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Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

Happy holidays! We've finally arrived in the month of celebrations, and we have a full roster of stunning club wines to help your festivities along. We have an array of classics—Bordeaux, vintage Champagne and Burgundy, California Pinot and Southern Italian wines—that are sure to pair beautifully with your holiday dinners and family parties. As always, I hope you enjoy the selections. And don't forget that you can also share the wine love! A subscription can be a great way to say Merry Christmas to family and friends.

For this celebratory month, Club Français members can look forward to an elegant Margaux, whose classic character is perfect at the holiday table. We are also featuring a vintage Champagne from one of our favorite grower-producers. Your club pricing will give you an incredible deal on this bottle. If you like it, don't forget to re-order quickly. We have a limited quantity of this Champagne.

Signature Red Club members will also receive a Bordeaux, this one from the Right Bank: a silky and friendly Saint-Émilion from the 2015 vintage. Alongside this, we have one of the best Pinot Noirs I've tasted all this season, a California classic from the Russian River Valley.

The Premium Club focuses on old-vine wines with two distinctive examples: one a Chablis from the cooler north and the other a Grenache from the southern Rhône. Both wines exhibit the remarkable depth and concentration that can only result from fruit grown in older vineyards. At the club price, these two could easily become holiday go-to's, whether for a dinner party or as great gift set.

The Best Buy Club features two exciting wines from one of the best value names in Bordeaux. We have a red and white made by the team at Château Beychevelle, Saint-Julien, in cooperation with Maison Barrière. Whether you'd like to stock your house with great food wines or you're looking for a perfect party selection, these are great choices.

Club Italiano members travel to the south this month with a gorgeous Sagrantino from Montefalco and a Passerina. Greg has picked these two delightful wines as a holiday surprise for you, and to round out the 2018 Italian tour.

Don't forget, it's also a Champagne month. Gary's two December selections are sure to be a hit with all of our club members. Not only does he feature a vintage Champagne from one of our best directly imported labels, he also has a stunning Premier Cru Champagne composed of all three Champagne grapes, and made in a light and delicate style.

Whether you're pouring a glass of Gary's Champagne or any of our other selections, thanks so much for being with us on the wine adventure! Cheers to your holidays!

Heather Gowen, K&L Wine Club Director
heathergowen@klwines.com

Le Club Français

I know we have many Bordeaux fans in Le Club Français, and I am quite excited to share with you this month a lovely Margaux from Château Larruau. Alongside this beauty, we are featuring a great vintage Champagne. After all, it is the season to celebrate, and we couldn't resist sharing this classic bubbly from one of our best grower-producers.

If you've ever shopped for bubbles at K&L, you've probably been exposed to our enthusiasm for the small grower-producers that we work with in Champagne. One of our favorites is Baron-Fuenté, located on the far western reach of the Marne in the Aube region.

Baron-Fuenté is both a négociant and a grower. For their vintage bottling, all of the fruit comes from their estate in Charly-sur-Marne. So what should you look for in the **2009 Baron-Fuenté "Grand Millesime" Brut Champagne (\$24.99)**? With 45% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Meunier, and 15% Pinot Noir from the warm, fruit-laden vintage of 2009, this Champagne is just hitting its stride. It's an excellent combination of taut, focused acidity, chalky minerality, rounded honeycrisp apple and yellow pear fruit, and fresh baked brioche, with an elegant, creamy bead. In other words, it's a classic. Upon tasting this, Champagne buyer Gary Westby and I agreed that with all its class and depth, this was the perfect holiday bottle for Le Club Français.

À votre santé!

As you can imagine, the wine map of Margaux is not exactly a changing and dynamic landscape. Margaux is a small commune, very fully explored and carefully cultivated. Yet there still are smaller producers to be discovered here, relative newcomers whose Châteaux were born many years after the famous classifications of the region. One such is Château Larruau, founded in 1980 by Bernard Château. Bernard is both owner and winemaker, and he produces one wine from fruit off of 12 hectares situated in and around some of the most famous sites of Margaux. The **2014 Château Larruau, Margaux (\$34.99)** is both classic and elegant. I think it's the texture more than any other element that proclaims its quality. Unctuous and smooth, with silky tannin, the wine balances an unmistakable Margaux perfume of violets and crushed graphite with deep cassis fruit and bright red berry acidity on the palate. Although it is young now, it is already well proportioned and drinks beautifully when you give it a few hours in the decanter. If you enjoy the wine now, don't forget to buy a few bottles for your cellar, as it will undoubtedly age flawlessly. In terms of pairing, I'd highly recommend this with rib-eye or venison.



Ignace Baron. He and his sister Sophie are the current proprietors of Baron-Fuenté.

