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Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

As we dive into the second month of 2020, I have a wealth of fantastic new wines to present to you. Every year K&L buyers scour the world for exciting wines, from up-and-coming producers or from venerable old wineries who simply don't have representation in the US. We also enjoy delving into our local wine scene, exploring boutique wineries in our own backyard. This year we have many new faces and a couple of old favorites to share with our club members.

Le Club Français features two stunning wines. One is a Grand Cru Champagne from a K&L favorite grower-producer, and the other is an exciting new Burgundy cuvée made by one of Burgundy's star estates. Whether or not you have plans to honor a certain St. Valentine this month, there's always a reason to open a bottle of bubbly, particularly if it happens to be this incredible, extra aged Blanc de Blancs. If you have plans for a special dinner this month, our Burgundy is a perfect pairing for a sumptuous meal.

For the Signature Red Club, we have two new and exciting wines to share. Some of you may be familiar with the name Anthill Farms and the excellent wines made there. It's exciting to have their wines grace our shelves at K&L, and even more exciting to be able to secure one of their exclusive Pinot Noirs for the club. In addition to this we have a lovely Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. This is a somewhat rare appearance of Italian wine in the Signature Club, and not to be missed.

For the Premium Club this month we have a study in soil. We present two very different wines, each representing the strong effect that a particular soil type can have on fruit. One is a Bordeaux made in a truly innovative fashion by Château le Rey, and the second is an old-vine Carignane from a gem of an old vineyard in Contra Costa County. The Bordeaux is planted in clay soils, whereas the Carignane comes from a vineyard planted entirely in sand. Both soil types contribute immeasurably to the character of the wines.

The Best Buy Club features two wines that are lots of fun, easy to drink and great with food. Our white is a zippy little Grüner Veltliner, the classic Austrian varietal, which tends to pair well with difficult foods. The red is a savory and fruity Rhône style blend from California's Santa Lucia Highlands AVA.

Italian wine lovers can look forward to Greg's classic Italian picks from the lauded 2015 vintage. We have a Rosso di Montalcino and a Chianti Classico this month. As usual, Greg has found two knockouts that will have you coming back for more.

Finally, don't forget that February is a Champagne Club month, and our esteemed Champagne buyer is introducing us to two new producers! Both wines are Blanc de Blancs, and as elegant as they come. These producers may be new, but we are very excited about their style, and they may well become your new go-to labels for all your bubbly needs.

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

# Le Club Français

It's a truly delightful month to be in Le Club Français. Not only do we have a spectacular Burgundy from the man behind Burgundy's Château de la Tour (of Clos Vougeot), we also have a beautiful Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs from one of our favorite grower-producers in Champagne. Both wines are elegant and understated in a very French fashion, and likely won't last long on our shelves. If you like what you are tasting, make sure to re-order quickly this month.

François Labet is the man behind the famous Château de la Tour, the only winery located within the Clos Vougeot itself. Château de la Tour produces only three cuvées, all with fruit from the Clos holdings. Monsieur Labet also directs Domaine Pierre Labet, which has a slightly broader scope. Still rather limited in production, this Domaine produces wines from the family holdings in Beaune, Meursault, Savigny-les-Beaune and Gevrey-Chambertin. These wines are also made under the direction of François Labet at the Château de la Tour winery, and it is from this portfolio that we have selected the **2016 François Labet Bourgogne Rouge Vieilles Vignes (\$24.99)**. This

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

We're pairing this lovely Burgundy with a favorite bottling from Launois. This Champagne house has long been a K&L exclusive import and tends to sell out quickly whenever it hits the shelves. Located in Mesnil-sur-Oger in the prestigious Côtes des Blancs region, the Launois production is entirely Chardonnay (always excepting the small amount of Pinot Noir used for their rosé). They make several bottlings, and the one that has always been my favorite is the Veuve Clemence. The **NV Launois "Veuve Clemence" Brut Blanc de Blancs (\$34.99)** is aged for an extra year on the lees before bottling, and hence has a depth of character and texture that beautifully rounds out the chalky, mineral-driven bent of a classic Mesnil Blanc de Blancs. On the palate a subtle almond note complements the creamy, round texture and contrasts nicely with a linear burst of acidity and citrus zest. The fruit for this bottling is culled from the best old-vine plots in Mesnil, located on the tops and the bottoms of the hillside. Today the estate is run by Bernard Launois and his daughter Severine, who continue in a tradition of excellent winemaking handed down for generations. Launois is one of the largest Champagne grower-producers in our portfolio, but for many years their production didn't reach the US, particularly the higher end bottlings such as the Veuve Clemence. Thankfully for us, buyer Gary Westby has built up a great relationship with Bernard and Severine, eventually convincing them to part with some of their more coveted bottlings. We are delighted to present this wine now to you. At our normal retail price of \$44.99 this wine often flies out the door. Your special club pricing is an opportunity not to be missed.



