



3005 El Camino, Redwood City, CA 94061
Phone, to place orders: (800) 247-5987
Wine Club extension: 2766
Fax (650) 364-4687
theclubs@klwines.com

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Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

Happy Holidays to all of you, our wonderful club members! We're in the midst of the celebratory season now, and it's the perfect time to take advantage of your member pricing for all of your holiday wine needs. Don't forget to check out our Re-Buy section at the back of this newsletter, and our more comprehensive online catalog of club wines. This month we have quite a lineup of holiday picks. Whether you're looking for the perfect wine to complement a special dish, a stunning Napa bottle to gift to a good friend, or simply a fun, easy-drinking wine to pop and enjoy at a quiet moment, we have you covered.

Le Club Français focuses on food-friendly wines this month. We've selected two tremendous reds that are drinking beautifully right now and are fantastic with an array of dishes. The Châteauneuf-du-Pape is from a new producer that Clyde discovered earlier this year and is a favorite here. The Bordeaux is a longtime K&L darling, one of our best producers in the commune of St-Julien. With seven years of aging under its belt, it's showing beautifully and is ready for your festivities.

It's a special month for the Signature Red Club. Buyer Ryan Woodhouse has landed two incredible deals for us from Napa. We have a Diamond Mountain Cabernet, and a Merlot from Spring Mountain. Both wines are absolutely stunning, and incidentally their club prices are far, far below their normal retail prices. We don't expect supplies to last long on these.

For the Premium Club we've mixed Old World and New World, bringing together a lovely Pinot Noir from the Loire Valley and an expressive Chardonnay from California's Russian River Valley. For those who have never enjoyed Pinot Noir from the Loire, this is the perfect introduction, as the wine is soft and brimming with fruit. The Chardonnay is a great example of the wealth to be found in Russian River Valley and exhibits such balance and poise that it's difficult to point to a better wine, especially at this special club price.

For our Best Buy members we've chosen two fun, easy-drinking wines. These are the bottles you want to have on hand for the spontaneous occasions of the season, or simply for the quiet moment when you can enjoy a glass at home. This South African Rhône style blend and California Sauvignon Blanc fit the bill nicely.

Greg has two rather off-the-wall selections for our Italiano Club members this month. Both wines are unexpected, yet positively delightful. If you've never had the pleasure of drinking Schiava, now is your chance with a lovely wine from the Alto Adige, one of Greg's favorites. He also includes a bold Syrah from the Marche.

For our Champagne Club, we celebrate the season with yet another offering of vintage Champagne, this bottle hailing from the acclaimed 2009 vintage. In addition, we have a lovely extra brut Champagne from a new producer. It can undoubtedly grace your New Year's festivities perfectly.

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

Le Club Français

One of my favorite things about this time of year is the food. Everyone pulls out their special recipes, and home cooking is at its height. It's the perfect opportunity to highlight food and wine pairings. So for all you foodies out there, I've chosen two wines that are perfect for holiday cuisine. I find that fuller bodied reds with a bit of age and some tannin structure are often the best accompaniment to richer fare, and that's exactly what we have this month with a Bordeaux from the 2012 vintage, and a lovely Châteauneuf-du-Pape from 2015. Both wines have hit their stride and are ready to grace your table.

You might be a bit surprised to hear me say that 2012 is one of my favorite Bordeaux vintages, particularly for the left bank. Initially underrated, this vintage has proved one of the best for excellent deals. The pricing was rather low due to initial criticism of the vintage, and then the wines began to show beautifully as they arrived on our shores. I remember tasting through a lineup of 2012s and being impressed with the slightly lighter-bodied and generally more aromatic quality of the wines, across the board. 2012 is not the best vintage for long-term aging—these wines are drinking beautifully right now. I'm thrilled to include one of my favorites for the Club Français this month. Château du Glana is at the heart of the St-Julien commune, and stylistically it's right down the middle: neither too modern and heavy bodied, nor too funky and old school. I find more red fruit in the du Glana wines, and really great aromatics, which were only enhanced in this 2012 vintage. The **2012 du Glana, St-Julien (\$29.99)** needs a decanting to show its full potential. About half an hour after you decant it, it really comes alive. Deep olive and dark chocolate aromas complement the eucalyptus and huckleberry fruit. On the palate the wine's tannin and acidity are nicely integrated and the development shows in the guise of savory cigar and pepper notes. Alongside this is a pretty red berry note and a hint of eucalyptus. Well-balanced, and slightly lighter in body, this wine is absolutely built for food. I envision serving this with a rack of lamb or a steak and roasted root vegetables.

