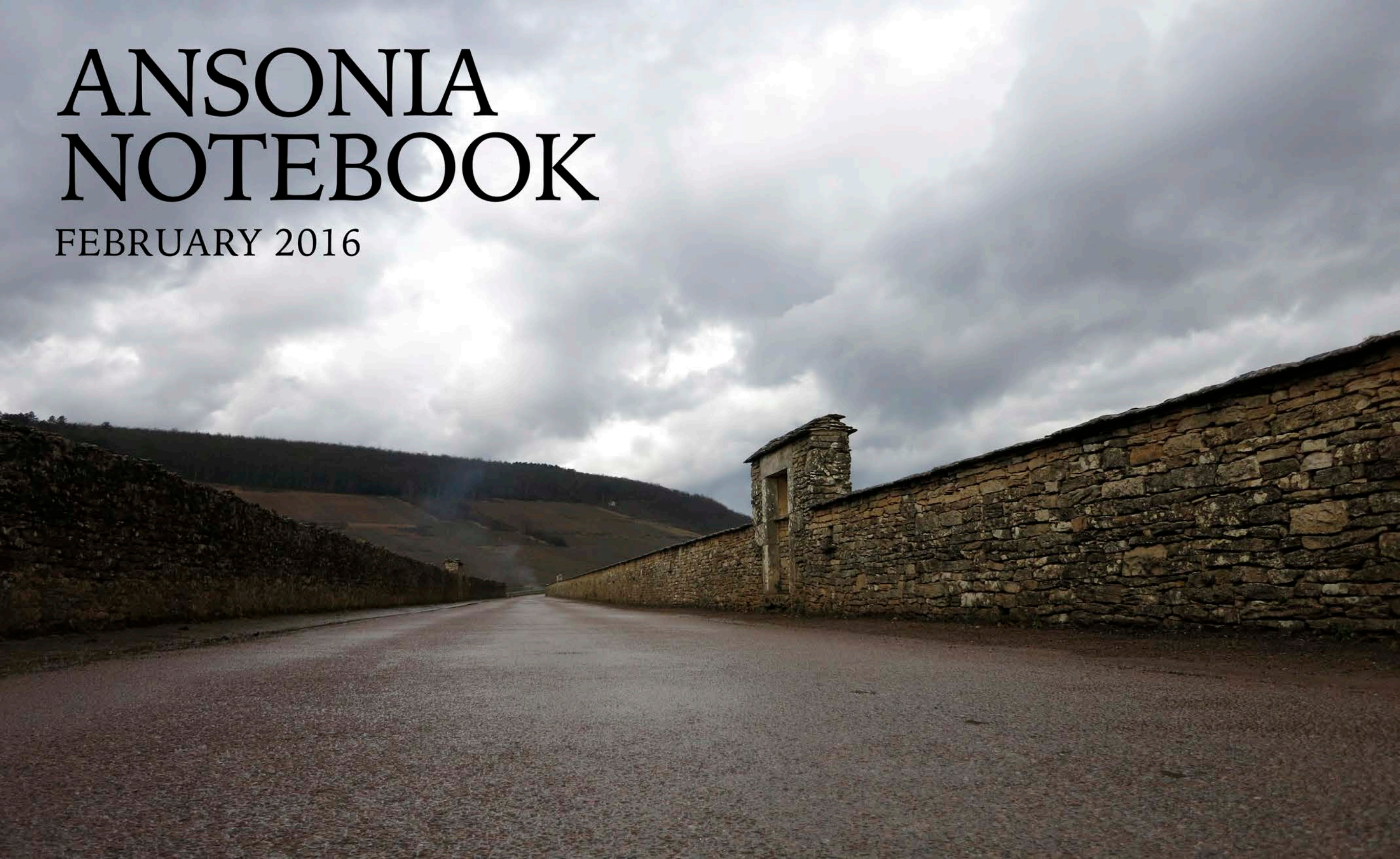


ANSONIA NOTEBOOK

FEBRUARY 2016





I. Notes from Harpswell

MARK WILCOX

A monthly dispatch from the rocky coast of Maine; February's column features a discussion of wintery weather, honeybees, and lobsters.



II. 25% Off Shelf: Feburary '16

This month's discount shelf includes eight wines – save up to \$114/case on eight wines from Burgundy, Bordeaux, Alsace, Languedoc, and Germany.



III. Have you heard about?

A list of things we've discovered recently that we think you'll enjoy; February's list includes coffee, Mozart, Michael Pollan, and quinoa.



IV. Depot Journal

ISAIAH WYNER

Our Warehouse Manager Isaiah Wyner discusses topics that come up during our Saturday open hours in Newton, Mass. This month: oak.