*Edouard Labet, Francois' son, has recently joined his father in the family business as he studies winemaking in Dijon.*



*Bernard Launois and daughter Severine. They harvest about ten days after most neighbors in the Cotes des Blancs, resulting in wines with a bit more body and depth than many classic Blanc de Blancs.*

# Signature Red Collection Wine Club

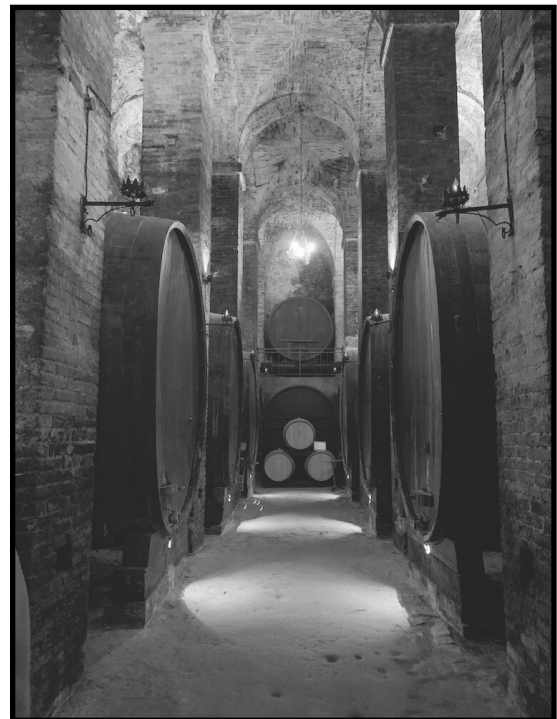
At K&L the search for top-notch wines from boutique producers is what we love. It leads us around the globe, and also into adventures in our own backyard. I am truly excited to share this month's two Signature Red Club selections with you. It's been too long since we've had an Italian wine in the Signature Club, and this month's *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* is from a property with a history like no other. Our second wine is a lovely Pinot Noir from what has quickly become one of the most popular small-production wineries in Sonoma.

Anthill Farms's first vintage appeared in 2004, and they have quickly risen almost to cult status in the boutique wine scene. You'll find the name on the wine list at a hip new restaurant or your favorite wine bar, or it may be the bottle that your local K&L staffer reaches for first when asked for a California Pinot recommendation. So what makes this wine such a hit in the wine world? Anthill Farms is the result of a trio of like-minded winemakers who joined forces to create something actually quite difficult to achieve: a true boutique winery, with limited production and a rather narrow geographical focus. Webster Marquez, Anthony Filiberti and David Low met in the cellar at high-end producer William Selyem and realized that they shared a passion for cool-climate Burgundian varietals. They began working with fruit from select vineyards in Sonoma and the Anderson Valley, creating delicate and highly expressive wines. This month's **2017 Anthill Farms Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$24.99)** is composed of fruit from two vineyards. One is perched on the low coast near the Petaluma Gap, and the other sits higher in elevation on the first coastal ridge inland and slightly further north. The vineyards share a significant marine influence, with cold foggy afternoons and slow ripening conditions. The wine from this fruit is highly aromatic, lighter in body with bright red berry fruit and surprising herbal notes. It's a culinary delight in terms of pairing. I personally love it accompanying foods that are umami rich, such as wild mushroom risotto.

