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April 2020

Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

Spring has officially sprung, and I find myself spending a lot more time outside. Whether that's sitting in the sun at the park with the kids, hiking one of our beautiful Bay Area trails or simply relaxing on the patio with a friend and a glass of wine, it's a lovely season. Speaking of wine and springtime, the selections this month are sure to enhance your April. We have a diverse and exciting lineup with everything from organic producers in the Roussillon to high-elevation Argentinian Malbec and classic Sonoma Pinot Noir.

The organic trend in France is the subject of this month's Club Francais wines. We've picked two of our favorite producers, and we're highlighting their work and ongoing efforts to further the movement. The Languedoc-Roussillon region is a hotbed for organic viticulture and biodynamics, and it's here that we discovered one of our favorite small producers who makes an incredible Syrah from schist soils. Our second wine is from a producer who's pushing forward the progress of organic viticulture in Bordeaux. One of the regions that is particularly challenged in implementing organics, Bordeaux can be a difficult place to source excellent organic wine, but that is changing.

In the Signature Red Club, we'll look at the term "modern" and what that means in terms of style and winemaking. We are considering two wines, one from France and the other from the US, both of which highlight this style particularly well. I find that both this month's Pinot Noir and Bordeaux exhibit all the best of what a modern wine has to offer.

Our Premium Club wines this month make for a great side-by-side tasting. If you happen to have the opportunity to invite over a couple of wine-enthusiast friends, you can have fun with this comparison. We feature both a Napa Cabernet and a Left Bank Bordeaux from the Médoc, bottled under our Kalinda label project. It's a perfect opportunity to sharpen your tasting skills on regional and vintage distinctions.

The Best Buy Club includes a really stellar deal this month with a deep discount on a beautiful Lirac Blanc from a world-class Rhône producer. All of our club members may want to consider this wine, because with the crazy discount we're giving here, our stock isn't likely to last. We're also featuring a lovely Malbec. Intense with a hint of sweet fruit and soft spice, this is a very versatile little wine that is sure to please a variety of palates.

Greg's Italian club features one of our favorite Brunellos from the fabulous 2015 vintage alongside a fun little Friulano from Giovanni Blason. We've worked with both producers for some time, and their wines are among our favorite direct imports from Italy.

In the Champagne world, we have another great month with selections from world-class Champagne houses Thiénot and Palmer & Co. Both producers are based in the famous city of Reims, the heart of Champagne. If any of you are in need of bubbles, take note: This month's selections are very deeply discounted for club members, and will be a great buy!

Heather Gowen, K&L Wine Club Director
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Le Club Français

A growing sector of producers in France are turning to organic and biodynamic farming and winemaking. In each major wine region of the country, farming organically has various challenges. Bordeaux is particularly prone to mold and harmful fungus growths; Burgundy is so subdivided that a neighbor's practices can undermine one's farming method. In the south of France, the Languedoc-Roussillon regions and the Rhône tend to be more naturally suited to organic practices. This month I'm highlighting two producers that are incorporating organic and biodynamic approaches throughout their production.

We begin with a very passionate couple in the Roussillon—Séverine and Philippe Bourrier. Séverine is the winemaker, and member of the dynamic “vinifilles” group, a trade organization for women winemakers in the Languedoc-Roussillon. We were lucky enough to stumble upon this group a few years back and have since met an array of talented winemakers producing incredible products in this region. Séverine is one of our favorite finds, and her incredible wines at Château de l’Ou rank as some of our most popular from the Roussillon. The **2017 Château de l’Ou “Secret de Schistes” Côtes Catalanes (\$26.99)** is 100% Syrah, grown in brown schist soils in a high-elevation site in the Agly Valley. It's a beautiful balance of intensity, rich fruit, weighty palate, and a fresh cut of acidity that belies all this. The secret of schist soils is that they are incredibly nutrient-poor, forcing the vine to dig very deep to sustain itself. This produces small, powerful grapes that carry a weight of minerality and depth that couldn't be achieved in the same way elsewhere. Séverine was the first in her area to achieve organic status, and has been instrumental in leading this trend for organic and biodynamic wine throughout the Roussillon.

Our second wine is a Pomerol from Bordeaux's Right Bank. Here the challenges to organic viticulture are many. I mentioned above the difficulty with molds and unwanted fungi; both tend to bring progress to a grinding halt. Other factors include the involvement of large businesses and investors looking for high returns, and the weight of winemaking/growing traditions that have held sway in the area for many decades. However, some producers are bucking this prevailing tendency, and one such is the philanthropic couple Steven and Denise Adams, who own a few properties on the Right Bank. They acquired Clos de l’Eglise in 2007 and have begun the process of converting the production to organic and biodynamic farming and winemaking practices—a process already completed in their St-Emilion property, Fonplegade. Clos l’Eglise itself sits on the western side of Pomerol and sports a mix of the famous blue clay soils, gravel and iron deposits, which lend the wine a serious structure and intensity. **The 2015 Clos l’Eglise, Pomerol (\$32.99)** is a thoroughly classic Pomerol. A little reticent at first, it shows beautifully with an hour or two in the decanter and opens up to display poignant cassis, wild strawberry and red cherry notes, punctuated by a savory, almost bloody undertone. The structure is still quite firm, and the wine should age well for decades to come.



