on its way to the bottle).

Of course there's no need to stay with Chardonnay. Some will remember Tom's photo from Nantes that led off our July Futures brochure -- Muscadet from vines along the Loire estuary matched with Breton oysters from the same place. Muscadet is usually inexpensive and straightforward, but the fruit of its grape, the Melon de

Bourgogne, leaves room for saline and mineral qualities. The pairing can be gorgeous, and the picture still transports us to that June evening en Bretagne. (We expect to include a Muscadet in the November Issue of our Futures program.)

Sancerre and Pouilly Fume from further up the Loire also work well, as do a range of Alsatian whites – Mure’s dry Riesling can be beautiful, and we have greatly enjoyed oysters with Mersiols Auxerrois. Or simply open a bottle of Bardoux Champagne or Picamelot Crémant. In every case, if you think clean and pure, you’ll find a pretty nice match. It may have been a bold person that first ate an oyster, but ever since then, one needs only to love what is fresh.

MW

WINES FROM THIS ARTICLE

Gautheron Chablis Petit Chablis 2014

Gautheron Chablis 1er cru Vaucoupin 2013

Collet Chablis Vieilles Vignes 2013

Collet Chablis Grand Cru Vaucoupin 2011

Maillet Macon-Villages 2013

Maillet Macon-Verzé 2013

Ravaut Bourgogne Blanc 2013

Michot Pouilly-Fumé 2014

Muré Riesling 2013

Mersiols Auxerrois 2012

Bardoux Champagne Brut NV

Bardoux Champagne Millesimé 2007

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October Mixed Cases



Amiot Red Burgundies

Brothers Didier and Jean Louis Amiot seem to make better wine every year. Their wines are classic red Burgundies, showing earth, red fruits, violets, toast, and minerality. Most Amiot wines are better after a few years in the bottle, so we've included some older wines in this collection -- these should drink beautifully now.

6x	Morey-St-Denis '07	\$52
2x	Morey-St-Denis 1er "Charmes" '10	65
2x	Morey-St-Denis 1er "Millandes" '07	72
2x	Clos de la Roche Grand Cru '11	130

Retail: \$846

free east coast shipping | (save \$151)

Notebook Price: \$695

[Click to order a case >>](#)



Consider the Apple

Our only non grape-based imports are two apple products from the stark, windswept coast of Bretagne. The traditional cider is dark, slightly off dry, and earthy; the pommeau is an after-dinner cordial, a blend of cider and calvados. Both beautifully reflect their rugged origin, and are perfect choices for the coming fall weather.

9x	Melenig Cidre de Cornouaille	\$15
3x	Melenig Pommeau de Bretagne	25

Retail: \$210

free east coast shipping | (save 30%)

Notebook Price: \$149

[Click to order a case >>](#)



Weeknight White Burgundy

We think white Burgundy is the purest expression of the Chardonnay grape. It drinks well on its own, and reaches magnificent heights with food; but prices often restrict white Burgundies to special occasions. We try hard to find examples that are priced to enjoy on a weeknight. Here are four ideas – all pure chardonnay, two oaked lightly, and two not at all.

3x	Thomas Bourgogne 2012	\$22
3x	Ravaut Bourgogne 2013	25
3x	Gautheron Petit Chablis 2014	20
3x	Maillet Macon-Verzé 2013	28

Retail: \$285

free east coast shipping | (save \$51)

Notebook Price: \$234

[Click to order a case >>](#)



A Chill in the Air

Depending on where you live, temperatures are starting to dip in the evenings. We know nothing better to accompany a sweater and a pair of wool socks than a nice rich red wine and a fireplace. The Farmer's Almanac predicts a rough winter this year, so here's a collection of wines that we'll be drinking when the weather turns cold.

3x	Autard CDP Côte Ronde 2007	\$72
3x	Goubert Gigondas 2011	28
3x	Saint-Clair Saint-Joseph 2011	34
3x	Lazaret CDP Cuv. Exceptionnelle 07	54

Retail: \$564

free east coast shipping | (save \$79)

Notebook Price: \$485

[Click to order a case >>](#)



North vs South: the Rhone

The Rhone Valley is divided into two halves, each with a distinct style. Reds from the North are pure syrah, showing dark fruit, black pepper, and cloves. Reds from the South are blends of Grenache and others varietals, and are jammier and richer. All four are great cold weather wines. Avoid the Civil War with this collection of both.

3x	Goubert Gigondas 2011	\$28
3x	Font du Loup CDP 2011	42
3x	Bonnefond Cote Rotie 2011	54
3x	Saint Clair Crozes-Hermitage 2012	28

Retail: \$456
free east coast shipping | save \$71

Notebook Price: \$385

[Click to order a case >>](#)



German Rieslings

It's hard to imagine an more underappreciated category of wines today than German Rieslings. They're inexpensive, great for food pairing, diverse, complex, and delicious. We've chosen four wines ranging from bone dry to almost dry, all of which are balanced by beautiful, crystalline acidity and delicate slate minerality. Try this sampler to see what you've been missing.