Our Italian selection comes from one of the oldest and most impressive estates in Montepulciano, de Ricci Cantine Storiche. The de Ricci estate traces its origins back to medieval times, when the proprietor won the name and mascot of the hedgehog (*riccio*) because he always foretold the weather patterns by observing the hedgehogs on his estate. We don't know whether hedgehogs also helped him locate the premier vineyard sites in Montepulciano, but the estate grew in power and became known for its incredible cellars. Today its cellars are still a destination for tourists, as they literally consist of an underground church, and boast giant barrels some two stories high. The current proprietor, Enrico Trabalzini, inherited the cellars from his father Aldo—the namesake of this wine. The **2015 De' Ricci "SorAldo" Vino Nobile di Montepulciano (\$24.99)** bottling is composed of Sangiovese, and boasts deep, violet and cassis aromas, underscored on the palate with sumptuous fruit and rich baking spices. It's gorgeous to drink all on its own, or pair with richer, fatty meats such as veal or duck.



*The creators of Anthill Farms refer to themselves as worker ants. All three love the cellar and joke about scurrying around like a pack of ants when making wine.*



*The gorgeous cellars of De Ricci, part of the palace built by Cardinal Giovanni Ricci in 1534, often get called the Cathedral of Wine.*

# Premium Wine Club

Winemakers can get a little nerdy about soil, with good reason. Soil influences wine like no other element. It is innate to the fruit character, second only to varietal and weather. Soil is almost mysterious in the influence that it exerts over the vines planted in it. Without being a geologist, I can certainly tell you that vines planted in limestone produce fruit that is vastly different from those planted in clay or sandy soils. The two wines I've chosen this month each exhibit the character of a different soil type. The first is a Right Bank Bordeaux planted in blue clay, and the second an old-vine Carignane planted in the sandy soils of a vineyard bordering the San Francisco Bay.

Historically, Bordeaux is a region where each Château blends the fruit from their various parcels to make one "house style" wine. They may also produce a white, a dessert wine, or a second-label red made from the younger vines on the estate, but the idea of bottling wines based on vineyard site or block is almost entirely absent. That's more of a Burgundian model. However, some innovative producers in Bordeaux are now changing the script and experimenting with single-vineyard wines that celebrate the soil and aspect of individual sites. The **2018 Château le Rey "Les Argileuses" Cotes de Castillon (\$14.99)** is such a wine. Several years ago, Château le Rey caught the attention of the Vignobles K group, the owners of beloved Châteaux Haut-Brisson and Tour-St-Christophe. A small estate, composed of two distinct parcels, each planted on distinct soil types, Château le Rey presented just the opportunity that Jean-Christophe Meyrou (general manager of Vignobles K Bordeaux) was looking for. Finally he had an estate where he could bottle wines entirely by soil type, rather than the traditional house blend. The Les Argileuses bottling that we've chosen this month comes from the portion of the estate where green and blue clay dominate. This unique soil is a trademark of the right bank, and particularly well suited to Merlot. The density of the blue clay forces vines to send roots down deep, and the water-retaining properties of both green and blue clay provide the vine with water even in hot dry spells. M. Meyrou decided to produce this wine entirely in stainless steel to underscore and highlight the fruit character presented by these unique soils, so this young Bordeaux is surprisingly approachable and drinkable now.

Our second selection is another red, with a vastly different character. Contra Costa County is not exactly a wine destination, but it isn't far from the meccas of Sonoma and Napa. There are some absolute gems tucked away in this East Bay locale, including Casa Roja Vineyard, a patch of vines planted in the 1800s to Carignane, Mourvèdre, and Malvasia Nero. Sandwiched between San Francisco Bay and Suisun Bay, this little vineyard has 100% sandy soils. Faith Armstrong Foster has championed this forgotten site and produced the **2015 Onward "Casa Roja" Contra Costa County Old Vine Carignane (\$14.99)**. I knew upon nosing my glass that we'd found something special in this wine, and the palate only confirmed it. Old Vine Carignane can be aggressively earthy, but here it is not so. Rather, it's subtly savory with smooth dark fruit and is surprisingly light on its feet, with lively aromatics. Sandy soils often make for more aromatic, elegant and lighter bodied wines, and that's exactly what lifts this Carignane, giving it the perfect balance of elegance and depth.