Séverine Bourrier makes the “Secret de Schistes” for her mother, whose love of this region inspired the bottling.



In addition to their Bordeaux properties, Denise and Stephen Adams own a winery in Napa. They promote their organic winemaking philosophy across both countries.

Signature Red Collection Wine Club

The wine world has a number of terms that we tend to bandy about without any clear definitions. Personally, I like to take a term and examine it in the context of a few wines, to help define the meaning. This month I've chosen the word “modern” and we'll look at what that concept means in terms of wine styles from two different countries. It's tempting to associate “modern” and its antonym “old-school” with the terms “new world” and “old world,” but you can of course have modern wine from an old-world country, and old-school wines from the new world. This month we'll look at a Right Bank Bordeaux and a Sonoma Pinot Noir that both exemplify the very best of what “modern” means in a wine.

To me, modern wine has two aspects. First, the winemaking is clean and the processes take advantage of modern technology. Second, the goal is to produce wine that is immediately accessible, whether or not it is also built for aging. Our first wine, the **2017 Sojourn Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$26.99)** is as elegant and seamless as a Sonoma Pinot Noir can be. Stylistically, it's fuller bodied with rich, dark fruits and ripe, luxurious aromatics. In keeping with modern style, this is not a wine that has to be aged before its components come into harmony. It's open and proportionate now—completely ready to drink. The founders of Sojourn Cellars, Erich Bradley and Craig Haserot, see life as a sojourn, which should be enjoyed with little moments such as a perfect glass of wine. They fully embrace the technologies of modern winemaking, albeit with a great respect for the character of their fruit and its terroir. In the cellar, the wine is looked after and vinified in small batches with careful handling, to manage tannins, create a balanced fruit and acidity structure, and produce a wine that's immediately enjoyable. This is their tribute to life's brief sojourn.

Our second example comes from Bordeaux's Right Bank. The **2015 Grand Destieu, St-Emilion (\$23.99)** is a silky-smooth, Merlot-dominated wine with intense, concentrated black fruit punctuated by sweet oak spices and rounded tannins. It's bold and powerful, but at the same time quite approachable, and surprisingly soft textured for such a young Bordeaux. Run by Fabienne Lagoubie, this small Château in St-Emilion expresses the modern current in Bordeaux winemaking. It's not that the winemaking is radical or experimental, or parts ways with the traditional style of the region. It's simply more polished, clean and accessible. Fabienne uses traditional oak barrels with about 60% new French oak, and she also vinifies a small portion in stainless steel, blending to taste for the final product. The wine benefits from both the stainless steel and the oak—one preserves the fresh, vibrant fruit and the other rounds out the wine, presenting a foil for the tannin structure and adding depth to the flavor profile. The result is a lovely young Right Bank wine that is thoroughly ready to drink upon release. The bonus is that this wine also has the intensity and power to age well.



Craig Haserot and Erich Bradley, the duo behind Sojourn Cellars, developed a bond over their love of tennis and fine wine before venturing into the business.



Fabienne Lagoubie, owner and winemaker at Château Grand Destieu.

Premium Wine Club

Who doesn't love a good contest? It's not a contest per se here in the April Premium Club, but we do have an excellent Napa Cab and an excellent Left Bank Bordeaux facing off in this month's selections. Tasting these two wines together really is a lot of fun. Both are labeled under our "Kalinda" project, so the producers are secret and that makes the comparison even more fun. So take an afternoon or evening and gather a couple of friends for an impromptu tasting. That's what my colleagues and I did with these two wines earlier this year.

If you're a Cabernet fan, it's likely that you've compared the two most famous locales for this popular varietal before. Just from the label you'll immediately

notice the difference in alcohol percentages between the two. With the generally cooler region of Bordeaux you tend to have lower sugars present in the fruit, and sometimes it is picked earlier as well to avoid frost dangers. In the Napa Valley on the other hand, the Indian summers allow vineyard managers to leave the fruit to hang on the vine much longer and develop higher sugar levels, and a higher alcohol level can easily be reached. Despite the 2% difference in alcohol between the wines, neither is imbalanced. The **2016 Kalinda Médoc Bordeaux (\$14.99)** is a more subtle and subdued wine. It's a lovely blend of dark fruits with black plum boysenberry and cassis complemented by hints of sweet tobacco, vanilla, cocoa and baking spice. Certainly a decent amount of oak is employed here, but it's nicely integrated with the fruit character. All the components of the wine are already in harmony and it has a pleasant round weight on the palate. It also displays a serious backbone of structure that will ensure a long life ahead for it.

The **2017 Kalinda Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$14.99)** is immediately richer, with plush black olive and ripe, rounded black plum and mocha notes. You can feel the glycerin on the palate, which is much weightier than the Bordeaux. Once again, though, everything is in balance here—the boldness of the fruit synthesizes with the weight of the palate and the powerful underlying structure. The wine closes with lingering sweet fruit. Although it should develop nicely over the next couple of years, it is designed more to drink in the near term.