Our other selection is also a rich, savory and venerable red. In October we featured the Mourre du Tendre Côtes-du-Rhône for the Signature Club, and now we have their stellar Châteauneuf-du-Pape for our Club Français. Château du Mourre du Tendre is a classic French domaine, run for generations by the Paumel family. Current owners Florence Verité and her son Paul continue to run the winery in an old-school way, hand harvesting all of their fruit and aging the wines in large oak foudre. The result is a beautifully balanced production with all the care and focus of traditional methods. The **2015 Château du Mourre du Tendre Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$29.99)** opens with rich aromas of dried herbs, red currant and cured meats. Slightly smoky on the palate, the wine has beautifully mellow, round tannin with full body and layers of spice and fruit. The finish here is exceedingly long and complex. The wine already shows a fair amount of development and is in its first drinking window. Paired with grilled meats, it's an immediate win. This wine is versatile and could work well with almost any savory dish that displays the right amount of body and flavor to balance the power and depth of the wine.



In 2015 Château du Glana completely re-built its cellar and winery with a state-of-the-art design by architect Bertrand Digneaux.



The Mourre du Tendre vineyards offer a stunning view of Mont Ventoux and the Dentelles, classic Rhône Valley landmarks.

Signature Red Collection Wine Club

As I mentioned in the introduction, this is an incredible month for the Signature Red Club. This month's wines are well below their retail prices for you, our club members. We're focusing on Napa, and the two wines we feature come from some of the best old-school producers in the region. Our Cabernet hails from Diamond Mountain District, and our Merlot from Spring Mountain District. Both of these mountainous AVAs produce some of the finest fruit in Napa, and I think you'll love these wines.

Let's start with our Cabernet, the **2015 Von Strasser Diamond Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon (\$29.99)**. With a normal retail price of \$44.99, this is a super deal. Rudy von Strasser, founder and winemaker of Von Strasser Winery, has made his mark on the Napa wine scene with his highly acclaimed Diamond Mountain Cabernets. Sitting on the northwest side of Napa, Diamond Mountain District is a part of the Mayacamas Range, dividing Napa Valley from Sonoma Valley, and produces some of the most characterful Cabernets, with very long aging potential. When Rudy purchased the old Roddis Estate Winery on Diamond Mountain back in 1989, he chose this location for its potential to produce refined, classic Cabernet with the structure and depth to age like Bordeaux. As the first American allowed an internship at Château Lafite-Rothschild, Rudy was profoundly impressed by the elegance and craft he witnessed. He seeks to portray something of this character in his own wines, always considering the unique climate and fruit of his vineyard. The 2015 vintage was particularly fine in Napa, and although the Von Strasser Cabernets are built to age, this wine is showing so many fine characteristics already that it's difficult to wait for a future date to open and enjoy it.

Our second wine for December comes from one of my personal favorite producers in Napa. Keenan Winery has singlehandedly convinced me to drop all my assumptions surrounding domestic Merlot and approach this great varietal with fresh eyes. We all know that Merlot took a hard beating after the film *Sideways*, but regardless of where you fall on the varietal, I think this wine will impress you. Also hailing from one of the mountainous AVAs of Napa, the **2015 Keenan Napa Valley Merlot (\$19.99)** is anything but boring. Intense dark cassis fruit is balanced by distinctive menthol and cigar notes. The wine perfectly marries a rich, velvety texture to bright, focused acidity and ripe but firm tannins. It's an incredible example of the power and depth that Merlot can achieve in the right circumstances. This wine comes from the nine acres planted right around the Keenan winery up on Spring Mountain—also found in the Mayacamas range. It's the perfect location to grow serious Merlot, and if you haven't yet tasted a wine from Keenan, this is a phenomenal introduction. It normally retails for \$39.99, so our special club pricing is half off. I don't expect either this Merlot or our Cabernet to last long on our store shelves, so make sure to stock up.



Rita and Rudy Von Strasser, whose operation has the distinct honor of being named Winery of the Year by Wine & Spirits Magazine an incredible 13 times since its founding.



The Merlot vineyard at Keenan surrounds the winery and tasting room, and includes some of the oldest vines on the estate.