Signature Red Collection Wine Club

As a wine professional I love learning about new varietals, and tasting wines from places I've never been to before. It's an endless journey, exploring the world of wine. Yet the more I explore, the more I'm brought back to a deep appreciation for the classics. There's a reason why the varietals Pinot Noir, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon are among the most popular on the market, and there are equally strong reasons why places like Napa Valley, Nuits-Saint-Georges and Saint-Émilion are so well known. Particularly in

the holiday season, when you are hosting guests and on the lookout for wines that are a snap for pairing, the classics are invaluable. That's why this month I've decided to feature two effortless, timeless classics: a Bordeaux from Saint-Émilion, and a Pinot Noir from Russian River Valley.

The Puy Blanquet estate is owned by Madame Marcelle Jacquet, and sits on the eastern side of Saint-Émilion. This area's clay soils are mixed with limestone, imparting both concentration and perfume to the wines grown here. The wine is composed almost entirely of Merlot, with a small percentage of Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon blended in. While K&L has long been a fan of this Château, the 2015 vintage was so outstanding we bought all we could. The **2015 Puy Blanquet, Saint-Émilion (\$23.99)** is the perfect holiday wine: Not only is it classic and food friendly, it appeals to a variety of palates. With a definite concentration of black and red berry fruit, the wine maintains elegant tannin and acidity structure to give it definition. The aromatics are stunning. Full and expressive violet, cassis, plum and anise dominate, and the layers of fruit, spice and earth notes are endless. Although it's young, the beauty of the 2015 vintage is that the wines are open, balanced and drinkable now. However, if this does make its way to your cellar it will certainly go the long haul.

Our second wine this month is a label that may be familiar to you as a California classic. Pellegrini is one of the oldest names in the California wine business. Since the first winery was founded in 1933 through a foray into importing and wholesale, and finally to today's winery on one of the best vineyards in Russian River Valley, the Pellegrini name has been a strong force in the California wine world. Tasting the recent releases with Clyde and Trey, we had a quick chuckle about having featured these wines in our wine club back in the 1990s. Well, the wines are still good. In fact, this was the standout wine of the month for me. I am very excited to feature the **2015 Pellegrini Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$25.99)** for the December Signature Club shipment. Not only does the wine show the best qualities of the appellation—silky tannin and luscious dark fruit—it also has an elegance and surprisingly delicate aromatic quality that caught me completely off guard. Wherever you fall on the Pinot spectrum, I think this wine will win your favor with its perfect poise and balance. Incidentally, it's a great choice for a holiday party, appealing as it is to a variety of tastes.



Olivet Lane Vineyard in the Russian River Valley is home to some of the region's most stunning fruit, and to the Pellegrini Winery.

Premium Wine Club

Last month in the Premium Club we had two great selections from France. This month we continue the French theme with two more classics: Chablis and a Côtes-du-Rhône Grenache. One is grown in the cold northern reaches of Burgundy and the other in the warmth of the southern Rhône, but they have something in common: the age of their vines. While the expressions are vastly different, both wines display the concentration and complexity that can only be found in fruit from vines that are 45+ years old. While a vine that reaches this age may not be at its peak in terms of yield, the fruit itself has such character it makes up for decreased production with a much higher quality product. In this month's selections we'll have the chance to see what old-vine fruit means for two very different styles of wine.

Starting in the north, we have the **2016 Domaine de Bieville (Louis Moreau) Chablis (\$14.99)**.

This 45-hectare Domaine was planted by Jean-Jacques Moreau in the 1970s. It's one of the larger contiguous parcels in Burgundy, and is planted on a south/southeast-facing slope in eastern Chablis. The site could not have been better chosen. Its orientation and soils are very similar to some of the best Premier Cru vineyards, and with the expertise of the Moreau family driving the venture, it was bound to be a success. Now that the vines have reached the 45-year mark, the quality is unmistakable. As the plants have aged, the fruit character has evolved to include a more definite mark of the chalky, limestone minerality for which Chablis is famous. Yet the vigor of the vines is also poured into a smaller fruit production, giving a richness, weight and depth to the berries as well. Today the wine has everything, from minerality and snappy acidity to weight and rich stone fruit notes. It's a complex and beautiful expression of this old-vine site.



These ancient vines in Signargues produce the very expressive Grenache fruit that goes into "La Granacha."

In contrast to our Chablis, this month's Côtes du Rhône was not made by a big winemaking name. It comes from a newer co-op, comprised of ten vintners who are committed to sustainable farming and winemaking. The **2016 Vignerons d'Estezargues "La Granacha Signargues" Côtes-du-Rhône Villages (\$14.99)** is sourced from an old Grenache vineyard in the small town of Signargues, not far from Avignon. This little vineyard boasts an average vine age of 80 years, and produces some of the most spectacular fruit in the region. Thankfully for us, the Vignerons d'Estezargues decided to make a wine featuring this fruit, and began bottling the "La Granacha" label in 2000. They use the Spanish version of the name, "Granacha," because that's the name of the grape in their local dialect. The old-vine fruit expresses itself beautifully in both the stunning aromatics of this wine, and the layers of spice that support its complex fruit profile.

