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Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

I hope your year is off to a great start so far! Here in the San Francisco Bay Area, February is the beginning of springtime, and a beautiful month with some fairer weather coming our way. Whether you are still in the midst of winter or just starting to see signs of spring, we have a good array of classic wines for you this month from Europe and the US.

France has a wealth of wine regions, not least of which is the Loire Valley in the north, producing some of the best white wines for any occasion. This month in our Club Français shipment we've included a phenomenal new Sancerre, which comes from a young lady who has brought a breath of fresh air to the region's wines. Alongside this beautiful white, we have a red Burgundy from the very traditional Domaine J. Roty. While both light and delicate in style, the two wines have very different expressions.

In our Signature Red Club, we have both a domestic Syrah from Russian River Valley, and a Southern Rhône Syrah/Grenache blend. We'll take a look at two rather different aspects of the Syrah varietal seen in these wines. The grape can be both earthy and raw, and also polished and deep fruited. Each wine highlights the strengths of Syrah in a different light.

For the Premium Club, we've brought together wines from two small labels, each run by a husband and wife team, passionate about their work. The wines happen to be from opposite sides of the globe, but each displays that drive for purity and quality that we find so often with small, family-run wineries. Please enjoy a Bordeaux from one of the region's star winemakers, and a Sauvignon Blanc from our own backyard in Napa.

Best Buy Club members, this month we are giving you just slightly more wine than usual. The Grüner Veltliner that we've selected as this month's white wine comes in a 1L bottle, so you'll have just that much more of it to enjoy. And enjoyable it is: bright, zesty and crisp, and great for food pairing. The red wine this month is also versatile, a lighter bistro-style Rhône from a new favorite producer.

Club Italiano, stay tuned for a slightly more international experience this month. Both of the wines that Greg has selected use Cabernet in the blend, and present a unique picture of how Italy envisions a Bordeaux style blend. One is a classic "Super Tuscan" and the other a Bordeaux style blend from Friuli.

Champagne lovers, it's finally a Champagne month, and Gary has two exquisite wines selected for you this month, coming from the Montagne de Reims region. We have short supply on these bottles, so make sure to place your re-orders quickly this month.

Please enjoy the wines, and Cheers to a New Year, full of promise!

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

## Le Club Français

For this month's Club Français selections we juxtapose two lighter style wines, one from the northern end of the Côte d'Or, and one from Sancerre. Few producers in Burgundy could lay claim to the heritage that Philippe Roty possesses in Domaine J. Roty. It is rare that the same family should be farming and making wines from the same plots for 300 years, but here that is exactly the case. In contrast, our Sancerre producer, Aurore Dezat, is fairly new to the scene. While the wines of Philippe are steeped in tradition and showcase the slow beauty that tradition can lend, Aurore's wines are bright and modern in expression, with no screen to hide the raw purity of Sancerre. Both wines are great examples of the power and depth that each region can achieve, and they certainly show two different approaches that complement each other nicely.

The first thing I want to say about the **2014 Domaine J. Roty Marsannay (\$36.99)** is that this wine needs not only to be understood in a traditional sense, but also enjoyed in a traditional manner. By that I mean it needs a couple of hours in the decanter, and an accompanying meal throughout which you can savor the wine as it opens and evolves in the glass. The Roty family has perfected its winemaking techniques over 300 years, and their end goal is not just a movie night and snacking. Don't get me wrong, I love movie night wines, but I'd save this one for a real dinner. The wine is a bit secretive, just like the family who makes it, and requires a little patience. Once it opens up, it is thoroughly thrilling. 2014 is not a showy vintage in Burgundy, and that's one of the reasons I love it. It is a classic year, meaning that the northern part of the Côte d'Or was cold; the wines retained their acidity and structure, without all the gregarious fruit of the following year. This delicate Marsannay is restrained in character, but extremely elegant with beautiful layers of wild mushroom, crunchy red cherry, bright cassis and subtle anise, clove and earth notes. I don't pretend to be a pairing expert, but my mind strayed to bacon-wrapped pheasant while tasting this wine. Whatever your choice to pair this wine, please enjoy, and don't forget to decant it in advance.