Premium Wine Club

It's no secret that at K&L we love our French wines. Some of the oldest direct relationships that we've cultivated over the years are in France, and in consequence we have a wealth of fantastic French wines to share with our customers. We also have a passion for more local favorites—in particular, boutique Californian wines. For December's Premium Club, we've settled on two of our absolute favorite producers. We've featured the wines of Aurore Dezat before in the Club Français, but now we have a larger shipment of her wines, and enough of her stunning Pinot Noir to share here with the Premium Club Members. Additionally, we have a lovely Chardonnay from a Russian River star. Both wines are friendly and open in style and drink well now.



Aurore Dezat. Despite the cool climate of the Loire, all of her wines show a clean, modern style that highlight the fruit character.

Typically when you think Sancerre, you think crisp, chalky white wine. The region also produces phenomenal Pinot Noirs. One of the aspects of Sancerre that makes for great Sauvignon Blanc is the limestone and flint soils, which lend depth of minerality and gorgeous aromatics. These same soil characteristics also make for incredible Pinot Noir with plenty of depth and personality. One of our best new-direct import producers in Sancerre, Aurore Dezat, makes just such a wine. 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 a cold region known for tangy, minerally whites, but here we have it. Aurore took over the family domaine in Sury-en-Vaux with the 2011 vintage and has worked hard to overhaul the entire production. Her wines are clean, well-balanced and more modern in style than those of some of her neighbors, and they were an instant hit with the K&L staff. Although the **2018 Aurore Dezat Sancerre Rouge (\$14.99)** is still young, it shows beautifully once you give it a little air in the glass or in a decanter. This red would make a great pairing with roast game birds and of course any hard, nutty cheese.

Our second wine this month comes from a very exciting producer in the Russian River Valley. Derek Rohlffs, the founder and winemaker at Bravium, is of Cherokee descent. The Cherokees are called the people of the mountain, and Derek feels strongly about the connection to nature passed down to him through his Cherokee roots. Taking this passion for nature into the wine world means Derek is first and foremost a lover of the land, with tremendous respect for his fruit. Not only does Derek select very specific sites to grow his fruit in both the Russian River and Anderson Valleys, he also uses very minimal intervention in the cellar and seeks above all else to respect the terroir and the natural expression of the fruit he uses. The **2018 Bravium Chardonnay Russian River Valley (\$14.99)** is a beautiful rendering of the Reis Vineyard, from which it hails. This vineyard is situated 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 Derek's careful handling in the cellar makes for a stunning Chardonnay with body, depth, and lift.



Derek Rohlffs describes the fruit of his vineyard as a gift of the land, and loves more than anything to be out among his vines.

Best Buy Wine Club

While the holiday season has a different look for each of us, one thing that's generally true is that it's a season full of bustle and noise. That means that it's also a season where the perfect easy-drinking glass of wine at the end of the day can be exactly what you need. Not to usurp the role of the physician, but I would readily prescribe a good glass of wine to offer a much-needed pause and still moment to your holiday season. That's why this month we've chosen to feature two fun, easy-drinking wines that are ready to pop and enjoy. Both wines are New World in flavor profile and origin, with the red hailing from South Africa's Cape region, and the white from California's Redwood Valley in Mendocino.

Made by one of Clyde's old friends, the **2017 Chance Creek "Terroir 95470"**

Redwood Valley Sauvignon Blanc (\$10.99) 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 are world-renowned, and some, like this wine, are under the radar and humbly phenomenal. The Chance Creek vineyard site, originally planted to Palomino grapes used in the production of California sherry, was purchased by Lou Bock in 1979. He soon replanted the vineyard to Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier and Sangiovese. Today the mature vines produce incredible fruit and Lou enjoys making wines from this unique terroir. His Sauvignon Blanc is certainly one of the best I've tasted from Mendocino and combines all the elements that you'd wish for in any top-notch representation of the grape. 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.

Back when I was first seriously getting into wine but had the budget of a poor college student, someone told me that South African wines were the way to go—they're always affordable and taste great! It's funny how those early pieces of advice can stick with you. I've had a fondness for South African wines ever since, and I've found that advice to be generally quite true. This month's **2017 Edgebaston "Pepper Pot" Red Stellenbosch (\$8.99)** is perhaps 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 varietals. 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. David employs only stainless-steel tanks rather than oak barrels in making this wine, to highlight the fruit character. His recommended pairing for this charming little wine is pizza.