NOTES FROM HARPSWELL

February 2016 | Mark Wilcox

What a difference a year makes. One year to the day before I began tapping out this note, it was snowing sideways on Harpswell Sound, temperatures hovered in the single digits, and a blizzard was busy pruning the coastal forests of standing dead trees. This week temperatures hit the forties, as they are expected to do again next week. So much for drawing conclusions about the climate by looking out the window.

People have been talking about the weather for as long as they have been talking, but only recently do they seem to be getting mad at each other about it. For us, moving from the middle of Philadelphia to the middle of the water has piqued our interest in matters climatological. We had a careful look at projected sea-level rise before trading our city townhouse for a perch on a spit of land in the Gulf of Maine; but if we have learned anything so far, it's that this climate stuff is very complicated.

Consider honeybees. When I learned that this winter was expected to be a mild one, I breathed a sigh of relief. The hive got a late start last year, and I was sure that honey stocks would be short. It turns out, though, that a mild winter puts a hive at risk more than a frigid one. When the temperature is in the teens, the bees hold in a tight cluster. Their metabolism drops dramatically and they consume very little food. When the temperature is in the thirties, they're more active and eat more honey. Who knew?

Or consider lobsters. Unlike the cod fishery, lobster production is booming along the coast of Maine – 2015 is likely to set a fourth consecutive record for landings – and no one is quite sure why. Maine lobstermen have operated for many decades under rules designed to maximize egg production. As they haul in traps they dutifully measure carapace size against minimums and maximums, and under pain of four-figure fines, they not only return egg-bearing females to the water, they cut a tail notch to identify the egg-layers after the



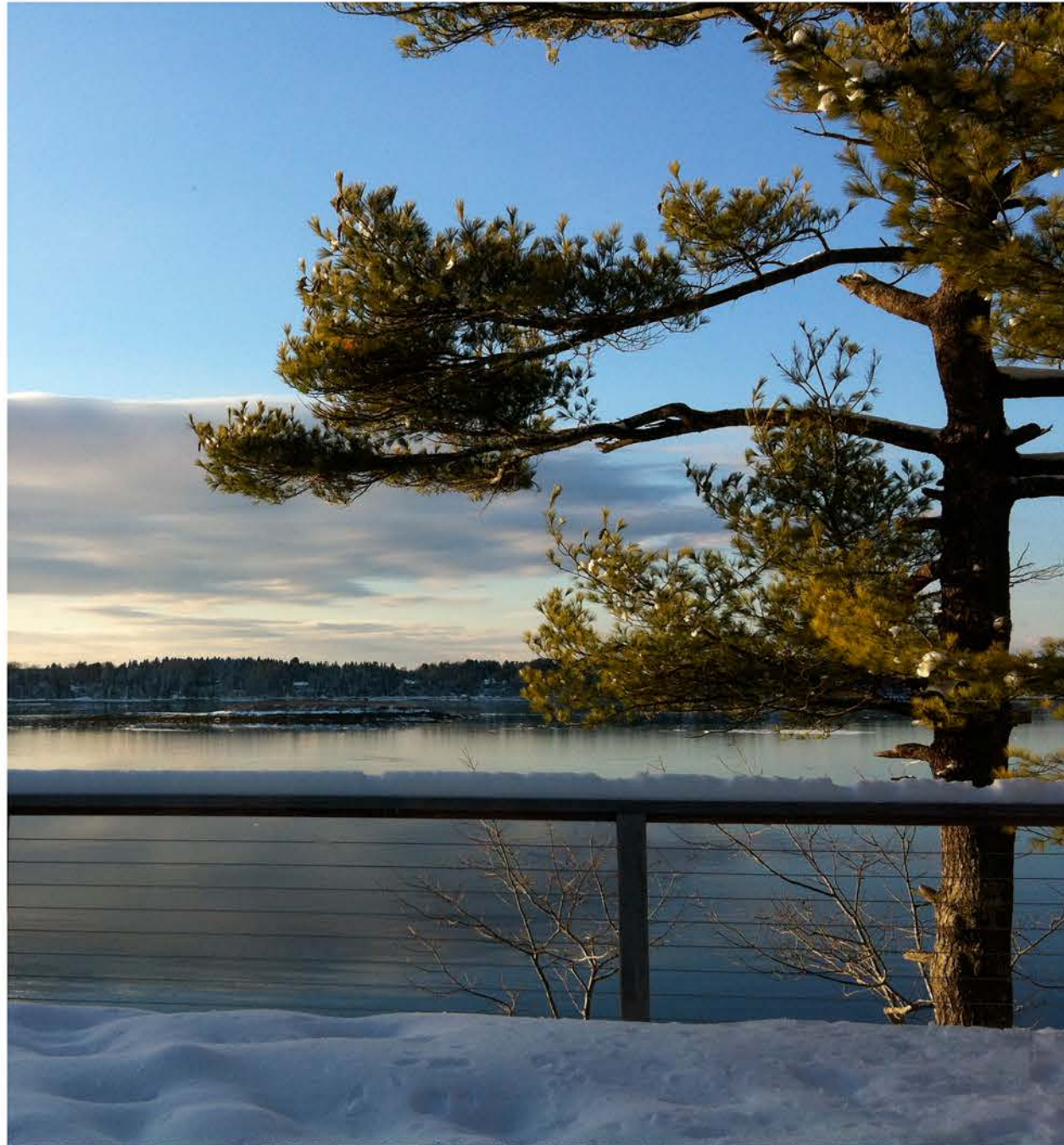
eggs are gone. But egg volume is likely not the limiting factor in the population. Recent research shows that only certain locations have bottoms with the hiding places baby lobsters need to develop into adults, and getting the lobster larvae there can be a dauntingly random process.