Best Buy Wine Club

I hope that by now you have all been able to enjoy October's Grand Moulin wine. As the cooler weather hits and heartier dishes start appearing at the table, I find that the right wine for the season is Bordeaux. Whether it's that we find ourselves indoors with more time to be creative in the kitchen, or whether it's the holiday guests, generally this month is about food. And what better wine to go with food than Bordeaux? For December we have two very food-friendly wines, a red and a white made by some of our favorite folks in Bordeaux.

A couple of decades ago, Château Beychevelle of Saint-Julien began a project with the négociant Maison Barrière. Château Beychevelle has an excellent winemaking team and centuries of winemaking expertise, and Maison Barrière has connections with small growers all across Bordeaux, giving them access to some fantastic fruit sources. They decided to join forces and produce a label that has become synonymous with Bordeaux's best value wine: Grand Bateau. The name for the label was inspired by the dragon boat statue at Château Beychevelle. While the fruit comes from a variety of sources across Bordeaux, the wine is made under the

direction and expertise of Beychevelle's Philippe Blanc, with his team.

The **2016 Grand Bateau Rouge, Bordeaux (\$9.99)** is bursting with bright black cherry, cedar and graphite on the nose. It transitions on the palate to cool blueberry and dark cherry fruit with an elegant integration of oak spice and gentle tannin. It's absolutely begging for something hearty such as meat or savory, *umami*-laden dishes. It's also a great pairing for hard cheeses.

The **2017 Grand Bateau Blanc, Bordeaux (\$9.99)** is made entirely from Sauvignon Blanc, and is stunning. For this price I'd take it over almost any other Sauvignon Blanc in the store. It has expressive aromatics of gooseberry and lemongrass, with surprisingly soft stone fruit on the palate, accented by lime zest and lemon pith. It's crisp and refreshing while maintaining a great fruit presence and effortless balance. I hope you enjoy both these wines with whatever comes to your table this season!



The famous dragon boat statue in front of Château Beychevelle.

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

Sagrantino is one of Italy's myriad indigenous grape varieties and certainly one of its most powerful red wine grapes. It had historically been made into a powerful sweet wine; the grapes were dried and then pressed, to make a deeply colored, powerful and very tasty sweet wine. The sweetness could mask the grape's inherent tannin—and it is tannic. The major innovator in this grape's area has been the Arnaldo Caprai winery. Arnaldo purchased his winery and land in 1971, and in 1988 he passed the winery into his son Marco's hands. It was Marco who brought this wine into the 20th century. The Caprai family had a lot of success with their improvements, and among the families growing Sagrantino in Montefalco, that led to a revolution in quality, in particular for the Trinci family wines. The Trinci families were the Lords of Foligno in the 14th and 15th centuries and they joined in the Sagrantino Renaissance in the early 1990s.

Terre de Trinci's thoroughly modern winery was one major step toward modernization. Choosing French barriques over the traditional large Slavonian oak barrels for the Sagrantino was a step toward taming the grape's fierce tannins. Through micro oxygenation and a couple of other chemical reactions, the barrique softens the tannins and accentuates the fruit character. The **2012 Terre de Trinci Sagrantino di Montefalco (\$27.99)** spends one year in barrique and then is held to allow it to develop in the bottle. The 2012 vintage is the current release. The late release gives the wine time to come together and develop secondary and tertiary



Terre de Trinci's cutting-edge winery design is shaking up the Montefalco wine scene.

flavors rather than relying on primary fruit character. The results are a powerful yet graceful wine. The tannins are more directional than forceful and they frame the powerful fruit richness. This is a big wine, best perhaps as an accompaniment to aged hard cheeses.

I met Marco Santori several years ago during Vinitaly. He is a calm, quiet young man, confident with the path he has mapped out for his future. Marco's family are nurserymen and have been raising vines in the southeastern end of the Marche for generations, in a town called Ripatransone about five miles from the Adriatic Sea. After graduating from Enology & Viticulture School, Marco traveled to Spain, California and France, putting in time to learn how to make wine and see how the rest of the world thought about and made wine. Marco is passionate about the region's indigenous varieties and focused on making Montepulciano, Sangiovese, Pecorino, Trebbiano and Passerina into the best expression possible.



One of Southern Marche's emerging winemakers, Marco Santori has added winemaking to his family grape-growing background.