David Finlayson, owner and winemaker at Edgebaston, follows a sustainable approach to winemaking, using only organic compounds in the vineyard, and minimal intervention in the cellar.

Club Italiano

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

I met Peter Zemmer last April during Vinitaly, which is a madhouse of people running around trying to get from one appointment to another in an incredibly crowded venue. I had decided to drop by without an appointment, trying to do it a bit on the sly. Upon asking if I could taste I was shuttled to a small, back corner where eventually Peter Zemmer himself arrived. Peter is a warm, serious, conscientious man and you could see that the changes he made at the winery and mostly in the vineyards, now four years ago, are really paying off. Being that it is a family winery you can't always be so bold with a proprietor without offending anyone. It's a long slow process. I was so impressed with the wines that I decided to visit him when I was on vacation this last September in the Alto Adige. I tasted the entire array of wines and have bought many for you to try. In this month's Club I decided to introduce the **2018 Peter Zemmer Schiava Alto Adige (\$12.99)** to you all. Okay, right up front I'll come clean: I am a Schiava lover. 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. As you can see it is very versatile, and I hope you like it as much as I do.

There are certain places in Italy that I find myself drawn to over and over, and the Marche is one. Perhaps it is because I love the Adriatic coast or Verdicchio, the rolling hills covered in grain. It's hard to say that one Italian region is more beautiful or picturesque than another, because most of Italy is so stunningly beautiful. Marche's narrow coastal strip with spectacular beach views is close to the interior mountains, and there are so few tourists, it's like going to Italy 30 or 40 years ago. Most of the tourists are Italian and to me it feels like a throwback experience. The **2015 La Monacesca Syrah Marche IGT (\$26.99)** comes from the Marche's Matelica Valley. The Matelica is a north-south valley, while the other Appennine valleys all flow east to west. In Italy (unlike California), any coastal air flow is coming off warm waters. Matelica's orientation gives it a real continental climate with very cool summer nights, warm days and an exceedingly long growing season, which allows grapes to become physiologically ripe, not just a harvesting response to the sugar bloom. This allows nature to balance the wine. 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 powerful and structured wine, and could use an hour or three in a decanter before current drinking. 400 cases were made.



Above: Peter Zemmer.

Below: Aldo Cifola.



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

Exploring the West of Champagne We don't need an excuse to pop a bottle of Champagne, but December is a great month for opening more than usual, and for getting adventurous with our choices. With that in mind, I thought that December would be a good time to explore the west of Champagne, rarely visited by foreigners. This part of Champagne is the closest to Paris, and used to sell almost all of its production to residents of the that beautiful city. This month, we have one bottle from Crouttes-sur-Marne, on the very western edge of Champagne, and another from Boursault, a little closer to the center.

With the dollar still very strong, we were able to do another vintage selection this month, the **2009 D erot-Delugny Millesime Brut (\$34.99)**. This 30-acre estate only keeps one third of their production for making their own Champagne, selling off the rest of their fruit. They are the oldest grower-producer in their village; they have been estate-bottling Champagne since 1929, and they've been growing grapes longer than written records go back. Everything is aged in a hillside cellar that is over 50 feet deep at the back. This ten-year-old vintage Champagne is a blanc de noirs, composed of half each Pinot Noir and Meunier from the oldest vines on the estate. It has a wonderful sourdough toast nose and 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 pat , stuffed mushrooms or savory tarts this holiday season.

One of the best additions that we have had to our direct import portfolio in many years came our way last spring when I visited Charlotte and Herv  Le Gallais in the village of Boursault. Longtime Champagne Club members might remember Champagne Tarlant, and Le

Gallais is their neighbor. All of their production comes from ten acres within the walls of the Clos Boursault. The Clos of Champagne are the rarest and most special vineyard sites in the region. They were identified by ecclesiastical vigneronns as the best sites, and were walled off. This property was purchased in 1843—long after the first wall had been built—by none other than Madame Clicquot, and her great-granddaughter sold it to the family le Gallais, in 1927. For the club, I've selected the **Le Gallais Cuv e des C dres Extra Brut Champagne (\$34.99)** which is in fact a brut nature. This Champagne, from the perfect exposures inside the walls of the Clos, did not need any dosage. It is composed of 45% Pinot Noir, 45% Meunier and 10% Chardonnay, so it's very close to the Derot in composition. But the wine could not be more different. This Champagne has a warm baguette bouquet and clean red cherry and pear flavors. It is dry and zingy but not at all austere, and will go very well with anything from tuna tartare to composed salads. A toast to you! —*Gary Westby*



Champagne Derot-Delugny in Crouttes-sur-Marne.