Another good way to compare these two wines is to taste them alongside food. It's amazing what a complementary pairing brings out in a wine, and it's fun to try a few different foods to really explore the potential of each wine. I'd recommend trying these with three very different foods: steak, blue cheese, and finally dark chocolate. I particularly liked the Napa Cabernet with the blue cheese, but each of these food combinations work quite well, and they highlight the various strengths of each wine.



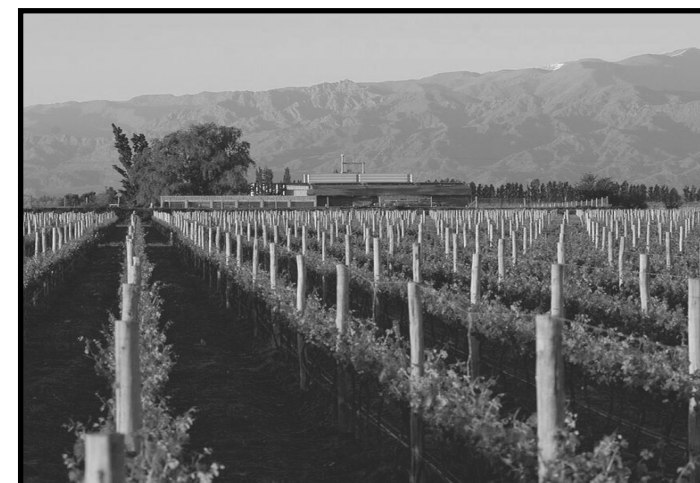
Weather is always a challenge to growing world-class Cabernet in Bordeaux's Medoc region, but 2016 was a fabulous vintage.

Best Buy Wine Club

This month in the Best Buy Club I'm expanding our varietal repertoire a bit with two fun wines that I don't believe we've featured in quite a while. As popular as Malbec is, it can be difficult to find one that is both approachable and affordable, and at the same time high in quality. This month we'll feature one of our favorite producers whose Malbec checks all three boxes. Along with it, we have a crazy deal in white Rhône. It's a flirty and fun southern Rhône white blend, a perfect marriage of styles that will appeal to both your Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc lovers while actually bringing its own element into play.

The maker of our Malbec is Antucura, situated in the high-elevation Vista Flores region of Argentina's Uco Valley and home to an impressive array of elegant, French-influenced wines. Anne-Caroline Biancheri, owner and founder of Antucura, fell in love with the unique beauty of Vista Flores, and feels that it is truly her home. In the ancient language of the region, "Antucura" means "Sun Stone" and indeed the sun is felt here. At the high elevation of 3,445 ft above sea level, Vista Flores sports cold nights and hot days, and little mitigation in these diurnal swings. This intense climate, together with the limestone soils, makes for very vibrant wines with bold personalities. The **2018 Antucura Malbec Mendoza (\$9.99)** is everything you're looking for in this versatile varietal. It's both hearty and bold with a fuller body and bright, ripe fruit flavors, without being at all tannic or overpowered by oak. The little kick of peppery spice on the finish makes this a very food-friendly wine. It's big enough to stand up to a steak, and yet smooth enough to serve cocktail style with light appetizers or all on its own.

Our second wine this month is quite the bargain. From the famed Brechet family of Châteauneuf-du-Pape's Château Vaudieu we have the **2015 Plateau des Chênes Lirac Blanc (\$9.99)**. Normally retailing for \$22 +, this is a crazy bargain for club members. This wine has been on my radar for a while, and I'm absolutely thrilled to feature it in the Best Buy Club. It's a screaming deal even at the higher price point simply because of the sheer quality of the producer behind it. The Brechet family has an estate in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and just across the river from it they own a few small parcels in Lirac, and that's where our wine is grown. A blend of Grenache Blanc, Roussanne and Clairette, this lovely little wine is at once floral, delicate and rich with a surprisingly weighty palate and a round quality on the tongue that enhances its depth. You might think a white from 2015 is a bit on the old side, but this little gem is just hitting its stride. With its couple of added years of age it has mellowed out, creating an almost honeyed quality in the glass that intensifies the complexity and lengthens the finish. It's simply begging to be paired with a lightly spiced Asian cuisine such as a milder Thai dish or a traditional pork Bahn Mi.



In the shadow of the Andes, the vineyards at Bodega Antucura are planted in rocky limestone soils, which lend to the wine a bright, elevated minerality.



Just across the river from Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Lirac is an under-appreciated terroir with many qualities similar to its famous neighbor.

Club Italiano *Notes by Greg St. Clair, K&L's Italian wine buyer.*

In the fall of 2018 I was in Montalcino and visited with Paolo Bianchini, the owner of Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona. I've known him for decades but it's always fun to actually visit the winery. Winery owners show a whole different pride in their land and winery when you meet them on site rather than afar. I had seen him months before at Vinitaly and he wanted my opinion on his 2014 Brunello di Montalcino. It had been a difficult year and he was wanting a judgement to see if I thought his wine was good enough to be released as Brunello. Paolo led me around the winery, tasting wine from multiple tanks, and eventually we had a blend of what would approximate the new release. Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona produces some of Montalcino's best wines, including a 100-point wine in the upcoming 2015 vintage, and Paolo was not looking to release something he felt was substandard. We tasted the **2014 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona Brunello di Montalcino (\$29.99)** and while it wasn't the glorious 100-point version, it was a true representation of his land and Sangiovese. Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona is on Montalcino's south slope facing the Orcia river valley in the shadow of Mount Amiata, the extinct volcano that every local will tell you protects them from nature's nasty weather. Ciacci's piece of this south slope is covered with Terra Rossa, a bright red, iron-rich soil that gives extra depth of fruit to the wines. This 2014 Brunello is going to need some decanting, I'd say at least an hour ahead of time, and a plate of hearty pasta or a rich stew, something with some richness and depth. Or, just a big hunk of Parmigiano Reggiano! Enjoy.