When I first tasted Marco's wines I could tell right away there was a certain purity to them, a quality that a man whose family grew plants for generations would want to see. It was an expression of his ancestors. His vineyards overlook the sea from 1200 feet. The **Santori Passerina (\$11.99)** is made in stainless steel to emphasize its origin, freshness and fruit character. The nose is powerful, pungent, and just bursting with white peach and tropical fruit aromatics. On the palate the wine has a weight, textural richness that borders on oily. It is really unctuous but it is pierced by a dynamic acidity that balances, freshens and lifts the wine. Minutes after you swallow you'll still feel the growing minerality and incredible texture of this wine. I suggest a full-bodied fish such as Halibut.

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

La Petite Montagne & La Vallée Brouillet: Champagne's Hidden Terroir

This December we continue our non-stop tour of the terroir of Champagne, with two wines from some not-often-visited areas. Both of these wines are balanced blends of all three Champagne grape varieties, but with big differences in both personality and approach. I hope that you are enjoying the tour of the region as much as I am. When you decide to go in person to the region, make sure to reach out to me at garywestby@klwines.com for some advice!

La Petite Montagne, the small mountain of Reims, makes for harder bike riding than the "big" one. It is relentlessly hilly, devoid of even the smallest of flat areas. This little area to the west of the road between Reims and Epernay not only has steep slopes; it also has quite chalky soils, and is home to some of the best Premier Cru vineyards in Champagne. It is here, in Villers-Aux-Noeuds, that Olivier Langlais farms his fifteen acres of organic vineyards. Olivier has incredible dedication to biodynamics, and even disgorges his wine according to the moon cycle. His **Solemme "Terre Solemme" Premier Cru Brut Champagne (\$34.99)** is a blend of 55% Meunier, 25% Pinot Noir, and 20% Chardonnay that is aged

three years on the lees. The name Solemme is a combination of *sol* for *soliel* or sun, and *emme* for *femme* or woman. His goal is to make feminine, delicate Champagnes that are bright like the sun. I think he has



Paul-Vincent among his vines in the picturesque village of Brouillet in the north western corner of Champagne.



Olivier Langlais explaining biodynamic practices in his oldest plot of Chardonnay, the 50-year-old Montelle Blanche in Villers-aux-Noeuds.

succeeded with this gentle, light Champagne that has subtle toast and restrained apple fruit. This is a great apéritif Champagne, and is at home by itself as it is with a plate of cheeses.

La Vallée Brouillet might be my very favorite place in all of Champagne. I love the rolling landscape, the mix of mustard, vineyard and colza fields. But most of all I love the quiet peace of this secluded northwestern part of the region. This is the real countryside of Champagne! This area is known for the incredible diversity of fossilized shellfish that can be found in the fields here. The Ariston family makes up a pretty good chunk of the village of Brouillet (population 91), and not only do they make great wine, they also have a great museum with fantastic examples of the fossils of this area. The **2011 Ariston Aspasié Brut Champagne (\$34.99)** is an even blend of all three varieties, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier. This toasty Champagne has wonderful nutty flavors to go along with the extroverted brioche nose. It is perfect with hot, savory gougères and even paté appetizers.

Happy holidays! A toast to you! *—Gary Westby*

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

2016 Domaine Faiveley Mercurey “La Framboisiere” @ \$34.99 per bottle

Although the harvests were small, 2016 was an excellent vintage in Burgundy. The Framboisiere is perfectly poised aromatically, with poignant blackberry, raspberry, clove and nutmeg giving way on the palate to berry compote, layered stony minerality, and subdued baking spices. The fruit is offset by a solid structure of fine-boned tannin and lean acidity that drives the finish. While it is youthful, it is surprisingly open and pretty right off the bat. If you can manage to lay it down, though, it has all of the components needed for long term aging.

2015 La Chablisienne 1er Cru “Beuroy” Chablis @ \$24.99 per bottle

Situated on a south-facing slope just across the central valley from the Grand Cru cluster, Beuroy is one of the smaller 1er Crus, and is rarely seen in the American market. This wine has the weight and complexity of a Grand Cru, but is made in a clean, open style that underscores the round apple and pear notes that dominate the palate. With the power and generosity of the 2015 vintage coming into play, this little 1er cru only gains in complexity. The aromas are of understated lemon curd, honeycrisp apple and pear, with a flinty edge. The texture on the palate is one of the elements that I love the most, with soft fruit, mineral depth, and mild creamy notes.

Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

2017 Kalinda Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir @ \$22.99 per bottle

Like all Kalinda wines, this is made by a winery whose name we can't disclose. I'll try not to drop too many hints lest I give it away. If it were labeled under its real name, it wouldn't last ten minutes on the shelf at this crazy price. So what does the wine have to say for itself? It's a great picture of the silky, smooth, perfumed and luscious style of Pinot Noir that sets apart the best wines of the Sonoma Coast. Even though the wine is young, it is incredibly well integrated already, with an emphasis on fresh berry fruit, ripe, soft tannin, and just a kiss of subtle oak spice.