3x	Dahm Badstube kabinet 2009	\$18
3x	Dahm Badstube halbtrocken 08	15
3x	Dahm Mosel Qualitätswein 11	13
3x	Dahm Badstube feinherb 2010	18

Retail: \$192
free east coast shipping | (save \$44)

Notebook Price: \$148

[Click to order a case >>](#)



Recipe Corner



Brussels Sprouts With Pickled Red Onion and Maple Mustard Vinaigrette

for the pickled red onion:

- 1 red onion, halved, thinly sliced
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt

for the maple-mustard vinaigrette:

- 1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme leaves, minced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 2 1/2 pounds brussels sprouts, medium-sized
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 sprigs fresh mint, leaves picked and torn
- 2 sprigs fresh dill, leaves picked

1. For pickled red onions: Bring vinegar, water, sugar, and salt to boil. Pour hot liquid over sliced onions and allow onions to cool in liquid to room temperature. Can be done a day in advance.

2. For maple mustard vinaigrette: Whisk together mustard, maple syrup, vinegar and thyme. Slowly drizzle in olive oil, whisking continuously, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Cut off ends of brussels sprouts and remove loose outer leaves. Wash and let dry. Cut in half lengthwise. Toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Place cut side down on baking sheet and roast at 400 degrees for 30 minutes or until crisp and brown on outside and tender inside. Allow to cool slightly.

4. Toss brussels sprouts with pickled red onions, mint, dill, and vinaigrette. Serve at room temperature. Can be done up to two hours in advance.

adapted from Eli Kulp, Fork Restaurant, Philadelphia

Recipe Corner

Marcella Hazan's Mushroom Risotto

1 oz Dried Porcini Mushrooms
2 cups very warm water
5 cups beef or chicken broth
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp onion, chopped fine
2 cups arborio rice
Black pepper, salt to taste
1/3 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano DOP, grated,
plus more for serving

1. Soak the dried porcinis in very warm water for 15 minutes. Drain, reserving the soaking liquid. Strain liquid through cheesecloth or fine sieve. Roughly chop the softened mushrooms. Bring broth to a slow, steady simmer in a saucepan.

2. In a shallow saute pan, put 1 tablespoon butter, olive oil, and chopped onion, heat to medium high, and saute until onion is translucent. Add rice, turning until grains are coated with butter and oil.

3. Add 1/2 cup of simmering broth, and stir. Cook rice, stirring constantly, over medium heat until liquid is absorbed. Add another 1/2 cup broth and repeat, remembering to continue stirring (this breaks down the rice structure and makes it creamy). After 10 minutes, add the mushrooms and 1 cup soaking liquid. Add 1/2 teaspoon sea salt or to taste.

4. Continue stirring and adding more simmering broth when all liquid is absorbed. Risotto is done when it is tender, but still firm to the bite. Remove from heat.

5. Add freshly ground black pepper, half of the parsley, 1 tablespoon butter, and Parmigiano-Reggiano, and stir.



Recipe Corner



Classic Apple Crisp

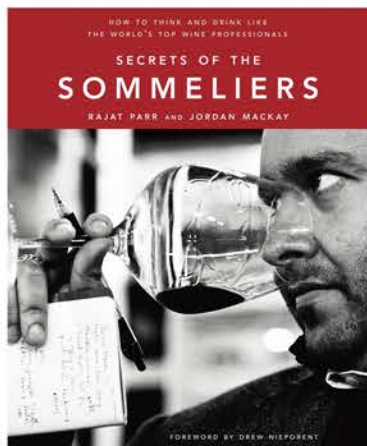
1 cup	flour
1 cup	brown sugar
1/2 cup	granulated sugar
3/4 cup	unsalted butter (1.5 sticks)
1 tbsp	cinnamon
1 cup	old fashioned oats
4-6	small apples, gala or similar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a glass baking dish.
2. Peel and core apples, slice into thin wedges.
3. Combine brown sugar and cinnamon, flour, and white sugar in food processor bowl. Add butter to the bowl and pulse until coarse meal forms; do not over-mix. Move to separate bowl and stir in oats.
4. Stir in oats. Spread flour mixture evenly over blueberries. Bake crisp until topping is golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes before serving.





Have you heard about



Secrets of the Sommeliers

Sommelier Rajat Parr's book is a beautiful introduction to meaningful wine. Addressing everything from tasting and aging to collecting and decanting, Parr's book mirrors our focuses on the Old World, particularly France and Burgundy. It's the single most useful wine book on our shelf.