Charlotte & Herv  Le Gallais in the Clos Boursault.

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

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.

2017 Domaine Jean et Gilles Lafouge Meursault @ \$35.99 per bottle

The slightly cooler vintage in 2017 brings us back to classic Burgundy. This wine opens with lovely hazelnut and custard aromas, punctuated by lemon verbena. On the palate the medium body shows a good cut of crisp acidity across a lovely texture from lees stirring. The dominate fruit is yellow pear, framed by other orchard fruits. The close is long and lingering, presenting all you could ask for in a superb Meusault from a classic vintage. I'd highly recommend stashing a few of these bottles in your cellar as I'm confident it will only grow in complexity over the next five years.

2015 Grand Mayne, St-Emilion @ \$44.99 per bottle

If you're looking to build your cellar, this is a great wine to consider. Not only does it come from one of the best recent Bordeaux vintages; with the insight and wisdom of consulting winemaker Michel Rolland, it's built to age seamlessly. The winemaking is incredibly precise and careful. Each plot in the vineyard is tended and harvested separately, then vinified and blended to taste. The result is a beautiful and forceful Merlot-dominated wine, with the structure of Cabernet Franc lending it the bones to age for many years.

2016 Domaine Cherrier Père et Fils “l'Essentiel” Sancerre @ \$14.99 per bottle

One of the higher end cuvées from the Domaine, l'Essentiel is a new Sancerre at K&L, not to be found elsewhere on the American market. The wine is as classic a Sancerre as you could wish, with a stony, mineral-laden and citrus-tinged palate and a clean, incredibly long finish. This elegant Sancerre is served best with seafood or goat's cheese.

2012 Château de Montfaucon “Vin de Monsieur le Baron de Montfaucon” Vin de Pays du Gard

@ \$27.99 per bottle

Composed of 15 Rhône varietals including Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault, Carignan, Counoise, Mourvèdre, Muscat, Aubun, Alicante, Tempranillo and several others. Made to reflect a historic style of wine from the 19th century (the etching on the label also dates from this time), the wine is all hand harvested, co-fermented and racked straight into barrel for aging right after fermentation. Rodolphe de Pins, the current proprietor, has chosen to further age this wine in bottle so that it is perfectly ready to drink upon release. It is drinking beautifully now, with a lovely savory development showing, and all the structure integrated seamlessly into the dark, brooding fruit.

2017 Chateau de la Negly “La Falaise” Pays d'Oc Blanc @ \$19.99 per bottle

This classic Rhône white incorporates Roussanne and Marsanne with a small percentage of Bourboulenc and Clairette. The wine is partially aged in Stockinger barrels—the work of a famous Austrian cooper—to give a subtle creaminess and sweet spice to the finished product. While it tends toward a fuller body, with lots of texture and richness on the palate, the wine is nicely balanced with crisp acidity. Beautiful clotted cream, papaya and honeysuckle notes mingle with the classic aromas of marzipan and ripe apple. On the palate the wine is all about the texture, seemingly endless.

Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

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.

2015 Mourre du Tendre Vieilles Vignes Côtes du Rhône Villages @ \$24.99 per bottle

This wine is gorgeous but reserved. The bright red berry fruits show themselves tentatively under a veneer of delicate aromas, subtle earth and oak spice, and pronounced structure. The wine is reminiscent of Piemontese styles from Italy and lends itself to aging. At four years past vintage date, this bottle is just coming into its own. I recommend enjoying it with a good meal and giving it time to open up in your glass or decanter for an hour or so to reap the full benefits of this Old World beauty.

2015 Aaron "Sand and Stone" Paso Robles Rhône Blend @ \$24.99 per bottle

While predominately Grenache like any good Rhône blend, this wine also features a large portion of Petite Syrah, making it one of the boldest, punchiest Rhône blends I've encountered from Paso. For all its power and weight it retains incredible elegance, with a core of vibrant acidity, a clean fruit profile, and bountiful aromatics. Typically with a wine this big I'd recommend a hearty dinner, but honestly Aaron's "Sand and Stone" is so beautifully balanced and seamless, it drinks perfectly well on its own. It is a great find for those of us who like hearty reds, but don't always want to go to the trouble of preparing a steak dish.