2016 Stolpman “Originals” Ballard Canyon Syrah @ \$26.99 per bottle

Five years from vintage date, this wine is showing incredible development and complexity, with aromas of leather, cigar box, cured meat and olive transitioning seamlessly into rounded red fruit and silky tannin with an undercurrent of game and forest floor. The finish is persistent, with lingering notes of wild herb, mushroom and game. While I'm not always one to judge a wine by its points, its worth noting that the critics agree—Robert Parker gave this wine 93 points and *Wine Enthusiast* 92 points.

2014 Comartin Cellars “Cuvee Cassidy” Santa Ynez Valley G-S-M @ \$24.99 per bottle

Aromatically full of bramble fruit, cassis, sage, thyme and plum, this transitions on the palate into a medium-bodied wine with smooth tannin and a slight gamey undertone. The finish is long and savory with continued notes of cassis and sage. It's in a perfect drinking window right now, and would be a great pairing for lamb.

2015 La Croix de Mazeyres, Pomerol @ \$24.99 per bottle

Winemaker Alain Moueix runs Château Mazeyres strictly along biodynamic principals, incorporating green growth between vine rows and encouraging fauna in the area. The winemaking follows the principals of “less is more” and aims to direct and craft what is already existent in the fruit. Although they do use some French oak in the élevation, the primary vessels are neutral concrete and stainless steel. The resultant wine beautifully showcases the powerful smooth and dark fruit of Pomerol, well balanced by a classical structure with nicely integrated tannin. With the generous nature of the 2015 vintage coming into play, this wine is open and soft right off the bat. It's highly tempting to drink it right now, but I also expect great things of this wine down the line.

2014 St. Jean du Barroux “l'Argile” Ventoux @ \$25.99 per bottle

This is a blend of Grenache, Syrah, Carignan, and Cinsault. Philippe Gimmel, the proprietor and winemaker, uses all native yeasts in his winemaking, and the wine is aged in neutral concrete vats before bottling. You may have noticed that this wine is a bit older than most on the market currently. That is because Philippe never releases a wine until he feels that it has begun to drink well. That is not to say that the wine needs to be drunk now. It certainly could be (perhaps paired with roast lamb), but it is made with such careful precision that it could easily age another decade or so, like its more renowned counterparts from Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

2016 Comando G “La Bruja de Rozas” Garnacha @ \$23.99 per bottle

This is composed entirely of Grenache from vines in the 50- to 70-year age range, from a few organically farmed vineyards surrounding the little town of Las Rozas de Puerto Real. Grenache is one of the varieties most suited to the area, given the hot and arid climate. This example is a bit lighter and more aromatic in tone than what you might expect. Garcia and Landi are very particular with their winemaking, hand-harvesting all the fruit, and only using native yeasts to ferment the must. Use of neutral oak adds a subtle texture, and balances the soft tannin nicely.

2016 Belle Glos “Dairyman” Russian River Valley Pinot Noir @ \$34.99 per bottle

The Russian River vineyard from which Joe produces this single-vineyard expression of Belle Glos Pinot is called “Dairyman” after the old dairy farm that used to occupy this area. It's on the southern side of Russian River, with a picture-perfect climate for the AVA. Cooling and moderating influences come from the ocean in the form of fogs and sea breezes, which balance out the California sunshine and allow for a long growing season. The resultant fruit is concentrated and it fully ripens without losing its structure and acidity. This makes for a powerful, full-bodied style of Pinot Noir that's difficult to argue with.

Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2015 Pomeys, Moulis @ \$14.99 per bottle

Lusciously fruited aromas of blueberry, blackberry, plum and cedar shavings transition into a medium-bodied wine with lighter tannin and very well integrated structure. On the finish, lingering berry and baking spice notes play on. There is nothing closed about this wine. It is ready to pour and enjoy now: an excellent Bordeaux for the sceptics.

2017 Franck Millet Pouilly Fumé @ \$14.99 per bottle

A beautiful new addition to the Millet portfolio. We are excited to feature this Pouilly Fumé from our dear friends Franck & Betty Millet, some of the best winemakers in Sancerre. Lean, crisp and focused, this wine has an excellent balance of chalky minerality, citrus, lemongrass, and orchard fruits. It's a beautiful apéritif wine, and also pairs well with a variety of seafood.

2014 Clos Chanteduc, Côtes du Rhône @ \$13.99 per bottle

Patricia Wells, well-known food critic and writer, owns the Clos Chanteduc and refers to the wine as the perfect “everyday red,” speaking of it in terms of a bistro wine. It's a classic Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre blend, with a little more Syrah than is typical in the area. The winemaker is Yves Gras of the famous Domaine Santa Duc in Gigondas. He also manages the Clos Chanteduc and pursues a fastidious attention to detail both in the vineyard and the cellar. So what makes this particular Côtes du Rhône the perfect food wine? Rhône blends already tend to be food friendly, and this one has a touch more Syrah, increasing the black pepper note, and a lighter bodied style with good acidity that plays perfectly with savory and salty elements. Patricia Wells recommends this with Black Truffle Spaghetti.