Chef's Table

Lovers of food, art, travel, and culture will supremely enjoy this wonderful six-part series on Netflix. Each episode follows a famous chef, exploring the inspiration and reasoning behind his or her work. It is beautifully shot and skillfully produced, and will inspire even the most casual of home cooks.



AccuSharp Knife Sharpener

We're not much for kitchen gadgets, but at \$9, this is a remarkable little tool. It might not be precise enough for your Shun or Henkel, but it's so handy you'll end up using it for everything else – steak, serrated, paring, even cheap chef's knives. (Good stocking stuffer too.)





“My Favorite Wine”

Recommendations from an enthusiastic customer.

Name: Maggy Wolf

Home: Portland, Maine

About: I moved back to the Northeast in 2014 after 27 years in New Orleans, which I still visit frequently. I am an avid knitter and a budding gardener. I have a 23 year old son who shares his late father's and my love for France, especially Burgundy.

Favorite Wine: **Gérard Thomas et filles Bourgogne blanc**

Why Favorite: When I read the Ansonia newsletters, I am not just anticipating a good glass of wine, but am also transported to another part of the world, and when they feature Burgundy wines, I get to re-visit some of my favorite locales. Among these, occupying a special spot in my heart is the town of St. Aubin, as my husband and I and our young son spent several vacations in a gite near that village in the mid-1990s, and even though the "Bourgogne" appellation doesn't mean that any of the grapes are from the village, this affordable wine has the classic white Burgundy rich, toasty flavor typical of that Southern end of the Beaune region. (Also, gratefully acknowledging some changes since my first trip to Burgundy in the 1970s, I admit I get a kick out of the "*et Filles*" in the Domaine name.)

Sole Bonne Femme

4-8 oz mixed wild mushrooms, finely chopped
(regular mushrooms may be substituted)

3 shallots finely chopped

1/2 cup finely chopped parsley

1/4 tsp white pepper

2 1/2 lbs sole fillets

3/4 cup cold fish stock (or 1/2 cup water + 1/4
cup clam juice)

3/4 cup dry white wine

2 1/2 tbsp flour

3 tbsp salted butter

1/2 cup heavy cream or crème fraîche

Salt and white pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Butter a pan that can go from stove to oven
and spread the chopped mushrooms and
shallots on the bottom.

Season the filets lightly and arrange them in one slightly overlapping
layer on top of the mushrooms and shallots. Pour in the cold fish
stock, wine and enough water so fish is barely covered. Place over
low heat and bring almost to a simmer.

Lay a piece of parchment or wax paper over the fish and place the
pan in bottom third of the oven. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until
a fork pierces the flesh easily, but do not allow the filets to
become flaky as they will be overcooked.

While holding the contents of the pan in place with a lid
or a large spatula, carefully tip and drain out all the cooking
liquid into a saucepan. Place over high heat and boil until
the liquid has reduced to 1 cup.

Off the heat, beat the flour with the butter to form a paste.
Beat this paste into the hot liquid off the heat. Slowly whisk in
the cream while bringing the sauce back to a soft boil, and cook
just until it coats the spoon.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon the sauce over the fish and serve
sprinkled with the parsley.





GOUTBERT

CHATEAU DE JULES

CHATEAU DE JULES



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CÔTE À OUVRIR

Domaine Michel GROS

Domaine Les Goubert

Domaine Les Goubert

Domaine des Accolles

Domaine des Accolles

Newton Depot Closeout

*Bin-ends and back vintages from our warehouse in Newton.
Quantities are limited; flat \$25 East Coast Shipping on case.*

WINE	GRAPE	REGION	RETAIL	DISCOUNT	PRICE	QTY
Bertrand Bergé Megalithes 2011	carignan	Languedoc	\$15	30%	\$10.5	11
Cabasse Séguret Casa Bassa 2006	grenache/syrah	Rhône	\$26	30%	\$18.2	10
Demois Chinon 2009	cabernet franc	Loire	\$20	40%	\$12	5
du Chene St-Joseph rouge 2009	syrah	Rhône	\$35	20%	\$28	5
Duclaux Chateauneuf blanc 2008	marsanne/rousanne	Rhône	\$48	20%	\$33.6	10
Gagnard Chassagne 1er 2006	chardonnay	Burgundy	\$92	20%	\$73.6	6
Gaussan-Kozine Corbieres 2011	carignan	Languedoc	\$19	30%	\$13.3	18
Goubert Sablet blanc 2012	marsanne/rousanne	Rhône	\$18	30%	\$12.6	6
Point du Jour Fleurie 2009	gamay	Beaujolais	\$24	30%	\$16.8	14
Poggerino Chianti Classico 2009	sangiovese	Chianti	\$24	10%	\$21.6	5
Trignon Côtes du Rhône 2007	grenache/syrah	Rhône	\$18	40%	\$10.8	24

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