2015 Charlie Heintz "Valentina" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

Sourced from the vineyard blocks that are closest to the "crown" of the Valentina vineyard, this distinctive Pinot shows deep blackberry and cassis notes, polished tannin and a pleasant medium palate weight. A savory, almost iron-rich element to the wine makes me think immediately of roasted fowl, and in particular of pheasant or Cornish game hens. If you like some of the deep-fruited, polished Pinots of the Sonoma Coast, this wine is sure to be up your alley.

2018 Kalinda, Anderson Valley Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

This is one of those very special private label bottlings, the maker of which we are forbidden to disclose. If you're an aficionado of Anderson Valley and "true" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, you undoubtedly have tasted their wines before and may have some in your cellar (if you're lucky). The folks behind this bottle craft some of the finest wines of the appellation and their single-vineyard bottlings are highly sought after, coveted by collectors and sommeliers alike.

2016 Andronicus Napa Red @ \$24.99 per bottle

In 2016 the growing season was nearly perfect in Napa, and brothers Eric and Phillip Titus made the decision to use a higher percentage of Cabernet from their home vineyards in this blend. With 66% Cabernet Sauvignon, the wine also incorporates Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Merlot. After 22 months in barrel, the wine is both smooth, rounded, and well-integrated. The barrel aging also adds a very light mocha spice note that beautifully contrasts with the cool blackberry and cassis fruit that dominates the palate of this wine. At the special club price of \$25, it's a great deal for a classic Napa red!

2016 Mount Edward Estate Pinot Noir Central Otago @ \$24.99 per bottle

Winemaker Duncan Forsyth has been in New Zealand's Central Otago region since the 1990s and planted some of the best vineyard sites in the area. Teaming up with winemaker Anna Riederer, who cut her chops at none other than Domaine Roulot in Meursault, Burgundy, the duo has gone on to produce some great Pinot. Anna's approach to winemaking is balanced and careful, not intervening overly much in the natural process, and aiming to achieve a finished wine that is not only complex in character, but textural, nuanced, and expressive of its terroir. Terroir is Duncan's department. Having planted many of the vineyards in the area, he knows the soils and vines like few others.

Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2017 Jean-Michel Dupré Morgon "Le Griottier" @ \$14.99 per bottle

This lovely Morgon is made from naturally grown grapes, and the winemaking is very non-interventionist, highlighting the inherent depth of the fruit from this site. On the nose it exhibits dark cherry fruit with cola accents and sweet baking spice. As the wine continues into the palate you encounter further red fruits with a savory twist reminiscent of mushroom and forest floor. The medium body is pleasantly round on the palate with soft edges and mild tannin structure.

2015 Kurtz Family Barossa Valley Shiraz @ \$14.99 per bottle

This wine is as classic as it gets for the Barossa. Situated in Light Pass, right in the heart of the region, Kurtz Family Vineyards grows some of the best full-bodied, deep-fruited Shiraz to be found in the Valley. The 2015's generous fruit profile is well balanced by the punch of peppery spice and great texture on the palate. Big, rich and full, this wine is certainly one of the bolder expressions we've featured this year, and is a great bottle to return to for any richer meat dishes on your menu. It would pair particularly well with braised lamb, or pork.

2017 Wheeler Farms Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc @ \$14.99 per bottle

Wheeler Farms is the new winery of Bart and Daphne Araujo, so we were extremely lucky to include it in the club. Indeed, this bottle normally retails for \$34.99, but thanks to our domestic buyer Ryan Woodhouse, we've managed to snag this superb Sauvignon Blanc at such a bargain we can share with our club members. Not only is the price right, the wine is excellent. It opens with aromas of verbena, grapefruit and lemon curd. On the palate, surprisingly soft honeydew melon fruit dominates, with a continued citrus overtone and a lingering finish.

2017 Clos de l'Anhel "Les Terrassettes" Corbières @ \$14.99 per bottle

The region of Corbières is known for its Carignan, and this wine is Carignan-dominant, with a smaller proportion of Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvèdre. While Carignan can sometimes produce a brooding, earthy wine, Sophie Guiraudon of Clos de l'Anhel handles this varietal flawlessly. The wine is surprisingly delicate, medium bodied and dominated by soft red fruits. The earthiness comes more as an undertone in this wine and lends it depth and intrigue. It's one of my favorite reds for its versatility. Not only does it pair with an array of foods from red and white meats to veggies and appetizers, it's also a lovely cocktail wine.