2014 Buglioni Valpolicella Classico Superiore @ \$14.99 per bottle

While the Buglioni family produce many wines, from Amarone to Ripasso and even a rosé, the Valpolicella Classico Superiore, jokingly dubbed “l'Imperfetto,” is where they really shine. It's traditional in this area to use some Slavonian oak casks for aging, and that was done here. It adds a pungent sweet spice but doesn't overwhelm the wine, which is so vibrant and charming on its own, the result is stunning. The nose is loaded with black cherry, plum, and baking spice. On the palate a sweet berry fruit emerges, contrasted beautifully with light tannin and soft velvety texture. The finish is dry and laden with perfumed clove and nutmeg notes. I highly recommend pairing this with red sauce dishes, which are somewhat difficult due to the natural acidity of tomato, or with roasted beef or lamb.

2016 Kumeu River “Kumeu Village” Chardonnay @ \$14.99 per bottle

This is one of the best examples of serious New Zealand Chardonnay on the market. While showcasing plenty of ripe, tropical fruit notes, and a creamy texture from the malolactic fermentation that it undergoes, it still maintains a crisp acidity and stays light on its feet. Michael primarily ages this wine in stainless steel, with 25% used French barriques to add texture and a subtle sweet oak spice. What I love in this wine is the combination of traditional Burgundian techniques married to vibrant, ripe, yet balanced New Zealand fruit.

2016 Helen's Hill "Ingram Road" Chardonnay Yarra Valley Victoria @ \$14.99 per bottle

This wine is absolutely stunning, and will likely throw on its head any expectation of Australian Chardonnay that you may have had to date. I have to admit I'm a complete devotee of white Burgundy, and tend to think Puligny is the best Chardonnay in the world, but if I had to pick a wine to compete with that prestigious area, this is it. It's blended from a few different plots on the property. The fruit is grown and selected based on its particular fruit character, then blended to taste, and also sees some French oak. Like white Burgundy, it's taut and focused with plenty of minerality and orchard fruit, but also a subtle creaminess and an open character that allows it to drink well now.

2016 Helen's Hill "Ingram Road" Pinot Noir Yarra Valley Victoria @ \$14.99 per bottle

This Pinot Noir is blended from several of the different clones on the Helen's Hill estate. Most notably, the Old Block MV6 clone, whose original cuttings were taken from Clos Vougeot, one of Burgundy's most renowned Grand Cru vineyards. The fruit from these vines is small and concentrated with powerful dark berry flavor. It's complemented nicely by the Pommard clone Pinot that's planted across the eastward-facing slope of the Range View Block. That fruit adds a nicely earthy and savory element, with red berry fruit and subtle baking spice. All of the Pinots produced by Helen's Hill see some French oak, a judicious mix of old and new barrels, to impart a subtle sweet toast character and a great textural element.

2016 Idlewild "The Bee-Flora & Fauna" California White Blend @ \$16.99 per bottle

Composed of 53% Muscat Canelli, 42% Arneis and 5% Cortese. Muscat Canelli, aka Muscat Blanc or Moscato Bianco, is a wildly aromatic grape, native to northern Italy. In this case it's grown on volcanic soils in Lake County, giving the wine a wonderfully mineral drive. Arneis is another native Italian grape (here grown in Mendocino), and produces firmly structured, stony wines laden with minerality and herbal notes. It's the perfect complement to the Muscat Canelli, and plays well with the small amount of Cortese, which brings a fresh, citrus-driven acidity.

Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2017 Amalaya Torrontes-Riesling Salta @ \$8.99 per bottle

In this lovely blend of Torrontes and Riesling, you have a wine that is extremely complex aromatically, crisp, citrus-driven, and light in body. The region of Salta is one of Argentina's highest elevation growing regions, and wines from this area have a distinctive linear acidity that makes them fresh and underscores the vibrant fruit. This particular wine also has a higher dose of stony minerality that heightens this style. While you may be wondering how to pair this wine, it's actually quite simple. The gorgeous and heady aromatics work surprisingly well with pungently spiced food such as Indian or Thai cuisine, but alternatively, the wine works beautifully as an appetizer.

2016 Joostenberg "Little j" Red Rhône Blend Paarl @ \$10.99 per bottle

This Syrah dominated Rhône blend is from old, head trained bush vines dry farmed in the Paarl region of South Africa. It has bright, boisterous aromas of blackberry, cherry, blueberry and licorice, with a medium body and soft, mild tannins. On the finish cranberry and baking spice notes dominate.

