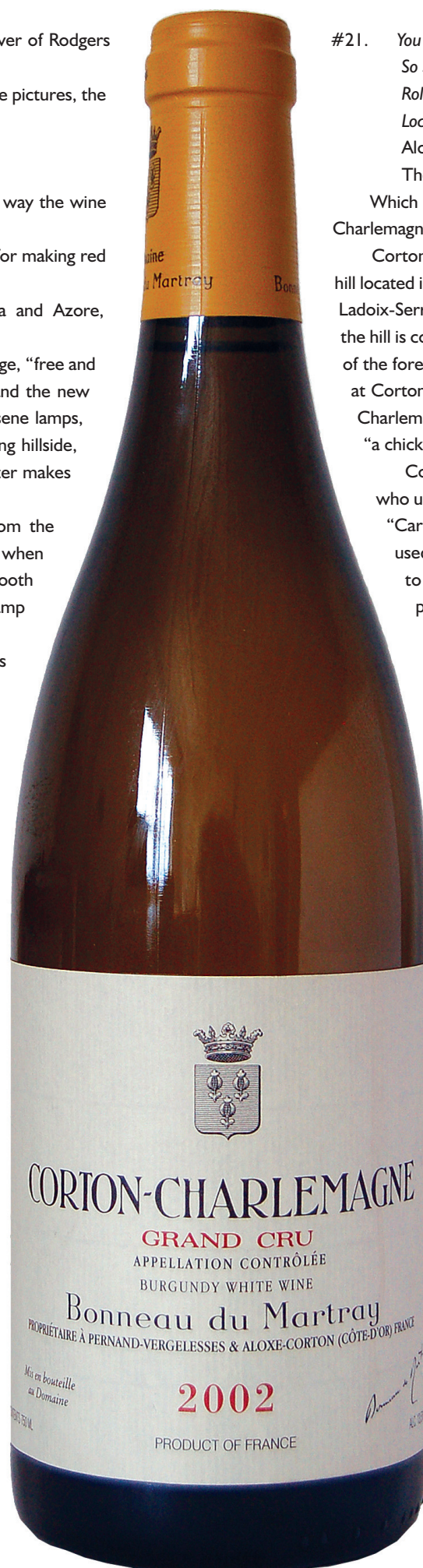


ONE BOTTLE: THE 2002 BONNEAU DU MARTRAY CORTON-CHARLEMAGNE

by JOSHUA BAER

- #1. McCoy Tyner's piano on the John Coltrane Quartet's cover of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *My Favorite Things*.
- #2. Richard Diebenkorn's works on paper, especially the spade pictures, the collages, and the drawings he made at Soda Lane.
- #3. Stella and Gabe's naked eyes.
- #4. The last line of Ernest Hemingway's *Islands in the Stream*.
- #5. La Tâche, in all of its aspects and vintages, especially the way the wine tastes like nothing but itself.
- #6. Domaine Dujac, Jacques Seysses, and the Seysses family, for making red Burgundies that remind me of La Tâche.
- #7. Australian Shepherds, especially Saint Genevieve, Cuba and Azore, Marie-Galante and Arthur the Beast, and Jack and Louis.
- #8. Tassajara Springs, especially the old baths, the curved bridge, "free and shining, within and without," the stone cabins, the old and the new kitchens, Pajama Lane, the gutters in the pool, the kerosene lamps, the barn with the view of the tan oaks on the south-facing hillside, the three crossings, the Narrows, and the sound the water makes in the middle of the night.
- #9. The view of San Francisco Bay and the Bay Bridge from the Berkeley Hills, especially at night during the late 1960s, when the old eastern span of the bridge was lit up from the toll booth to Yerba Buena Island so that the bridge resembled a ramp leading up to an enormous circus tent.
- #10. Valeria Ciangottini's face in the last frame of Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*.
- #11. All of Dan Welch's gifts, including but not limited to his calligraphic paintings, his resemblance to the mountain, his fluency in Katakana, and his religious pizzas.
- #12. Old Santa Fe, especially during the late seventies and early eighties, when hospitality was still a way of life and intimacy was still regarded as a virtue.
- #13. Eliza's mysterious ways, including but not limited to the way she laughs, the way she cries, and the way she cultivates theories about the people, places, and things that make her laugh and make her cry.
- #14. The big dreams, especially the ones where the mountain is the landscape and the ancestors laugh, move, smile, and talk like they have all the time in the world.
- #15. Classic Navajo blankets, especially the bayeta ponchos, the white background serapes, the early chief's blankets, and the bayeta mantas.
- #16. A lifetime of morning walks, most of them in the company of Black Jack, whose dark eyes see things long before they appear.
- #17. The way the markets listen when everyone is talking, and the way they talk when nobody is listening.
- #18. Bob Dylan's characterization of Jimi Hendrix as "the gypsy."
- #19. John Lennon's jaded voice, before, during, and after the echo chamber, but especially on *I'm Only Sleeping*.
- #20. Matthias Goerne, the German baritone, especially his version of J. S. Bach's *Cantata #82, Ich habe genug*. No one blends the ecstasy and the sorrow into a single sustained note like Matthias Goerne.



