



ANSONIA WINES
NOTEBOOK
AUGUST 2015



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NOTES FROM HARPSWELL

August 2015 | Mark Wilcox

In France the vignerons follow the subtleties of season and weather with great care. Experience has taught them general rules, like the expectation that there will be a hundred days between the *floraison* and the harvest. But the best producers develop an intimate connection with the ebb and flow of conditions in the vines, anticipating pressures so as to treat, pull leaves, or otherwise protect the grapes from the maladies that threaten in every season.

In our adopted home of Harpswell, Maine, we feel connected to the seasons as we never did

in Philadelphia, or even at the cottages in Ansonia, PA. In this house, on a narrow finger of land jutting into a corner of the Atlantic, the seasons come steadily through our doors and windows, drift across our screen porch and deck, and present themselves along the peninsula's road. It has become an everyday pleasure to watch them unfold.

Our first winter here was a doozy, and the locals assure us that if we could get through that one without running to the real estate pages we will be fine. Harpswell Sound froze over for the first time in fifteen years and the



notion that there's lighter snow right on the coast proved less than an axiom. But hunkering down by the fireplace from about 4 pm on had its own rewards.

Spring exploded this year along the coast. We saw a gradual change at first. Winter's Bufflehead ducks departed, to be replaced by Loons and mating pairs of Eiders. With the snow long gone, our muddy road firmed up. We made lists of things to do around the property -- collect limbs down from the winter, thin the Rugosa thicket by the screen porch, prune the seaside trees to preserve the view, assemble the bee hives.

Then one day in early May, everything seemed to leaf out at once. Flowers sprang up in wholly unexpected places, the Rugosa burst into bloom, and the seawater temperature moved from fatal to merely bracing. Wildlife began to appear everywhere. The neighborhood bald eagle took up a station in one of our trees, and the osprey reappeared. Great Blue Herons resumed their squawking glides into Lombos Hole to poke around at low tide, and the gulls took up their regular patrols overhead.

As May rounded into June, our first real Maine summer hove into sight. Three or four ducklings now trailed the female eiders, and the males, who had been present with the females throughout the spring, disappeared. In the kayaks on Lombos Hole one afternoon, we saw a

mother eider holding at some distance from a group of four ducklings, obviously agitated. As we tried to figure out what was happening, the bald eagle came barreling in from a considerable height, making straight for the ducklings. With no place to hide, they seemed to be goners; but just as the eagle reached them, they disappeared under the surface, popping back up only after the bird's momentum carried him well past. He wheeled and took another run at them with exactly the same result, and we watched four unsuccessful tries before the eagle gave up and took up a perch in a tree, looking just a touch less majestic than before.

Harpswell has plenty of working lobstermen – in fact its own Cundy's Harbor is Maine's oldest fishing village, at it since 1841. The lobstering season doesn't really get started on Harpswell Sound until late June or early July, when you can begin to hear the low throated rumble of diesel engines soon after dawn. By now there are hundreds of lobster traps out in the channel, including three of our very own. (While it's nearly impossible to get a new commercial license these days, Maine residents may apply for five-trap licenses. Lobsters caught under these licenses may be eaten but not sold, a restriction that's fine by us). The traps need to be hauled up daily, or nearly so, because the term "trap" is a bit exaggerated when applied to these wire enclosures. Two entrances at one end – the porch" – lead toward a mesh bag of bait (chopped up herring in our case). If the lobster continues past the bait through a mesh funnel into the next section, it is in the

“parlor,” from which most trapped lobsters are taken. But nothing prevents a lobster from turning around and walking back up the funnel again; and underwater photography has revealed that many more lobsters enter a trap than are hauled up. We’re having a grand time with them this summer, reveling in “free” seafood (having happily forgotten the cost of the traps, the line, the buoys, the boat and the bait), and exploring matches with a wide range of wines.

It’s hard to talk about life on Harpswell Sound without mentioning the tides. No wimpy three- or four-foot changes here – the average tide is nine feet, and in the

right phase it can exceed twelve. This four-times-daily drama comes not from just the moon’s and sun’s gravity but from the structure of the ocean floor in the Gulf of Maine, which has a broad shelf of shallower fishing banks before the plunge to the ocean deep. Twice a day, the ramp to our dock goes from nearly horizontal to steep enough to require gripping the rails to ascend. Though eventually tides come to seem a normal part of the day’s passage, we have stopped rolling our eyes when vigneron tell us that they time bottling by the phases of the moon. It now seems entirely likely that turbidity in wine casks changes with the cycle of these powerful forces.