2015 Grand Moulin, Côtes de Blaye Rouge @ \$9.99 per bottle

This wine is dominated by Merlot, planted in sandy soils that give the wine beautiful aromatics. Atypically for Bordeaux, it's aged in concrete, an inert vessel, to highlight the beauty and effortless elegance of the wine. Bright berry fruit dominates the palate with just a hint of underlying herbal notes, and the texture is silky and full. Although classically structured, it's not a wine to lay down in your cellar for decades. It's designed to drink well right off the bat. Jean-François recommends pairing it with the simple, ever-delicious French classic, chicken and herbs.

2017 Flor de Vetus Verdejo @ \$9.99 per bottle

This wine hails from Rueda, and is both traditional and edgy in character. While Verdejo has long been farmed in this area, and there are some high quality traditional barrel-aged styles, this is done in stainless steel, aiming for a lighter, crisper style with elegance and character. It's a lovely match to seafood, and would make a great substitute for Chablis with crab.

2017 Kalinda Sonoma County Sauvignon Blanc @ \$10.99 per bottle

Overt floral aromas give way to waxy honeycomb and white peach fruit playing against papaya and mango on the

palate. The slight grassy edge and sweet pea notes balance out all this tropical fruit beautifully, while the texture manages to be soft and creamy while still finishing with a crisp dry note. I have quite a few more descriptors in my tasting book, but I won't overwhelm you with adjectives. I'd advise you to pour yourself a glass and simply enjoy!

2017 A.A. Badenhorst "Curator" White Blend Swartland @ \$8.99 per bottle

This is the antithesis of the cheap bulk wines made in the Swartland. With Adi Badenhorst's intimate knowledge of old vine sites across the region, he creates this blend from highly expressive fruit sourced from several of his favorite parcels. In this vintage, the wine is made from dry-farmed parcels of Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay and Viognier. Stylistically, the wine is fresh and light with crisp acidity and refreshing orchard fruit. But pay close attention—this wine has a great textural element and some exotic spice notes that add complexity. It qualifies in my book as both highly quaffable, and quite intriguing—exactly the kind of wine I want on any given weekday.

2017 Domaine Duffour Côtes de Gascogne Gros Manseng @ \$10.99 per bottle

This is not your average white. I think you may find it a refreshing alternative to Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay. Made entirely from Gros Manseng, the wine is bright, fresh and tangy with vibrant tropical fruit notes and an appealing aromatic quality. The Gros Manseng varietal is native to the Jurançon area in France. It was brought to Gascogne about 25 years ago, and has taken on a more expressive character here on the clay and limestone soils. Although a relative newcomer, this grape is making waves in Gascogne.

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

2015 Giovanni Manzone "Il Crutin" Langhe Nebbiolo @ \$16.99 per bottle

This wine reminds me a bit of its maker, Giovanni: it's placid, deep and real. The wine is aged in 700-liter barrels for about six months before bottling, and it is gorgeous. It's true that 2015 is a sensational vintage, but this wine thrills me every year with its aromatics. You're going to love this wine's supple character, which it expresses without giving up any Nebbiolo-ness. I'd recommend drinking it with *Agnolotti dal Plin*.

2015 Poderi Colla Nebbiolo d'Alba @ \$22.99 per bottle

This comes from the Cascine Drago vineyard, east of Barolo and close to the western boundary of Barbaresco, at about 1100 feet in elevation. The harvest is a little more old school: last week of September and first ten days of October, all hand harvested, de-stemmed and then fermented on the skins for 10 to 12 days. The wine is aged in large oak barrels for about a year. The Colla wines are very classic and representative of the "Traditional" style, but they have more edge, grit and tannins. Nebbiolo is tannic to begin with, but this is so sublimely real, aromatically pure and superb. The key in these wines is the fork. They are food wines and the rich cuisine of Piemonte is perfect for them.

2015 Elio Grasso Vigna Martina Barbera d'Alba @ \$27.99 per bottle

This wine is sensational. Bold fruit, complex terroir, supple, long finish... you're going to love it! The wine is from a 35-year-old, south-facing vineyard at about 1200 feet. It's harvested at the end of September and beginning of October, gets stainless fermentation and is then aged in 50% new and 50% one-year-old barrique. Barriques too often can overwhelm a wine, but not this wine. It is spectacular and you really don't see the barrique influence at all. It's a beautifully balanced Barbera that I'm sure you will enjoy!

2013 Tenuta Roveglia Merlot @ \$11.99 per bottle

This wine won't remind you of any New World Merlot. It's more like a Bordeaux in structure and flavor. The grapes are harvested the first week of October after a long growing season, but this is not a late harvest; it's the normal period for the region. It is fermented and aged in stainless steel and then released a few years later. The nose immediately shows a wine with earth, leather, iron and spice; nothing simple-fruity here. On the palate the wine shows a bit of tannic grip, followed by cherry and licorice flavors. Time to grab your fork; this would be perfect for the more savory Italian style pasta Bolognese, rather than the tomato-driven American version. Enjoy!