While our second wine is complex and layered as well, it is also quite accessible right out of the bottle, and is not in the least averse to snacking or picnic foods. Aurore Dezat took over her father Denis' domaine in 2011, and brought a breath of fresh air into the whole operation. The domaine has a beautiful location in Sury-en-Vaux, Sancerre, with the classic soils of limestone, flint and pebble. Aurore has focused on highlighting the very best that this soil brings to Sancerre—strong minerality and gorgeous aromatics. One of our very newest finds in the Loire Valley, Aurore Dezat has already become a K&L favorite, and there is no doubt why. The **2016 Aurore Dezat "Les Chasseignes" Sancerre (\$22.99)** is her high-end wine, vinified from the older vines, and what she feels to be the best fruit on the estate. It is at once lean, crisp and mineral, while also displaying a richness of texture and weight that is surprising in this region. Perhaps the most stunning aspect, though, is the aromatics. My co-worker John Majeski mentioned the classic pairing of goat's cheese, and I couldn't agree more. If you have a favorite local goat farm, I'd highly recommend sipping this with their best expression.



*K&L owner Clyde Beffa tours Sancerre vineyards with winemakers Eric Cottat (left) and Aurore Dezat (center). Sancerre is a small region where most producers know each other and work together.*

## Signature Red Collection Wine Club

This month's Signature Club is a story of two Syrahs, or to be more exact, a Syrah and a Grenache/Syrah blend. Both wines captured my attention in staff tastings. They come from very different climates and winemakers, and they each present a beautiful aspect of this classic Rhône grape, showing off the beauty of this varietal. The first wine is all Syrah and comes from one of our favorite producers in the Sonoma Coast, Eric Kent Wines. The second is a Rhône blend hailing from Domaine de la Garrigue in the Vacqueras region of France.

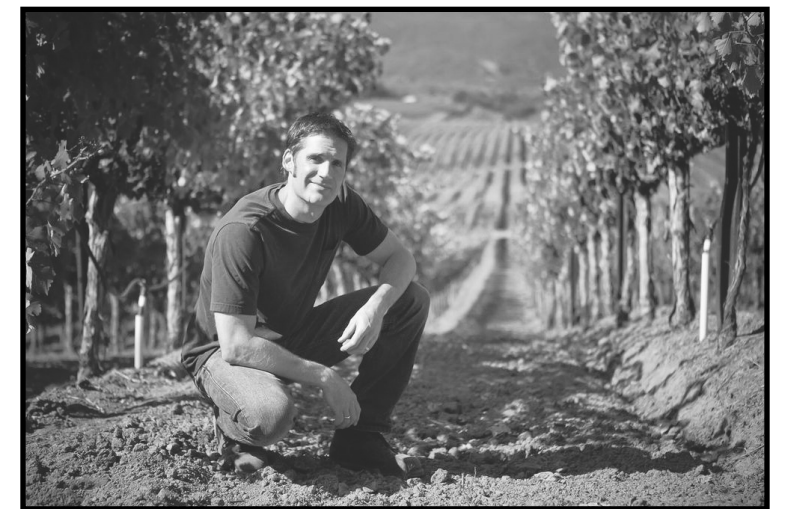
Domaine de la Garrigue is one of the largest domaines in the Vacqueras region, and is run by the equally large Bernard family. Fifth-generation brothers Maxime and Philippe head up the family enterprise, and the winemaking is done by the quiet and talented Virginie, a member of the family's sixth generation. Practices in the vineyard are simple and sustainable, and the winemaking is clean and focused. Virginie prefers not to use oak in the élevage, so all her wines are fashioned in concrete and stainless steel. This lends to the wine a brutal honesty and raw translation of the terroir of Vacqueras. The **2016 Domaine de la Garrigue Vacqueras "La Cantarelle" (\$26.99)** comes from some of the oldest vines on the property (70-plus years), and both the Grenache and Syrah used in the blend display the concentration and power of an older vine. In particular, the Syrah shows a tenacious peppery note, combined with a savory cured-meat aspect that nicely complements the deep black fruit of the Grenache. With the savory elements showing beautifully here, this would be an ideal candidate for wild game such as boar or venison and would also play well with smoked meats.

While our second wine this month also has some classic Syrah characteristics, the expression is very different. At K&L we have long been fans of Eric Kent Wines. All of the wines are driven by Kent Humphrey's passion for winemaking, and his striving to capture the essence of the particular varietal and site that he is working with.