MW





Eight Bottles for August

A collection wines we're drinking this month.

1. Chateau Voigny Sauternes 2012
Bordeaux | **Semillon** | orange rind, nectar; dessert-wine sweet | \$32 [ORDER ►](#)
2. Domaine des Accoles Rosé des Accolytes 2014
Ardèche | **Grenache, Cabernet** | cool, deep, earthy, fresh | \$12.95 [ORDER ►](#)
3. Domaine des Accoles Gryphe 2013
Ardèche | **Carignan** | dark, smooth, inky and juicy plum fruit | \$24 [ORDER ►](#)
4. Domaine Boyer-Martenot Puligny-Montrachet Reuchaux 2012
Burgundy | **Chardonnay** | fine, rich, elegant, golden | \$58 [ORDER ►](#)
5. Domaine Malmont Séguret 2013
Rhône | **Grenache, Syrah, Carignan** | dark red, rustic, earthy | \$26 [ORDER ►](#)
6. Domaine Collet Chablis Grand Cru "Valmur" 2012
Burgundy | **Chardonnay** | long, tense, classic, lively, rich | \$62 [ORDER ►](#)
7. Domaine Ravaut Corton-Bressandes 2010
Burgundy | **Pinot Noir** | rich, fine, elegant; graham crackers, spice cake | \$85 [ORDER ►](#)
8. Fattoria Poggerino Chianti Classico 2011
Italy | **Sangiovese** | dried cherries, roses, earth | \$24 [ORDER ►](#)



Giordano 1938.it
Yes you Yes 54



AUGUST RECIPE

Roasted Branzino

Branzino is available in most Whole Foods stores, but this recipe works with any mild fish; the fresher the fish the better, look for a shiny eye. Use your finest olive oil, as this is one of the major flavors of the dish.

one	whole branzino fish
3 thin slices	lemon
1 sprig	rosemary
	flake salt (Jacobsen)
	fine olive oil

1. preheat oven to 450
2. pat fish dry, brush with canola oil, sprinkle lightly with pepper and a little salt
3. fill fish cavity with lemon slices, one rosemary sprig

4. place fish on a rimmed baking sheet, cook for 15-18 minutes, or until flesh is opaque and slightly flaky

5. scrape skin off with a fork, then pull off flesh with a fork and spoon

6. with top layer of fish off, carefully lift off spine and collect the second fillet

7. drizzle very fine, flavorful olive oil over the fish; sprinkle with flake salt

8. serve with lemon wedges

WINE PAIRINGS

Gautheron Chablis Vieilles Vignes 2013 ▶
Collet Chablis Valmur Grand Cru 2012 ▶
Thomas St. Aubin 1er cru 2013 ▶



AUGUST RECIPE

Goat Cheese Pasta

This simple recipe is a staple at our summertime table. Reserving a bit of the pasta water is key to coating the pasta with the goat cheese evenly. As long as they are very ripe, fresh tomatoes will work in place of canned. In case you don't live near a cheese store, Trader Joe's has a high quality, well-priced log of goat cheese.

8 oz	fresh goat cheese
1 lb	penne
2	large zucchini
28 oz can	san marzano tomatoes

1. Trim the ends from the zucchini; then split lengthwise, and chop into half-inch half-rounds
2. Sauté the zucchini in olive oil for 4-6 minutes, or until slightly browned
3. Boil a pot of water, salt generously just

after boil; add pasta and stir once

4. Once cooked, drain pasta, reserving a half-cup of the pasta water
5. Divide goat cheese into several pieces, and mix into the warm pasta. While stirring, mix in splashes of the pasta water to help disperse the cheese
6. Open, drain, and chop the can of tomatoes, mix into pasta and goat cheese
7. Add in zucchini, toss to mix, and serve

WINE PAIRINGS

Muré Pinot Noir 2014 ▶
Thomas Bourgogne 2012 ▶
Goubert Rosé de Flo 2014 ▶



Have you heard about...

A collection of things – culinary and otherwise – that we think you'll like.

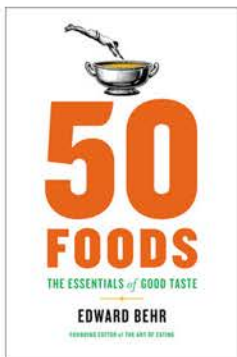


Luxardo Maraschino Cherries

Despite an intrafamilial bourbon/rye debate, the extended Wilcox family enjoys its fair share of Manhattans. Whatever your choice of base liquor, Luxardo cherries will enhance any drink calling for a Maraschino. Try this twist on the Manhattan we came across recently: 2 parts rye, 1 part vermouth, 1/4 part triple sec, 1 dash bitters, 1 Luxardo cherry, 1 scant spoonful Luxardo juice.