2017 Kalinda Lime Kiln Valley Pinot Noir @ \$14.99 per bottle

Lime Kiln Valley is one of a few unique inland sites in Monterey, which boasts some ancient plantings in the Enz Vineyards. A bit of an unusual site for Pinot Noir, it has a wide diurnal range—very cool nights and hot days. The soil is all limestone and dolomite, with sandy and gravelly loam in the top layer. The incredible depth of minerality of these soils is well presented in the old-vine plantings that produce this Pinot Noir. The man responsible for making this Pinot discovered this site a few years back and has been promoting its fruit in various channels ever since. The wine is as complex and unexpected as its origin. With bold blackberry and huckleberry fruit, scintillating minerality, and chalky undertones, it has layers of flavor, great palate weight, and beautiful structure.

Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2016 Motte Maucourt, Bordeaux Supérieur @ \$9.99 per bottle

Silky and velvety dark fruit aromas with a tinge of eucalyptus and anise greet the nose, then follow through to a

palate of plum, cassis and sweet black fruits. Just a hint of cedar and resin add complexity to the wine, while the balanced tannin structure merely serves to underscore the beautiful fruit profile. Beautifully aromatic for a Bordeaux, and with a lovely, more delicate fruit presence than most youthful wines from this region, this wine is ready to drink now. It's all of the great things that you look for in a Cabernet blend, but with a lighthearted, easy-drinking bent.

2018 Comte Louis de Clermont-Tonnerre (Alain Corcia) Ventoux @ \$9.99 per bottle

Classic black pepper spice with tinges of smoke and game meat compose the nose, while on the palate the wine is bright, youthful and full of vibrant dark cherry and blueberry fruits. It's a versatile little wine, incredibly food friendly. It works well with meats of any variety. If you like the wine now, it's well worth stashing away a few bottles to age as well, since it will develop nicely with a more savory aspect coming to the forefront in a year or two. This wine won a gold medal at the Paris wine show.

2018 Le Paradou Viognier @ \$10.99 per bottle

Viognier can be a difficult varietal to work with, and hence it's usually only seen in blends. However, Alex and Frédéric Chaudiere, founders of Le Paradou, have done an excellent job working with this grape all on its own. The wine has heady aromas as Viogniers tend to, but without being soapy or overly perfumed. They are full of clean honeysuckle and ripe stone fruit notes. On the palate the wine is quite clean and fresh with bright acidity and verve. It's a beautiful, easy drinking wine that you can pop and enjoy in almost any setting.

2016 Kalinda Paso Robles Red Blend @ \$8.99 per bottle

When we first tasted a barrel sample of this wine in its infancy I was impressed with how straightforward and delightful it was. The wine is beautifully representative of its region. The fruit is present and bold, but not overripe. The structure is honest and the execution of the wine is perfect. It brings together a number of elements including earthiness, spice, red and black fruits, mellow tannin and a clean finish.

2016 DXM California Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$9.99 per bottle

Made by Hoopes Vineyard and Winery in Oakville, this excellent little Cabernet shows all the signature quality of classic Napa Cabernet, albeit framed in a more approachable, everyday drinking style. On the nose it explodes with bright, red berry fruits, underpinned with a subtle anise note. On the palate, the tannin and acidity structure native to good Cabernet is well pitted against the luscious fruit, making for a balanced whole. This is your perfect party red, or alternatively a great wine to stock up on as your new house favorite.

2018 Domaine les Pins "Les Rochettes" Bourgueil Rosé @ \$9.99 per bottle

Made entirely from Cabernet Franc—not your classic rosé varietal. Cabernet Franc makes for an excellent rosé. Not only does it bring an array of new flavors into the pink world, but the wine has depth and weight that a Grenache or Pinot based rosé could never achieve. This lovely little wine has aromas of fresh raspberry and white pepper with a subtle presence of culinary herbs in the background. On the palate it has great weight and a stronger red fruit presence than you might expect. The note of white pepper persists and carries through to the crisp and clean finish.

2016 Château St Jacques d'Albas Domaine d'Albas Coteaux de Peyriac Blanc @ \$9.99 per bottle

A blend of 45% Vermentino, 45% Viognier, and 10% Roussanne, this wine is both vibrant and citrus driven, and it's layered with flavor and texture. As the perfect combination of serious meets fun, it will keep both your wine-snob friends and your palate-lacking pals happy.