While he is more famous for his Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, Kent's unique style is perhaps best seen in his Syrah. Russian River is usually associated with Pinot Noir, but Kent chose to source his Syrah from Atoosa's Vineyard in the eastern end of the valley. Certainly the location is still on the cold side for a Syrah site, but the fruit coming from this site has a beautiful purity and depth that Kent could not resist. His **2016 Eric Kent "Atoosa's Vineyard" Syrah Russian River Valley (\$22.99)** is deep purple, with concentrated cassis aromas and a rich, full-bodied palate that is at once full and fruity, while remaining crisp and light on its feet. The fruit is youthful and boisterous, with plenty of bright berry notes, but also shows a mild pepper spice and an intriguing layer of savory meaty notes. This is a more polished version of Syrah, and highlights the concentration and depth that this varietal is capable of.



*Domaine la Garrigue is owned and operated by the Bernard family, who also own a restaurant not far from the winery.*



*Kent Humphrey, founder of and winemaker for Eric Kent wines.*

## Premium Wine Club

At K&L we drink a lot of imported wine, and with our direct buying programs we've made some fantastic connections with small producers around the world. It's also great when you find a small producer nearby that you love. This month we are giving you both. One wine is from a winemaking star in Bordeaux, best known for his hand in the Tour St. Christophe label. We've brought in the wine from his family estate, and are excited to share this personal project with you. The second wine comes from a husband and wife up in Napa who are passionate about their small production, and make excellent wines from just a handful of vineyards in the area. The passion and hands-on approach of these owner/winemakers convinced me to feature these wines together in the Premium Club.

Jerome Aguirre, a young man from Basque country, went to the University of Bordeaux to study enology and subsequently fell in love with fellow student Veronique Abbadie. While Jerome went on to make wine for several small boutique wineries in Pomerol and eventually consult for Château Tour St. Christophe and Château Haut Brisson, he also helped Veronique tend the tiny parcel that her grandparents had left her in Lalande de Pomerol. While he still keeps busy with his consulting jobs, Jerome and Veronique have poured quite a bit of energy into Château Haut Musset, and today this little gem from Lalande de Pomerol, with its miniscule production, sees some of the finest vineyard management and winemaking technique on the Right Bank. The **2016 Haut Musset, Lalande-de-Pomerol (\$14.99)** is one of the earlier 2016s to hit our shores, and the wine is gorgeous and expressive right off the bat. With a higher percentage of Merlot, this wine is softer than you would expect of a young Bordeaux. It displays a perfect marriage of deep black berry fruit, currant leaf, mint and anise spice, combined with an elegantly poised structure of silky tannin and bright acidity. The resultant wine is young, certainly, but can be drunk now, preferably as an accompaniment to hard cheeses, Sunday roast, or savory poultry dishes.

The white wine comes from James and Hilary Driscoll, who approached wine through the food industry. With James training to be a professional chef and working stints at top-end kitchens up and down the California coast, the couple found themselves in Napa at some point, with a harvest internship. They both quickly fell in love with the wine industry, and they decided to jump all in. After a couple of years at Honicutt wines, James broke away to found the Driscoll Wine Co. and his first label, Tilth. The **2017 Tilth Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc (\$14.99)** immediately caught my attention when I was tasting wines for this club, and I pretty quickly sealed the deal. Learning more about James and Hilary, I can see why the wine so immediately attracted me. The fruit comes from the Burkett Vineyard



*Jerome Aguirre and Veronique Abbadie share not only a Basque heritage, but also a passion for the small 3-hectare parcel where they farm and make the wines of Château Haut Musset.*



*The Burkett Vineyard in Napa, where James and Hilary source their fruit for the Sauvignon Blanc, is farmed entirely to Jason's specifications, and is now farmed organically.*

in Napa, and the Driscolls have full control over its farming practices. It's crafted in a style that is at once bright and crisp, and busting with soft tropical fruit notes. The aromatics are stunning, with grapefruit peel, quince, lemongrass and honeydew melon. It's a rather versatile wine in terms of pairing, though perhaps it is best enjoyed simply on its own, or with finger foods.

## Best Buy Wine Club

In this month's shipment, you may be surprised to see one bottle that is slightly larger than normal. Our white wine this month, a Grüner Veltliner from Weingut Allram, comes bottled in a 1L bottle, rather than the normal 750ml size. Unusual as the size may be, the wine is phenomenal, and I'm excited to share it with you this month. In addition, and in a normal bottle size, we have a very fun little Côtes du Rhône by a new producer in our portfolio.