I met Giovanni Blason in 2003 when he was a young, energetic producer in Friuli's least known region, Isonzo, named after the river that runs from the Giulian Alps into the Adriatic Sea. Friuli's other two regions, Collio and Colli Orientali del Friuli, are its more famous regions, named for the hills that run up against the Slovenian border. Isonzo is decidedly flat, similar to Bordeaux's alluvial plains. I had never heard of the Isonzo before and decided to do a little research, and was surprised to find the depth of history. You really have to be a student of history to know about Italy's involvement in World War I. Pretty much all of Italy's action against the Austrian-Hungarian Empire happened along the Isonzo River. Eleven major battles, hundreds of thousands of casualties and pretty much of a stalemate for the entire war. I digress—you can do your own reading if you're interested.

Most folks, when they have heard of Italian whites especially from Friuli, think of Pinot Grigio but that is really a lesser grape when compared to the indigenous Friulian grapes of Friulano or Ribolla Gialla. Giovanni is most proud of his Friulano. It was his father's pride and joy, and when he replanted the vineyard he used his father's clone of Friulano. This vintage, the **2018 Blason Friulano Isonzo del Friuli (\$9.99)** is I think Giovanni's finest to date, thanks to the vintage and the vineyard's increasing age, and Giovanni's tireless work in the vineyards and his growing knowledge of winemaking. The intensity of aromatics, texture and acidic balance really make this wine sing. I would pair this with some lightly sautéed fish like red snapper, or a roasted chicken. I think you'll love this wine.



Paolo Bianchini in his barrel aging room.

Champagne Club *Notes by Gary Westby, K&L's Champagne buyer.*

Our Champagne Club is taking a trip to Reims this month, with selections from two Reimois producers, Thiénot and Palmer. Reims is the big city of Champagne. It's where the Holy Roman Emperors were crowned, and it was the front line of World War I. Both of these wines are great examples of the blender's art. Each is composed from many different crus to make a house style to delight the Champagne lover. They are a change from our normal focus on single-source Champagne and I hope that you find them as interesting and as enjoyable as I have. While these two have very similar grape variety composition, I think you will find a big contrast in the style.

Most of the big name (and the unknown for that matter!) négociants in Champagne are very old operations. In contrast, Alain Thiénot started his company in 1985, after working for decades as a grape broker for other houses. This is the perfect background for starting a Champagne house: Mr. Thiénot knew all of the vineyards and growers intimately. He started small, buying the best of what was available, and shopping for vineyards of his own. By the beginning of the 1990s Alain Thiénot had managed to collect up a number of gem vineyards, including a large parcel of Grand Cru Ay that had belonged to Krug but was sold off when Krug was acquired by Remy. Now he has a little over 67 acres of his own estate and contracts a further 32 acres from other growers. This large amount of prime estate fruit, and small number of truly excellent contracts, explains the very high quality in the bottle. The **Thiénot Brut Champagne (\$34.99)** is composed of 45% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir and 20% Meunier. The light gold color and big brioche, cream and baked apple nose gives way to a wine that is packed with power and complexity on the palate. This full-bodied Champagne has a luscious finish that is very impressive. This Champagne is great on its own, but will also go very well with any number of tasty patés!

This month the Champagne Club also features the **Palmer & Co. "Brut Réserve" Brut Champagne (\$34.99)**, at a big discount from the normal \$49.99 price. This too is a relatively new Champagne house, a cooperative in fact, established in 1947 by seven families of growers. Their focus is on fruit from the mountain of Reims, and this Champagne is composed of 50% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir and 10% Meunier and aged for a minimum of four years on the lees. This one of the toastiest, richest Champagnes the club has featured, and I loved the brioche, beure d'Issigny and Meyer lemon curd in this Champagne. I find that the hazelnut-like fruit of Verzenay stands out in this bottle. I loved this as an apéritif, and I think it would also do very well with an equally decadent meal such as lobster. A toast to you!



Alain Thiénot (right) is joined in the family business by his son Stanislaus and daughter Garance.

Re-order Offers

As a member of a K&L Wine Club, you have the opportunity to order previous offerings from any of our clubs. The following pages contain a "backlist" of each club. Please note the special club prices for each wine. You can make re-order purchases via phone, email or your online account. Our order desk is open 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. seven days a week. If you have any wine club-related issues, or wish to place an order, please call us at 800-247-5987. In addition, you can email us at theclubs@klwines.com.

All wine can be purchased by the single bottle. Prices are shown after each wine listed.

Tax (in California) and shipping will be added to each order.