The Gulf of Maine's topography creates an enormous counter-clockwise gyre. Cool North-Atlantic water flows in along the

Scotia shelf, descends the Maine coast, and then loops back out into the middle of the Gulf before leaving near where it arrived. While some lobster eggs hatch close to where they are shed, larvae from countless others -- particularly those hatched in deep waters -- travel great distances on the surface currents, which themselves change unpredictably with temperature and weather cycles. Like an uncontrolled fire hose, these currents can direct larvae all

over the place, sometimes landing them in fertile lobster nurseries, sometimes not. Many speculate that our current embarrassment of riches has as much to do with a felicitous phase of these currents as with anything else.

These days my own favorite theory on lobster abundance has to do with our cod, whose stocks are now so low that there is a complete moratorium on commercial fishing. Right now the Gulf of Maine is warming faster than 99% of the world's oceans, partly from the atmospheric carbon that's raising temperatures everywhere, and partly from the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation – a warm/cool many-decade cycle that's in



the middle of a warm phase. This theory holds that the cod, who are voracious predators of baby lobsters, have voted with their fins and moved north into the cooler waters of the Canadian Maritimes. With the cod away, the lobsters play.

In the end, I don't really pretend to know what's going on out there in the gyre. Increasingly I'm tempted to abandon the effort and go back to looking out the window. If I do, by this time next year I'll have a third datapoint to break the tie, and I can pronounce myself an expert on Maine winters. Or maybe I should just confine my thoughts to wine and oysters.

MW



25%

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To place orders, click the link
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DAHME Riesling Bratenhofchen
Kabinett spatlese 2009

FOULAQUIER Calades 2011

COLLET Chablis VV 2011

MELENIG Pommeau

ACCOLES Rendez-Vous 2013

MURÉ Pinot Noir 2014

LEHOUL Graves blanc 2011

FOREST Pouilly-Fuissé 2010

DAHM RIESLING SPATLESE TROCKEN 2009

German Rieslings are a chronically overlooked category of wine, and one that often provides excellent value. This very dry, late-harvest riesling shows beautiful herbal and petrol notes with dried apple fruit.

Retail: \$18 | **sale price: \$13.5/bot**

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FOULAQUIER CALADES 2011

The Mas Foulaquier makes distinct, beautiful wines using biodynamic winemaking techniques. Their Calades is a Syrah-Greanche blend, showing dark, peppery fruit and an earthy, blackberry jam in the mouth.

Retail: \$30 | **sale price: \$22.5/bot**

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FREE EAST COAST SHIPPING ON A CASE

COLLET CHABLIS VIEILLES VIGNES 2011

The Domaine Collet makes classic, lightly oaked wines that are pure chardonnay. Their style is traditional Chablis, with dry mouthfeel and brisk minerality. This old vine cuvée provides an extra dose of depth and intensity.

Retail: \$26 | **sale price: \$19.5/bot**

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MELENIG POMMEAU

Pommeau is a calvados-cider blend made in the northern French regions of Normandy and Brittany. This Pommeau is sweet and tannic, showing notes of black tea and apple skins. We serve it with or as dessert.

Retail: \$25 | **sale price: \$18.75/bot**

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FREE EAST COAST SHIPPING ON A CASE

ACCOLES RENDEZ-VOUS 2013

The Domaine des Accoles producers Burgundy-style wines from the darker, richer grapes of the south of France. Their Rendez-Vous is pure Grenache, showing earthy red cherry fruit and an impressive complexity.