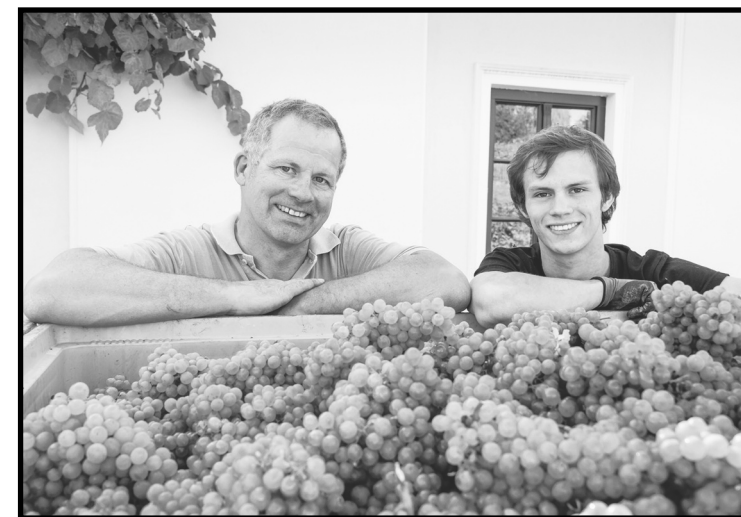
Some of you may have been through a career shift at some point in your life, but perhaps not so dramatic as that of Jacques Coipel. After working in the petroleum industry for a large part of his life, Jacques made a dramatic decision to purchase an estate in Valreas in the Rhône valley, and pursue a winemaking dream. Inspired and aided by his son Julien, who was studying winemaking in Switzerland and New Zealand at the time, Jacques launched the Mas de Sainte Croix domaine. With Julien as head winemaker since 2010, the quality of this little domaine has grown by leaps and bounds, and the wine is gaining recognition across the globe. I was thoroughly impressed with the **2016 Mas de Sainte Croix "Doceur du Fruit" Côtes du Rhône Rouge (\$9.99)**. It is a lighter style wine with pretty floral notes and red plum on the nose, and fresh cherry and strawberry fruit on the palate. It finishes dry with a lingering trace of baking spice. Delightful as a cocktail wine, this would also work perfectly with roast chicken and vegetables for a mid-week dinner.

Weingut Allram, which produces this month's white, is a family-run estate in the Kamptal region of Austria. Erich and Michaela Haas are the current owners and make the wines together with their son Lorenz in the recently renovated family estate. Grüner Veltliner, one of the most planted varieties in Austria, is a bright, fresh wine with citrus-tinged acidity and grassy undertones. When grown in the high elevation and colder climate of the Kamptal, this grape achieves its best expression. The **2016 Allram Grüner Veltliner Kamptal (\$9.99)** is light in



*Above: Mas de Sainte Croix winemaker Julien Coipel. He earned his winemaking chops at Te Mata, one of our favorite New Zealand wineries.*

*Below: Weingut Allram owner Erich Haas and son Lorenz. They tend the steep vineyards in the Kamptal, and also are in charge of the winemaking.*



body, with exuberant aromatics of lemongrass, quince, gooseberry and lime zest. On the palate it is clean and focused with pretty white pear and gooseberry fruit, crisp acidity and a lingering finish. One of the great strengths of Grüner Veltliner as a varietal is its unparalleled ability to pair well with the difficult dish. In particular it can work with vegetables such as artichoke or asparagus that have a bitter characteristic, and it is also friendly to umami-rich foods. I'd recommend pairing this with sushi, grilled vegetables, pork or tapas.

## Club Italiano

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

I first met Andrea Franchetti at his "other" winery in Sicily called Passopisciaro, on the north side of Mt. Etna. I could tell immediately that he is a passionate, introspective winemaker, one who is fiercely focused but more philosophical in his approach. He keeps at arm's length with lots of preparation, almost as if he's playing chess. He acquired this almost-500-acre property, about 20 miles south of Montepulciano in the southeastern corner of Tuscany, in the 1980s. He began planting his vineyards in 1990 in a meter-by-meter, high-density planting. Andrea is a soil guy, and he chose only limestone and gravel portions of the estate to plant vineyards. The soil reminded him of St. Emilion in Bordeaux so he planted Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot.