For a complete, up-to-date inventory listing, visit us online at: www.klwines.com.

Le Club Français Previous Offerings

2014 Barde-Haut, St-Emilion @ \$34.99 per bottle

The 2014 vintage was a good one; the wines are more classic than the opulent 2015s, and far better than the hit-and-mostly-miss 2013s. With the classic structure of 2014, this wine has a long life in front of it, so you'll want to decant it about an hour before tasting. It is sumptuous, rich, elegant and intense with loads of blueberry and cassis both on the nose and palate. The tannins are still firm, but the edge has rounded out nicely so it's already in fine shape for your Friday night steak.

2018 Julien Schaal Kastelberg Grand Cru Riesling Alsace (\$24.99)

This Grand Cru Riesling is bone dry yet has a surprising weight and depth to the palate. The aromas are intense and stunning with lime zest, elderflower liqueur, honeysuckle and apricot all playing a role. On the palate the array of flavors continues and the finish is completely dry, leaving you eager for that second sip. This is a wine to age. You may enjoy it so much now that you'll be surprised to hear that Grand Cru Alsatian Riesling is unspeakably gorgeous with about five to seven years under its belt. It can certainly be aged beyond that too. At the very least I recommend that if you like this wine, you get an extra bottle or two to lay down for several years.

2016 François Labet Bourgogne Rouge Vieilles Vignes @ \$24.99 per bottle

This cuvée is composed of fruit from the family's oldest vineyards in and around Beaune. The wine is made in a very classic Burgundian style, which is to say restrained, earthy, lighter in body but with incredible structure, aromatics and depth. It's well worth decanting this an hour or two before drinking, as it opens up beautifully with a little oxygen. It's a wine I would recommend pairing with game hens, pheasant, or wild mushroom galette.

Launois "Veuve Clemence" Brut Blanc de Blancs @ \$34.99 per bottle

This all-Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Champagne is aged for an extra year on the lees before bottling, and hence has a depth of character and texture that beautifully rounds out the chalky, mineral-driven bent of a classic Mesnil Blanc de Blancs. On the palate a subtle almond note complements the creamy, round texture and contrasts nicely with a linear burst of acidity and citrus zest. The fruit for this bottling is culled from the best old-vine plots in Mesnil, located on the tops and the bottoms of the hillside.

2018 Domaine Laroche Chablis "St-Martin" @ \$26.99 per bottle

Domaine Laroche has an incredibly long history, stretching back to the 12th century abbots who first planted grapes in the Chablis area. Today the estate is no longer in monastic hands, but retains an impressive array of historic vineyard sites. The "St-Martin" cuvée is composed of wine from some of the estate's top vineyards. It is classic in its minerality and crisp, stony style, and also incorporates a surprisingly soft palate with Honeycrisp apple and yellow pear showing through the veneer of bright, chalky acidity. It's an ideal accompaniment to sushi or poke.

2017 Domaine Bart Marsannay "Les Finottes" \$23.99 per bottle

Thanks to sandy soils, this wine is particularly aromatic, and the fruit profile is soft and inviting. Pierre Bart, the current generation owner and winemaker at Domaine Bart, treats this wine to no new oak, using only concrete and older oak barrels to showcase the delicate fruit. On the nose the wine displays bright red cherry fruit with sweet clove and nutmeg. The cherry fruit continues into the palate where it is complemented by savory wild mushroom and hints of forest floor. The body is on the lighter side, and the finish is of lingering baking spices.

Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

2010 Sempre Vive Napa Valley Petit Verdot @ \$26.99 per bottle

I've rarely had single-varietal Petit Verdot, and when I have it is typically too bold and harsh. This wine, however, completely blew me away with its refinement and poise. Age has beautifully polished out the tannin and mellowed the intensity of the fruit, and what we have is a perfect claret-like wine, ready to be paired with your Friday night steak.

2016 Trinity Hill "Gimblett Gravels" Syrah Hawke's Bay @ \$22.99 per bottle

The Gimblett Gravels region in Hawke's Bay is a rocky old riverbed, nutrient poor and with excellent drainage. These elements, together with the cool nights and long growing season, spell world-class Syrah. Right away you can tell from the nose that this is a serious wine—it's loaded with blackberry, blueberry and bramble, fine ground black pepper and something savory that reminds me of black olive. On the palate the depth of flavors persists, and the full body is balanced and lifted by crisp, bright acidity. For such a rich and full wine, it is surprisingly light on its feet.

2017 Anthill Farms Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

This lovely Pinot Noir is composed of fruit from two vineyards. One is perched on the low coast near the Petaluma Gap, and the other sits higher in elevation on the first coastal ridge inland and slightly further north. The vineyards share a significant marine influence, with cold, foggy afternoons and slow ripening conditions. The wine from this fruit is highly aromatic, lighter in body with bright red berry fruit and surprising herbal notes. It's a culinary delight in terms of pairing. I personally love it accompanying foods that are umami rich, such as wild mushroom risotto.