2013 Alfio Mozzi "Grisone" Sassella @ \$27.99 per bottle

I've long been a fan of the Nebbiolo-based wines from this region. Alfio Mozzi farms about 8.5 acres in Sassella. He ferments his wines using just indigenous yeast, then ages the wine for 18 months in 25hl and 30hl French oak barrels. In this small valley, Nebbiolo shows a different character from what you'd find in the Langhe. The wines have more earth and grit, and to me seem more aromatic than their cousins to the west. This wine is beautiful. It has more weight and richness

than most Valtellina wines but it never loses its sense of place. To fully appreciate it, try it with *Pizzoccheri*, the classic buckwheat pasta dish of the region. It has chard, cheese and potatoes and it's truly hearty!

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

2010 Fallet-Dart Vintage Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This vintage Champagne is composed of 70% Chardonnay and 30% Pinot Noir. It is bright, clean and refreshing Champagne that is perfect for an apéritif by itself, or paired with some little appetizers. I love the citric, white flower flavors in this Champagne, and the tight bead that the seven years on the lees has given it.

Gilbert Jacquesson "Cuvée Prestige" Brut Champagne @ 34.99 per bottle

This Champagne is entirely barrel fermented and aged for six years on the lees. It is composed of 40% Meunier from the 2010 harvest that spends a year in barrel before bottling, and 30% Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from 2011. This is a creamy, deep, brioche-laden Champagne with a truly unusual amount of complexity and depth. It is an ideal partner for pâté or charcuterie. Less than 3000 bottles of this were made, and the Champagne Club took a third of the entire production!

Marcel Vezien Secret d'Eclaires Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

The Vezien family have a very small plot of Pinot Blanc on their property, and use 5% in this fascinating Champagne. The other 95% is composed of Chardonnay, making this an exotic blanc de blancs. This Champagne is extroverted, rich and exotic, with hints of mandarin along with white flowers and subtle toast. This is ideal on its own as your apéritif, as it is soft, elegant and full of flavor. I think a little truffle-salt popcorn makes it even better.

Michel Arnould Verzenay "Brut Tradition" Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This Champagne is made solely from Verzenay Grand Cru Pinot Noir. This crazy Grand Cru is the heart of the Pinot Noir in Cristal, Veuve Clicquot vintage, and too many others to list. The wine has the classic hazelnut character that can so easily be mistaken for wood influence in a blind tasting. In fact, this Champagne is all stainless steel fermented, with three years of ageing on the lees. It makes a great, richer style apéritif on its own, and it's magic with cold smoked salmon.

Château de Bligny "Grand Reserve" Rosé Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This is distinctive for being the area's only Château-bottled Champagne, as all the other castle owners buy grapes rather than farming them. It is made the old fashioned hard way, on two old, manual coquard basket presses out of a half-and-half combination of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The wine gets its color from 10% Pinot Noir that is vinified red. The wine has a lovely fruit expression, with clean strawberry aromas balanced by pie crust. It is a very pure rosé that can be enjoyed as an apéritif, but it comes to life with savory food like charcuterie, or better yet game birds. This is usually \$49.99 retail, so it will go fast at your Club price of \$34.99.

2008 Fluteau "Symbiose" Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

The 2008 vintage is perhaps the best in a generation in Champagne, with stellar ripeness and power married to uncommonly high acidity and freshness. Cold east winds combined with lots of sun in the fall led to some of the most loaded, complex wines in a long time. Like the Bligny, the Symbiose is half Chardonnay and half Pinot Noir, but the Symbiose is vinified white. It has enjoyed eight years of ageing on the lees, yet is still as bright and fresh as you could want. This has great texture and a fine bead from the long ageing, but it is so vivacious right now that I would recommend having it with shellfish. Try it now, and then lay down a case to drink over the next ten years!

2011 Egrot Brut Grand Cru Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

Many of you have visited Elisabeth Goutorbe and Jean-Marie Egrot at their home in Aÿ, and even more of you have met her at tent events. A few years ago, they changed the name of the house from Elisabeth Goutorbe to Egrot et Filles, to avoid confusion with the many other members of the Goutorbe family in Aÿ. This Champagne is composed of two thirds Pinot Noir and one third Chardonnay from some of the chalkiest soil in all of Champagne. While this vintage proved challenging for many, some of the best plots in the grand crus did exceptionally well, producing wines of both power and finesse. This is one of those wines, and has plenty of richness for drinking on its own, but also the backbone of minerality to pair with the best salmon or tuna fillets.