Jacobsen Sea Salt

We've long been fans of Maldon salt, the flaky, crunchy, diamond-shaped finishing salt from England. We recently discovered an excellent domestic source for flake salt: Jacobsen Salt Co. from Netarts Bay, Oregon. Jacobsen's salt is very fine, pure, and delicate, with less crunch and more saltiness than Maldon. Use this salt to finish off a steak or plate of asparagus, and enjoy a subtle upgrade to the texture of your dish.



50 Foods, The Essentials of Good Taste

Edward Behr's Vermont-based "The Art of Eating" publication sets the standard for long-form food journalism. Behr's 2014 book is an essential for any culinary adventurer. "50 Foods" explores a range of fundamental elements of cuisine, examining each for its finest source, correct preparation, and perfect pairing. This is the smartest and most useful food book we've read in a while.

la Botte

Non
Traillés
Produit
Carottes
Nouvelles
Production
Calibre II
de la Loire

1,50€





“My Favorite Wine”

Recommendations from an enthusiastic reader.

Name: Roman and Lisa Schumann
Home: Newton Centre, Massachusetts

About Us: “We live just under three miles away from the Ansonia Depot in Newtonville. Roman is an anesthesiologist; Lisa translates texts from German to English – on topics ranging from penguins to the German cultural critic Walter Benjamin – and works at writing book reviews, articles, and the occasional short story. Now that our two children Nic (24) and Leo (19) are forging their own paths, we seem to have unconsciously gravitated toward travel that combines hiking and wine – to the Pfalz in Germany, Anderson Valley in California, and soon to the Alto Adige in Italy.”

Favorite Wine: **Mersiol Auxerrois 2013**

\$14/bot | TRY THIS WINE ▶

Tasting notes: “This is the wine we call our 'go-to' wine, the wine we make sure to have in stock, the wine we pull out when unexpected guests come, the wine we keep chill in the refrigerator for those sticky, hot New England summer evenings, although it proved just as good on long, snowy New England nights. But it is more that our 'go-to' . . .

Tasting notes:
(continued)

“... wine. It is the wine we find delicious each of the many times we have poured ourselves a glass. Roman describes its flavor as something between a dry Riesling and a Gewürztraminer.”

Pairing Idea:

“Pair this Alsatian wine with an Alsatian onion tart and a crisp, peppery watercress salad.”



Schumann Onion Tart

FOR THE ONIONS

3 sweet onions
2 tbsp olive oil
6 sprigs thyme

Peel the onions then slice them very thin and half them. Heat the olive oil and cook the sliced onions together with the thyme over very low heat for about three hours. Stir them occasionally.

When they are done, they should be very soft and lightly browned and taste quite sweet. Season with salt and pepper.

Remove the sticks from the thyme sprigs (the leaves should have fallen off). I often cook the onions the day before I need them when I am doing something else, as they need very little attention.

FOR THE TART

2 cups unbleached flour
dash salt
12 tbsp unsalted butter (1.5 sticks)
1/2 cup cold water

Work the butter into the flour and salt with your fingers until the texture is something like cornmeal. Slowly add about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the water, stirring until the dough forms clumps. Keep slowly adding water if the dough does not begin to form a ball. Divide dough into dough, form each half into a ball, wrap each ball in plastic. Flatten each ball into a disc and refrigerate for an hour.

Preheat oven to 375. With a rolling pin, roll each disc out into a thin, round layer and place it in a quiche or pie plate. Spread the dough with about two tablespoons of crème fraîche, then spread the onions on top.

Bake for about 30 – 40 minutes. When it is done, both the onions and the crust will look more golden-brown.





Mixed Case: August

August's mixed case is entirely from Francis Muré, a small artisan winemaker in Alsace. Muré makes a wide range of wines, and all three of these are perfect for the warm muggy weather this month. Muré's Riesling is dry, floral, and very refreshing; his rosé is bright, energetic and also dry; his pinot noir is light, pleasant and juicy – we recommend serving all three chilled.

4x	Muré Riesling 2013	\$20
4x	Muré Pinot Noir 2014	22
4x	Muré Rosé 2014	17

Retail: \$236
East Coast Shipping: (free)

August Case Price: \$182

[SEND ME A CASE ►](#)



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