

BURGUNDY & BEAUJOLAIS

RELAXED
HOSPITALITY WITH A
BACKBONE OF
ELEGANCE AND
A REFLEXIVE
CONVIVIALITY ARE
EVERY BIT AS
INDIGENOUS TO
THIS GREEN,
WELL-WATERED
CORNER OF FRANCE
AS ITS FAMOUS
VINES.

Floating on an emerald pillow of wild watercress in an ice-cold stream, several bottles of Irancy bobbed around inside a wire cage cooler attached to a tree. I noticed the light going tawny through the leafy lace of the big tapered poplars that lined the banks of the little island made by the mill run. When the limp breeze pulsed, the smell of sautéing onions coming from the kitchen of the ivy-covered old limestone mill house with verdigris-green shutters made me ravenous. So Burgundy was gifted to me for the time many years ago when I was invited for a weekend in the country.

When my friend Judy and I stepped down from the train onto the platform, heat shimmered from the rust-stained cement, but the air smelled of freshly mown hay, and it was a relief to have escaped from the city. I looked right and saw shortbread-colored fields of wheat on gently tilted hills beyond a horizon of low trees. Then I looked left, and our friend, a movie star, waved. She was wearing vintage sunglasses with dark green lenses, an impeccably

ironed, sleeveless calico shirtdress, and cherry red lipstick.

"Welcome! We just have an errand or two to do, then we'll get you two home for a swim and a glass of cold wine!" Her famously mellifluous voice was such an exciting distraction that it was a minute before I understood what she'd said. By then we'd stopped at a bakery in sleepy Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, and a big, heavy, still-warm black-crust round loaf sat on my knees as we streaked through the countryside in her tiny little white car with baking air pouring in the windows. Our last stop was a farm, where I was told to go find the farmer and buy some of his goat cheeses. When I did, he was sleeping in a haystack like someone I'd seen in a cartoon, and I was too shy to wake him. The movie star, my hostess, didn't hesitate to rouse him, and when he opened his eyes, his smile was as big as a boat when he recognized her. Immediately on his feet, he gently bowed before disappearing into his stone barn for several of the chèvres his wife had made the day before.

That night we ate outside at a long wooden table by the light of candles in