Retail: \$18 | **sale price: \$13.5/bot**

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MURÉ PINOT NOIR 2012

Francis Muré makes delicious, dry, fruit-forward wines from his farmhouse in the rolling hills of Alsace. His Pinot Noir is floral and bright, showing baked cherry fruit and a cool, refreshing mouthfeel. Serve a bit cool as an aperitif.

Retail: \$24 | **sale price: \$18/bot**

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FREE EAST COAST SHIPPING ON A CASE

LÉHOUL GRAVES BLANC 2011

The Chateau Léhou's white Graves is a traditional white Bordeaux. A 70/30 blend of Sauvignon blanc and semillon, this is brisk and refreshing, showing herbal, savory notes alongside the classic grapefruit.

Retail: \$24 | **sale price: \$18/bot**

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FOREST POUILLY-FUISSÉ 2010

This Pouilly-Fuissé comes from a wonderful, now-retired producer we met decades ago. The 2010 vintage was one of his last, and his wines are classic Pouilly-Fuissé: careful use of oak, baked lemon core, and extraordinary depth and intensity.

Retail: \$38 | **sale price: \$28.5/bot**

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FREE EAST COAST SHIPPING ON A CASE



GARE DE STRASBOURG

SNCF

VOUS ENTREZ
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NON-FUMEUR
MERCI D'ETENDRE
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VOUS ENTREZ
DANS UN ESPACE
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MERCI D'ETENDRE
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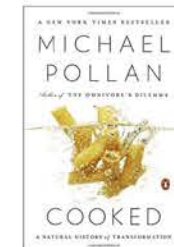


What we're watching: Mozart in the Jungle (Amazon)

A fantastic new show on Amazon Prime Video. Based on a 2005 novel by Blair Tindall, oboist for the New York Philharmonic, the show charmingly portrays the backstage drama of a new conductor and aspiring oboist. Anyone with an interest in music, arts, or New York City will thoroughly enjoy.

What we're reading: Cooked, Punch, Decanter

"Why Sommeliers are Heading for Retail" in Punch Magazine is an interesting look at a changing world. In Decanter, Andrew Jefford discusses the mystical aspects of wine and winemaking. We're also thoroughly enjoying and highly recommend Michael Pollan's now iconic "Cooked."



What we're brewing: Barrington Coffee Roasters

Based in Lee, MA, Barrington Coffee Roasters is an excellent small batch roaster. Check their website for detailed flavor profiles; we've recently enjoyed batches of (413) and the Colombian "Esperanza."

What we're cooking: Green Beans and Quinoa

An excellent and healthy recipe from Martha Stewart we discovered recently: Quinoa and Green Bean Salad. We suggest tweaking the recipe by roasting the greenbeans instead of blanching, and slicing them in half.





The Depot Journal

A monthly column from our Depot Manager Isaiah Wyner.

The word “oak” comes up frequently when we talk about wine on a Saturday afternoon at the Newton Depot. This column will begin to explain how and why oak is used in the winemaking process.

Beginning at harvest, a vigneron makes many decisions that reflect both individual preference and local style and tradition. One important decision is whether or not to use wooden barrels during vinification. With a few notable exceptions, like white wines from Macon and Chablis, most wines in the Ansonia portfolio have some contact with oak before they are bottled. Oak should never be the primary element in a wine, but more a supporting character used at the discretion of the winemaker. As the blog

Vinepair puts it “We like to think of a winemaker using oak as a chef would use salt.”

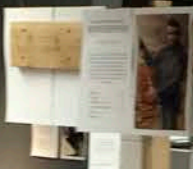
Sometimes winemakers ferment wines directly in the barrel, which usually results in a fuller, richer style. More often winemakers will use oak barrels in the aging phase, which serves two important purposes. The first is to slowly mature the wine as micro-oxygenation takes place through the pores of the wood. The second is to add additional flavor and aroma compounds to the wine. The tannins in oak barrels are important in red wine aging as they complement the tannins found in the skin and seeds, and the combination adds structure, texture, and additional flavors that increase the potential of the wine to age well.

Barrels vary widely in size, shape, and even species of oak. Winemakers may also decide the level of toast on the inside of the barrel – a light toast allows more of the oak flavors and tannins to be imparted and a heavier toast will add smokier notes. Barrel making is an old and esteemed profession of artisans with hours of hand work going into each piece; a single barrel can command upwards of \$1000.

In the Ansonia portfolio, the best way to see the effects of oak for yourself is to pick up two white Burgundies. Compare a bottle of the Gautheron Petit Chablis, a wonderful mineral driven unoaked wine, with a Gérard Thomas Bourgogne, a rich and round example of what oak adds to your glass.



EXHIBITION



CHATEAU
LAFONT MENAUT