2015 De' Ricci "SorAldo" Vino Nobile di Montepulciano @ \$24.99 per bottle

The de Ricci estate traces its origins back to medieval times, and today its cellars are still a destination for tourists, as they literally consist of an underground church, and boast giant barrels some two stories high. The SorAldo bottling, named for the current proprietor's father Aldo, is composed of Sangiovese, and boasts deep, violet and cassis aromas, underscored on the palate with sumptuous fruit and rich baking spices. It's gorgeous to drink all on its own, or pair with richer, fatty meats such as veal or duck.

2018 Stolpman Ballard Canyon Grenache @ \$24.99 per bottle

The unusual terroir of Ballard Canyon is surprisingly well suited to Grenache, a somewhat finicky varietal. One of the most inland AVAs of Santa Barbara, Ballard Canyon is a hotter, drier climate than most, but still enjoys the cooling influence of the ocean, funneled down the Santa Ynez Valley. This influx of cool air keeps the acidity in the ripening fruit and makes for a beautiful expression of Grenache with full, rich palate weight and stunning aromatics. Although it's a bit youthful, this Grenache displays boisterous berry notes both in the nose and on the palate. It's vibrant with plenty of fresh acidity to bolster the softer texture of the tannin. It's a wine that's lovely to sip on its own and would also accompany poultry very well.

2016 Atamisque Cabernet Sauvignon Uco Valley @ \$24.99 per bottle

The pungent nose of this wine displays red berry, eucalyptus and a slight black pepper note not uncommon in South American Cabernets. On the palate it is clean, with the black pepper moving a little to the forefront over a layer of red and black berry fruits. The tannin is beautifully polished, with great texture that nicely complements the little lift of acidity. Incredibly well balanced for a Cabernet, it drinks almost like a Bordeaux, but with the greater weight and ripeness of a California Cabernet. Altogether, it is its own wine, a uniquely Argentinian expression of the varietal.

2016 Talley Estate Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

Talley's estate wine is composed of fruit from two of their oldest vineyards: Rincon and Rosemary's. The wine is made and barreled by vineyard block, then blended to taste for the final product. Winemaker Eric is a wizard at blending, and the wine is always stunning. I find this 2016 vintage perfectly balanced, with cool red fruits dominating. The aromas include notes of culinary herbs and baking spice, while the texture shows very fine-grained tannin that marries perfectly with the fresh, bright fruit profile. Eric uses a blend of new, second-fill and third-fill barrels to make this wine, and the added texture and spice profile from the oak adds another layer of complexity.

2016 Puy-Blanquet, St-Emilion @ \$24.99 per bottle

This lovely Right Bank wine is composed of 75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. With the larger percentage of Merlot, it is silky and velvety, with delicate black fruits and classic menthol notes. Pierre Meunier, the vineyard manager for Château Puy-Blanquet, is quite particular in the vineyard, and continues to plow, leaf crop, and harvest by hand in the traditional manner. The winemaking is clean and precise, highlighting the excellent fruit profile, while maintaining good tannin and acidity structure. Although it is quite open and accessible right away, this wine can certainly age for several years more to develop the tertiary qualities that are now latent. This is a beautiful pairing for sumptuous and slightly fatty dishes such as roast duck.

Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2017 Eric Kent “Luke’s Grove” Russian River Valley Chardonnay @ \$14.99 per bottle

This Chardonnay that we’ve been lucky enough to land for the club is all Stiling Vineyard fruit, owned and farmed by the famed Dehlinger family. Owner/winemaker Kent Humphrey goes for a middle-of-the-road style, using some new French oak and some large-format, older barrels with frequent lees stirring to create a great mid-palate texture. The wine is at once bright and rich. It has beautiful clean aromas of yellow pear and Honeycrisp apple, and a palate that has beautiful creamy depth and a mélange of orchard fruits and lemon curd. The finish is surprisingly crisp and dry, making for a beautifully balanced whole.

2016 Ryan Patrick “Rock Island” Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$14.99 per bottle

The fruit for this wine hails from the Wahluke Slope, Rattlesnake Hills, and Red Mountain regions of the Columbia Valley. The team at Ryan Patrick achieves a beautiful blend from these AVAs to represent the best of Columbia Valley Cabernet. The wine was aged in 20% new American Oak barrels for 18 months, and then blended to taste and bottled. It is just now coming into its own with rich cassis, prominent blackberry leaf, cedar and tobacco notes. On the palate it is silky smooth with unctuous black fruit and latent savory tones. It’s a perfect example of the excellence this region can achieve.

2015 Onward “Casa Roja” Contra Costa County Old Vine Carignane @ \$14.99 per bottle

Sandwiched between San Francisco Bay and Suisun Bay is the Casa Roja vineyard, a patch of vines planted in the 1800s to Carignane, Mourvèdre, and Malvasia Nero and composed of 100% sandy soils. Faith Armstrong Foster has championed this forgotten site with this old vine Carignane. It’s subtly savory with smooth dark fruit and is surprisingly light on its feet, with lively aromatics. Sandy soils often make for more aromatic, elegant and lighter bodied wines, and that’s exactly what lifts this Carignane, giving it the perfect balance of elegance and depth.

2018 Domaine de Fondrèche Ventoux Rouge @ \$12.99 per bottle

Deeply mineral at its core, this lovely fresh young red is still singing with bright cherry and blueberry primary notes on the palate, with layered spice and soft but resilient structure. With 50% Grenache, 30% Syrah and 20% Mourvèdre, the wine is compositionally as classic a Southern Rhône as you could wish.