*Andrea Franchetti's estate at Tenuta di Trinoro is meticulously planned, with vines planted on particular blocks according to soil type and sun exposure.*

The **2016 Tenuta di Trinoro "Le Cupole" Toscana (\$24.99)** is the second wine from Trinoro. Their first wine goes for about \$200 a bottle and is a 50-50 blend of Cabernet Franc and Merlot. The blend of the Le Cupole is 42% Cabernet Franc, 40% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Petit Verdot. You might be expecting something along the lines of red Bordeaux with tannin and gravelly character, but this wine really doesn't taste like that at all. Nor does it have much of a resemblance to California Cabernet blends; it stands out on its own. I find in it far more of a central acid focus, that part that lines up right down the middle of your tongue that gives the wine lift and balance. The nose is complex and saturated, full of cassis and blackberry and with hints of pencil shavings, cigar box and a hint of smoke. The finish is long and powerful yet not overpowering. You should decant this wine for an hour or so if you have the time. I feel it will age well for another decade plus.

The next wine is from Giovanni Blason, whom I first met in the spring of 2003. He, like many young winemakers of his era, had decided to take his family vineyards out of the cooperative and make the wine himself. Giovanni's irrepressible nature has never changed—the eager smile, fun-loving nature and eagerness to learn. We've grown together over the years as he has worked to adapt to changing climatic conditions as well as the ever-changing drinking public's awareness. When I first



*Giovanni Blason*

tasted his wine I was looking for an inexpensive Pinot Grigio, as was every other importer in America, and his fit the bill. Years have gone by and with the urging of his consulting enologist Andrea Rossi, plus lots of gentle prodding from Mike Parres and from me, Giovanni has branched out to different varietals and even some dramatic new methods.

The **2015 Blason Bruma Rosso Friuli (\$14.99)** is a 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot blend. Its grapes are harvested in the first weeks of October and fermented in barrique. Fermenting white wines in barrique isn't a difficult task; you just pour in the juice. For red wines you need to ferment on the grape skins, and if you've ever seen the bung hole on a barrique you know it would take a lot of effort to stuff all the skins in through that opening. Solution: stand the barrique on its end and take the top off. It works perfectly other than it adds up to an immense amount of work because you can't fit a lot into a barrique! Patient winemaking and a glorious 2015 vintage has made the Bruma Rosso. Bruma is the name of the estate, local dialect for the low-lying fog that flows across the Isonzo River basin. I'm sure Giovanni would smile if you had this with your favorite grilled meat or a richly flavored béchamel sauced pasta!

## Champagne Club

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

**The Mountain Wines of Champagne** The wines of the Mountain of Reims are famous for their power and grace and their top-class dark fruit. Those of you who have visited the region know that this mountain is the most memorable geographic feature of Champagne, and separates Reims and Epernay. The mountain tops out at about 900 feet, but is prominent because the surrounding land is so flat. This February, we have two Champagnes from the mountain, one from the legendary village of Bouzy, and one from the picturesque village of Chamery.

The organically grown, terroir-driven Champagne of the Paillard family has wine lovers buzzing all over the world. As their first importer on the West Coast, we were lucky enough to get a parcel just barely large enough to offer in the club. The **Pierre Paillard "Les Parcelles" Grand Cru Extra Brut Bouzy Champagne** is normally \$48.99, and our supply won't last long at the re-buy price of **\$39.99**. It is composed of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay with about one third reserve wines, and entirely from estate grown, organic fruit in the Grand Cru of Bouzy. Although labeled as extra-brut and dosed quite low at 3.5g/l, this is still a rich wine from ripe, south-facing parcels and makes a great apéritif. If it had been up to me, I would have labeled this as brut, as it is in no way steely or austere. This Champagne makes a fantastic pairing with lobster, which really brings out both the chalky elements and the core of dark Pinot fruit. This is clean, powerful, terroir-first Champagne with very little toast, in spite of more than three years of sur-lee aging.

For me, one of the most beautiful and rarely visited places in Champagne is the slopes of "la petite montagne" on the western side of the hill. The village of Chamery has vineyards here, all situated in a south-facing amphitheater. From here, the **Pascal Lallement "Brut Reserve" Champagne (\$29.99)** shows off the pretty side of red-fruited Champagne. It is composed of 40% Pinot Noir, 40% Pinot



*Antoine Paillard explains his estate-grown, Bouzy Grand Cru Champagne.*

Meunier and 20% Chardonnay, and is aged for nearly five years on the lees before being disgorged. With just the right amount of toast, cool dark Pinot fruit and a very compact group of streamers, this drinks well by itself, but really comes alive with caviar. An idea for Valentine's Day perhaps?