- #21. *You look like who you say you are*
So scoot over let me drive your car
Roll down the glass and give some wind
Lock all the doors I'm on the loose again alright...
Along with every other lyric, note, grunt, and howl in ZZ Top's *Thug*.
The best version is still the studio cut on *Eliminator*.

Which brings us to #22, the 2002 Bonneau du Martray Corton-Charlemagne.

Corton-Charlemagne is a *grand cru* vineyard, an *appellation*, and an imposing hill located in the French communes of Aloxe-Corton, Pernand-Vergelesses, and Ladoix-Serrigny. The slopes of the hill are planted with vineyards. The top of the hill is covered with a forest of pine trees. From the south, the wide thin line of the forest looks like the crust at the top of a cheese soufflé. All of the vines at Corton-Charlemagne grow Chardonnay grapes but to refer to a Corton-Charlemagne as "a Chardonnay" is like referring to a beautiful woman as "a chick"—it is not so much an understatement as an insult.

Corton-Charlemagne got its name from the Emperor Charlemagne, who used to own the hill. The name "Charlemagne" comes from the Latin "Carolus Magnus," or "Charles the Great," though the French alchemists used to contend that Carolus Magnus meant "the great song." According to Burgundian lore, Charlemagne's second wife, Queen Hildegarde, preferred white Burgundies to red Burgundies because the white wines did not stain her husband's beard.

While a number of winemakers make Corton-Charlemagne, the best known domains are J.F. Coche-Dury, Louis Latour, Jean Chartron, and Bonneau du Martray. Of the four, Coche-Dury is the most expensive, Latour is the most typical, Chartron shows the most restraint, and Bonneau du Martray offers the greatest degree of enchantment.

In the glass, the 2002 Bonneau du Martray Corton-Charlemagne radiates golden light. The bouquet is steady at first, then it becomes what the French call *sauvage* or what we call "wild and crazy." Be careful of the thoughts you have when you inhale the bouquet. If someone is reading your mind, he or she may never trust you again. On the palate, there are suggestions of modern longings and ancient ambitions. The finish is tragic, in the sense that it is over before you have the chance to enjoy it.

What I love most about Bonneau du Martray's Corton-Charlemagnes is the way they age, and the way the wine from an aged bottle manages to be simultaneously aloof and engaged. Of the vintages that are available, the 1999, 2004, 2007, and 2009 are the most popular but the 2002 is the vintage that brings tears to my eyes. And that's why it completes my list of favorite things. ♡

One Bottle is dedicated to the appreciation of good wines and good times, one bottle at a time. The name "One Bottle" and the contents of this column are ©2011 by onebottle.com. For back issues, go to onebottle.com. You can write to Joshua Baer at jb@onebottle.com.