2018 Aurore Dezat Sancerre Rouge @ \$14.99 per bottle

If you love silky, round Pinot Noir with gorgeous dark cherry notes and layers of spice, framed by bright acidity and great mineral depth, this wine is for you. You might be surprised to find such a luxurious and open Pinot Noir from such a cold region, known for its tangy, mineral whites, but here we have it. Although this wine is still young, it shows beautifully once you give it a little air in the glass or in a decanter. This red would pair nicely with roast game birds and of course any hard, nutty cheese.

2018 Bravium Chardonnay Russian River Valley \$14.99 per bottle

This Chardonnay is a beautiful rendering of the Reis Vineyard, from which it hails, high on a ridge some nine miles from the coast in the Russian River Valley AVA. This cool site lends freshness to the fruit, and winemaker Derek Rohlf’s careful handling in the cellar makes for a stunning Chardonnay with body, depth, and lift.

Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2018 Domaine Begude “Terroir 11300” Chardonnay Haute Vallée de l’Aude @ \$8.99 per bottle

This Chardonnay is a light, crisp expression of the varietal, made in stainless steel and highlighting what the domaine feels to be the best of their terroir (11300 is their postal code). The aromas are almost tropical, with hints of papaya and pineapple complementing more traditional orchard fruits. On the palate the wine is quite light bodied and refreshing with notes of verbena and lemongrass coming into play. For those of us who like Chardonnay on the light side, this is a perfect choice.

2018 Kalinda Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir @ \$10.99 per bottle

For me, the quality jumps out of the glass at the first sip. The aromas themselves are heady and rich with ripe summer cherries and a hint of cola. On the palate the wine has a pleasant, medium body with very soft, rounded

tannin and a velvety feel. You’ll also note the sweet oak spice here—it’s not a wine that shies away from oak, but the oak is very well incorporated and complements the rich red fruits beautifully.

2018 Allram Grüner Veltliner Kamptal 1L @ \$8.99 per bottle

The Kamptal area is one of Austria’s premier growing regions for both Riesling and Grüner Veltliner, and here the Allram family established their reputation. The wine we focus on this month is a blend from several of the best parcels. Crisp and bracing, the wine sports heady aromatics of verbena, lemongrass and white pepper. On the palate it displays beautiful lemon curd and fresh granny smith apple, together with delicately spiced pepper and subtle herbal notes. An array of dishes can pair beautifully with a classic Grüner such as this. It truly comes alive alongside richly spiced dishes (think Thai spice), with fried foods, and with umami-laden dishes such as cooked asparagus.

2017 Hahn “GSM” Central Coast Grenache/Syrah/ Mourvèdre @ \$10.99 per bottle

From a historic Central Coast property, this Hahn GSM bottling is brimming with character and eminently food friendly. It sports soft red berry fruit with a touch of black pepper and a pleasantly weighty palate. It’s currently in a perfect drinking window. The fruit is still buoyant and bright, and a slightly savory note is just coming into play. This perfect marriage of freshness and savor makes it ideal for food pairing. One of my favorite matches for the wine is a smoked BBQ brisket, and it also is a great candidate for a hamburger or pizza.

2018 Joostenberg “Little j” White Blend Paarl @ \$9.99 per bottle

This delightful South African wine is a blend of predominately Chenin Blanc, with smaller amounts of Viognier and Roussanne blended in to round out the fruit and floral components. This wine is made using only the “free run” juice, the juice that flows freely off the skins in the first pressing. It is aged in stainless steel, and bottled with a bright, fresh, and tangy profile. Refreshing and light, this is not your honeyed and heavy style of Chenin Blanc. It’s perfectly crisp, and delightful with a variety of plates. Perhaps it’s best paired with white fish, salads or light tapas.

2017 Chance Creek “Terroir 95470” Redwood Valley Sauvignon Blanc @ \$10.99 per bottle

Chance Creek is one of those little-known gems that California abounds with. In a state as large as ours, and as suited to wine-growing, a wealth of terroirs produce an incredible variety of wines, some popular and world-renowned, and some like this wine: under the radar, but humbly phenomenal. Boisterous aromas of grapefruit, verbena and pineapple fill the nose, while the palate presents a cohesive array of tropical fruits with a lovely medium body and cheerful, vibrant acidity. The finish is clean but lingers. It’s an ideal pairing to seafood and also a great apéritif wine.

2017 Edgebaston “Pepper Pot” Red Stellenbosch @ \$8.99 per bottle

This wine is one of the best arguments I’ve found for the incredible value of South Africa. As its playful name suggests, this spicy red is a Syrah-dominated blend, featuring classic Rhône varieties. David Finlayson, owner and winemaker at Edgebaston, created this red with the joy of the everyday in mind. It’s a fruit-forward style, bursting with luscious black cherry and cassis flavors, while retaining a spicy edge, definitive structure, and a clean finish.