I hope you enjoy this month's selections. 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](mailto: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](http://www.klwines.com)*

## Le Club Français Previous Offerings

2016 Chante Cigale, Châteauneuf-du-Pape @ \$29.99 per bottle

This wine is a blend of 65% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre, and 5% Cinsault. It boasts elevated and spice-laden aromas with luscious berry compote on the palate, accented by silky tannin and precise acidity. Poised and well balanced, this wine already betrays its depth and complexity with a little decanting time. I'd highly recommend pairing this with lamb, smoked meats or dishes cooked with wild mushroom.

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.

## Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

2013 Poggiarellino Brunello di Montalcino @ \$29.99 per bottle

As classic a Brunello as you can find in Montalcino. I'll bow to the expert and include Greg's tasting notes: "The nose is full with layers of wild cherry and dense dark fruit while porcini, saddle leather adds to the complexity. On the palate this wine is a blockbuster, powerful, structured yet the fruit richness is still the dominant character as once again the wild cherry and porcini emerge. A long, powerful finish, balance and structure gives this wine a superb life ahead." While this isn't the best bottle to open now (unless you have several hours to decant it), if you can bury it away for a couple of years in your cellar or wine fridge, it will absolutely blossom in your glass upon opening.

2015 Domaine L'Ostal Cazes "Grand Vin" Minervois La Livinière @ \$19.99 per bottle

Owned and operated by Jean-Michel Cazes of Château Lynch-Bages fame, this property produces full-bodied Minervois wines that punch far above their modest price point. The wine is full of heady aromas of cassis, black plum and savory olive. On the palate the dark fruit is complemented by a light menthol note and a stunning balance of tannin and acidity. The savory component develops throughout and lingers after the finish, with a trace of game, forest floor and mushroom.

2015 Puy Blanquet, St-Emilion @ \$23.99 per bottle

This St-Emilion is not only classic and food friendly, it also 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. The beauty of the 2015 vintage is that the wines are open, balanced and drinkable now. If this does make its way to your cellar, it will go the long haul with aging.

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, it's worth noting that the critics agree. Robert Parker gave this wine 93 points and *Wine Enthusiast* gave it 92 points.

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.

2013 Robert Goyette Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$24.99 per bottle

This is old-style Sonoma Cabernet at its finest: pure fruit, classic structure and just the right kiss of oak. Being a few years from its release date, the wine is in top form. You've all heard praise for the 2013 vintage in Napa and Sonoma, and it's great to see how these wines are developing. This Cabernet is loaded with dark cassis fruit and pretty red berry notes. It also displays a lovely savory character which brings into play a hint of tobacco, forest floor and clove. The finish is quite long, and the wine still has a good hearty structure that ensures its ability to continue to age gracefully. I would stick to the classics in terms of food pairing, and recommend this with your Friday night steak.

## Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2016 La Monacesca Verdicchio di Matelica @ \$14.99 per bottle

Hailing from the tiny DOC of Verdicchio di Matelica, La Monacesca produces excellent high-elevation white wines—complex, precise, crisp and layered. This Verdicchio is bursting with lemongrass, nectarine and honeysuckle aromas, followed by a palate of cool passionfruit, nectarine and citrus rind. The weight is pleasantly round, with a dry, grassy finish. It's a little weightier and more complex than many a Verdicchio. Pair with cured meats, hard cheeses and olives.

2015 Domaine l'Oiselet Vacqueras @ \$14.99 per bottle

From an all-organic estate in the southern Rhone, this wine has clean aromas of cassis, blueberry, clove and licorice followed by a soft palate full of bright berry fruit with defined tannin and clean acidity. A light oak spice comes into play and nicely complements the boisterous fruit and clean mineral aspects of the wine.

2016 Les Vignerons d'Estezargues "La Granacha Signargues" Côtes du Rhône Villages @ \$14.99 per bottle

This wine is made 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. You may be wondering why the label sports the Spanish version of the word, "Granacha"; this is also the name of the grape in local dialect. The old-vine fruit expresses itself beautifully in both the stunning aromatics of this wine, and the layers of spice that support a complex fruit profile.

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 aperitif wine, and also pairs well with a variety of seafood.

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

Food critic and writer Patricia Wells 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 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 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.