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

2017 La Ca' Növa Barbera d'Alba @ \$16.99 per bottle

This is an ebullient wine that shows lots of juicy fruit and tangy balance. The wines are aged in 30-hectolitre Austrian oak barrels, which give little to no toasty flavors to the wines. I love Barbera paired with turkey and dressing. The rich fruit character and vibrant acidity bring the richness of the dressing and gravies together for a perfect combination. La Ca' Növa's Barbera is especially good with the turkey as well.

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.

2017 Marco Carpineti "Tufaliccio" Lazio Rosso @ \$20.99 per bottle

A blend of 70% Montepulciano and 30% Cesanese grown at over 1300 feet, this is fermented and aged only in stainless steel. The high tone cherry-like aromatics are incredible and come from the Cesanese. The richness, power and structure come from the Montepulciano, one of Italy's most underrated grapes. I love the Tufaliccio's spicy, crunchy character. It's so vibrant and full of flavor, I think you'll love it. This should be served at cellar temperature.

2017 Cave des Onze Torrette Valle d'Aosta @ \$18.99 per bottle

The wine is made by one of the Torrette region's multiple Cooperative wineries, Cave des Onze, started in 1990. More than 200 growers belong to it, and they have close to 200 acres of vines between 1800 and 2900 feet. The wine is made from a blend of 75% Petit Rouge, which is Valle d'Aosta's most planted variety, and 25% of three other local grapes: Vien de Nus, Cornalin and Premetta. I love the snappy, spicy nose of this wine. Its medium body holds your interest with delicate tannins and vibrant flavors. I would make sure to serve this wine at cellar temperature, or definitely less than room temperature. Great with cold cuts, and perfect with barbecued chicken!

2015 Santoleri "Vignaladra" Montepulciano d'Abruzzo @ \$24.99 per bottle

When you hear that a winery started their switch to organic agriculture in 1981, their vineyards lie above 1100 feet and were planted in 1968 and 1972, in a calcareous soil with a south, southeasterly exposure and only 13.5% abv, you might well sit up a bit and take notice. Well, the stats I listed above are for the Santoleri "Vignaladra" Montepulciano d'Abruzzo. You should love this wine. The Vignaladra has a savory intrigue full of smoke, porcini dust and sweet earth that adds to the vibrant dark cherry and plump berry aromatics. It doesn't hurt that it's from the superb 2015 vintage as well. Try it with grilled meats or a hearty pasta.

2015 Ambra "Elzana" Carmignano Riserva @ \$29.99 per bottle

Composed mostly of Sangiovese, together with Cabernet Sauvignon, Canaiolo Nero, Colorino, Merlot and Syrah. In Italy "Carmignano" has been synonymous with fine wine since the 13th century. Ambra's Carmignano is a modern-day Super Tuscan with classical styling, wild cherry and savory earthy elements in the nose with a bold, structured body that has hints of olive, rosemary and a complex blend of wild fruits.

2014 Podere Brizio Rosso di Montalcino @ \$14.99 per bottle

This wine comes from vineyards that are 16 to 25 years old, on a gentle slope facing southwest at about 1000 to 1100 feet. The vines are planted in a soil of marine origin and have underlying foundation of marl and limestone. This vintage is a powerful representation of what Rosso di Montalcino can produce. This is a powerful wine and needs decanting a couple of hours ahead. It really could use a rich dish to accompany it, like a big dense lasagna!

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

Damien Hugot Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru @ \$29.99 per bottle

This wine comes from the 2015 harvest and changed my view on Extra Brut. This vintage, which was the hottest ever at that point (but outdone by 2018, and likely 2019) tastes like rich brut even though it is dosed super low. It has a big, Meursault-like character, with fine pineapple and minerality intertwined in a subtly bread-like package. This is a great apéritif. Trust me-it is not at all too dry!

Michel Arnould Verzenay Extra Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This Champagne changed the way that I think about Extra Brut. It is dosed at just 2.8 grams per liter of sugar, and is composed entirely of Verzenay Pinot Noir, so I assumed it was going to be very austere. I was wrong. This batch is entirely 2015, the second warmest harvest ever in Champagne, and these lots of very ripe Pinot simply did not need very much dosage. This is nutty, airy, elegant Champagne that is *facile à boire*, easy to drink. It has a very long finish and will be just as at home as an apéritif as it would be with a smoked salmon appetizer.