Club Italiano Previous Offerings *Notes by Greg St. Clair, K&L’s Italian wine buyer.*

2017 Daniele Conterno Barbera d’Alba @ \$24.99 per bottle

This Barbera is a Superiore, and therefore is aged for one year in 20hl to 25hl barrels. It comes from vineyards in Monforte d’Alba, Barolo and Novello communes. It is a classic, high-acid Barbera and I suggest you decant it an hour ahead of time. Have it with rich, cream sauce pastas. The classic American lasagna would be perfect as well.

2015 Il Pollenza Marche Porpora @ \$14.99 per bottle

This wine is a blend of 50% Merlot and 50% Montepulciano and spent 12 months in a mix of French barriques and tonneaux. It’s a full-bodied wine that will be best suited for grilled meat or hearty casseroles. I’d decant this wine an hour ahead as well.

2015 Baldéro Chianti Classico @ \$14.99 per bottle

This Chianti is a blend of 90% Sangiovese and 10% Merlot. The San Casciano Val di Pesa commune frequently produces higher acid Sangiovese, so this wine’s dash of Merlot rounds out the edges and plumps up the mid palate. The wine sees seven months in used barriques and tonneaux, then does most of its aging in stainless steel tanks to preserve the fresh fruit and supple mouthfeel.

2015 La Fiorita Rosso di Montalcino @ \$24.99 per bottle

This lovely Rosso, made by famed winemaker Roberto Cipresso, is a powerful wine from a powerful vintage. It is fermented in Slavonian oak barrels for ten days and then aged in used 5-hl French oak barrels for ten months. I suggest you decant this wine an hour or two ahead of time and have it with rich pasta dishes or a grilled T-bone.

2016 Peter Zemmer “Furggl” Lagrein Alto Adige @ \$23.99 per bottle

No one is sure of the origin of Lagrein. It is grown almost exclusively in the Alto Adige/Süd Tirol, and the lineage of the grape seems to be lost in the fog of genetic history and undiscovered ancestral grapes. Most tasters will notice that it has, and I take a lot of liberty saying this, a bit of Syrah-like character. See what you find as you taste it. The wine has a lot of black pepper and wild herbs and I think it goes best with a hearty stew or cassoulet. This is a powerful wine; I suggest you decant it an hour ahead of time.

2018 Peter Zemmer Schiava Alto Adige @ \$12.99 per bottle

This virtually unknown varietal is seriously good. One of the things that takes most people by surprise is the color. It's more of a dark rosé than a red, and the moment you put your nose in this wine you can see why: There's an explosion of aromatics, black pepper, blood orange, star anise and forest berries. This is a wine that seems so BIG in the nose but then is medium light on the palate. It's feisty, fresh and best served at cellar temperature, 55°. It is a perfect accompaniment to salumi, roasted chicken or veal.

2015 La Monacesca Syrah Marche IGT @ \$26.99 per bottle

This unique Syrah comes from the Marche's Matelica Valley. It's a perfect climate for Verdicchio, but Aldo Cifola decided 25 years ago to plant a tiny amount of Syrah and he has waited until now to finally release one. This 2015 wine is 100% Syrah and spent 20 months in used barrique. Released in April of this year, it's a powerful and structured wine, and could use an hour or three in a decanter before current drinking. 400 cases were made.

2014 Cantine Viola Rossoviola @ \$22.99 per bottle

This wine comes from the town of Saracena in the Province of Cosenza. The town takes its name from the Saracens, or Muslim conquerors. The Cantine Viola Rossoviola is made from the Magliocco Dolce grape, also known as Marsigliana Nera and not to be confused with Magliocco Canino. Magliocco Dolce is a late-ripening (harvest starts in early October) and tannic variety. It's grown on mostly red clay over limestone substrate at 1500 feet above sea level on the southern boundary of the Pollino National Park. At that elevation the grape keeps its freshness while still showing its power. The Barolo of the south! This is a wine with power and depth, and it does show a fair amount of tannic structure. It's ideal with braised meats or hearty casseroles.

Champagne Club Previous Offerings *Notes by Gary Westby, K&L's Champagne Buyer.*

Bernard Lonclas Blanc de Blancs Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This shows off the famous Turonian limestone soil of the village of Bassuet, on the eastern frontier of Champagne. When I tasted it I was shocked at how much Chassagne-Montrachet-like weight and minerality it had. The nose is full of the creamy, baguette toast that one would expect from a top-quality Champagne, and it also has intriguing notes of coconut and Meyer lemon. This makes a great apéritif, and also pairs very well with oysters or lobster.

Courtois Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This wine is grown in soil that is a mixture of limestone, clay and chalk, and gives rich wines with plenty of weight. This wine is very full bodied, even grassouillette, making it perfect as an end-of-winter apéritif. It will also go very well with all manner of savory pastries and pâté. The wine itself is loaded with buttery brioche and comes across decadently loaded with toast. The best thing about the wine is how focused and fresh it is on the finish. This is dry and long wine with class.

2009 Dérot-Delugny Millesime Brut @\$34.99 per bottle

This 10-year-old vintage Champagne is a blanc de noirs and composed of half each Pinot Noir and Meunier from the oldest vines on the estate. It has a wonderful sourdough toast nose and has a touch of smoke on the savory, dark cherry palate. After eight years on the lees it still has a vigorous bead, and will go very well with paté, stuffed mushrooms or savory tarts.