2014 La Grange Coteaux de Languedoc "Castalides" Reserve @ \$13.99 per bottle

A long-established winery, Domaine La Grange is a big supporter of biodynamic farming, and sustains a great diversity of plant and animal life in its vineyards. The Mas de Couy vineyard, from which this Reserve wine comes, is home to rosemary, thyme, wild gorse, olive trees, and quite a few critters. This little plot is situated perfectly for Grenache and Mourvèdre, the classic Languedoc varietals, to grow in the warm Mediterranean climate. The plot is hedged by Garrigue woodlands, and cooled by breezes from the nearby Cevennes mountain range. The vines themselves are over 50 years old so they've had plenty of time to assimilate the influence of the soils into their low yields. The winemaking is clean and guided. It doesn't attempt to overpower what is essentially already very expressive fruit. The resultant wine is full-bodied, unctuous and subtly spiced. There's an excellent savory quality that is derived purely from the old-vine character, and the whole is loaded with bright, expressive berry fruit.

## Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2016 Momo (Seresin) Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough @ \$9.99 per bottle

This organic Sauvignon Blanc is fresh and snappy as you'd expect, but with an added complexity and texture from the native yeast used in fermentation. Alongside the lemongrass and citrus notes, this wine abounds with white

peach, nectarine and a slight nutty lees quality. I'd highly recommend this as an aperitif or cocktail wine, though it would also work well with salads and lighter vegetarian fare.

2017 Casa Juan Senor de Lesmos "Cuarteto" Rioja @ \$9.99 per bottle

This wine is a joven style Rioja, aged in concrete and fermented with whole clusters. Joven style Riojas, unlike Crianza and Reservas, do not have to be aged in oak for given amount of time. They are often made in a ready-to-drink style and released young and fresh. The wine carries some of the innate spice of Tempranillo, but showcases more of the fresh red berry fruit alongside a more brooding savory element. It's by far one of my favorite joven Rioja expressions I've ever tasted.

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 dominate 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.

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 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.

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

2013 Tenuta Sant'Antonio Scaia Paradiso Veneto @ \$16.99 per bottle

This is a blend of 40% Corvina, 20% Corvinone, and 20% Rondinella, all local Veronese grapes with, to make it unique, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. They call it a Super Veneto—take that Tuscans! When I tasted this wine I was impressed first by the bold, wild cherry nose that pulls you in. It was the palate texture that lured me in further. The grape vines are cut and the bunches left to wither on the vine for a couple of weeks, giving it a bit of an Amarone rouch, yet it's still well balanced and lively. Aged for ten months in French tonneaux, this is the perfect kind of wine for cold nights in front of the fireplace.

2015 Felsina Chianti Classico Reserva @ \$22.99 per bottle

This Chianti has a really concentrated nose like a fruit confit, layered, bold and still dark. The flavors are shy, hidden by the richness. On the palate the wine has incredible length and is powerful and concentrated, like a giant coiled spring. The fruit is saturated, a combination of wild cherry and strawberry. The finish is exceptional, with power and length. Supple tannins wrap around the wine in a smooth, soft, protective cloak and the flavors seem to go on forever. I'd open this a couple of hours ahead of time or decant it for the best results.

### 2012 Terre de Trinci Sagrantino di Montefalco @ \$27.99 per bottle

Terre de Trinci's Sagrantino 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 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.

### 2017 Santori Passerina @ \$11.99 per bottle

This Passerina 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.

### 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*.

### 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 early in October, the normal period for the region. It is fermented and aged in stainless steel and 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. This would be perfect for savory Italian style pasta Bolognese, rather than the tomato-driven American version. Enjoy!

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

### Sollemme "Terre Sollemme" 1er Cru Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

From a small organic vineyard in Villers-aux-Noeuds, this Champagne is a blend of 55% Meunier 25% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay that is aged three years on the lees. The name Sollemme is a combination of *sol* for *soliel* or sun, and *emme* for *femme* or woman. Winemaker Olivier's goal is to make feminine, delicate Champagne that have are bright like the sun. I think that he has 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.

### 2011 Ariston Aspasié Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

In La Vallée Brouillet, the Ariston family makes some of our most popular Champagnes. This wine is an even blend of 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.

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

This is a creamy, deep, brioche-laden Champagne with a truly unusual amount of complexity and depth. It is entirely barrel fermented and aged for six years on the lees. Composed of 40% Meunier from the 2010 harvest that spends a year in barrel before bottling, and 30% Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from 2011. An ideal partner for pâté or charcuterie. Fewer than 3000 bottles 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.