*Château le Rey has two distinct parcels. One half of the estate is limestone, the other half is blue and green clay.*



*Faith Armstrong Foster, founder and winemaker of Onward and Farmstrong wines, has a knack for discovering unique vineyards throughout Northern California, and works exclusively with sustainably farmed small plots.*

# Best Buy Wine Club

Both of the wines featured this month for the Best Buy Club make for excellent options in your culinary pairing pursuits. I love introducing folks to Grüner Veltliner. This lovely dry Austrian varietal is refreshing, delightful, and unexpectedly versatile with difficult dishes. While this may not be your first encounter with the varietal, I hope you'll enjoy the classic expression we've chosen this month. Our second and very food-friendly wine is a lovely GSM produced in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA. This oft-overlooked region is a truly great birthplace for many wines and is particularly suited to Burgundian varietals and Rhône style blends.

Weingut Allram is no stranger to the K&L clubs. It's one of our favorite Austrian producers, and we return to Allram with great pleasure to source this month's wine. The **2018 Allram**

**Grüner Veltliner Kamptal 1L (\$8.99)** is a lot of wine for the price. Yes, it's a bigger bottle than your classic 750ml, but what I'm focused on is the quality of wine inside. The Kamptal area is one of Austria's premier growing regions for both Riesling and Grüner Veltliner, and here the Allram family established their reputation. Today the winery is lead by Michaela Haas-Allram and her husband Erich Allram, together with their son Lorenz and daughter Magdalena. Their production boasts several single-vineyard Grüns and Rieslings. The wine we focus on this month is a blend from several of the best parcels. Crisp and bracing, the wine sports heady aromatics of verbena, lemongrass and white pepper. On the palate it displays beautiful lemon curd and fresh granny smith apple, together with delicately spiced pepper and subtle herbal notes. An array of dishes can pair beautifully with a classic Grüner such as this. It truly comes alive alongside richly spiced dishes (think Thai spice), with fried foods, and with umami-laden dishes such as cooked asparagus.

Our second wine is a Rhône-inspired blend from one of California's Central Coast greats. Hahn Estate, founded in the late 1970s, was the propelling force behind the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA, and today continues to make some of the best wines in this area. Current proprietor Philip Hahn inherited the family wine estate from his father Nicky (Nicolaus) and mother Gaby Hahn. While

the Santa Lucia Highlands was home to vineyards since the time of early Spanish missions in the 1790s, the area was largely given over to agriculture and farming by the time Nicky Hahn purchased land here in the 1970s. He quickly saw the potential for world-class vineyards, and developed the Hahn Estate. This month we've chosen to feature their **2017 Hahn "GSM" Central Coast Grenache/Syrah/Mourvèdre (\$10.99)**, a wine brimming with character and eminently food friendly. It sports soft red



*Michaela Haas-Allram assumed management of her family's estate in 1992, and together with her husband Erich, has modernized production and succeeded in leading the estate to international success.*



*The Santa Lucia Highlands AVA is separated from the coastline by a range which provides needed protection against harsh fogs and cold fronts, yet allows some cooling influence to reach the vineyards planted in their shadow.*

berry fruit with a touch of black pepper and a pleasantly weighty palate. It's currently in a perfect drinking window. The fruit is still buoyant and bright, and a slightly savory note is just coming into play. This perfect marriage of freshness and savor makes it ideal for food pairing. One of my favorite matches for the wine is a smoked BBQ brisket, and it also is a great candidate for a hamburger or pizza.

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

I met Guido Carissimo, Carus Vini's owner, at a wine tasting event in San Francisco. These all-comer wine tasting events occur on a regular basis. An enterprising marketer rents a room and sends out invites, and offers exposure to wineries that are looking for importation. My job in going to these events turns out to be mainly a matter of kissing frogs as I seek the occasional princess. Believe me, there are very few princesses! Yet every once and a while there emerges a wonderful wine. While I tasted Guido's wines in San Francisco I was impressed with their balance, classic fruit character, easy accessibility and ultimate drinkability. Before pulling the trigger I wanted to taste the wines again on their own, when I'm not tasting 100 other wines. The winery shipped us new samples, and tasting with our staff the results were the same! The winery is in San Casciano Val di Pesa, about 17 miles SSW of Florence. In a picturesque valley, they have 32 acres in vines, all certified organic since 2017, and ten acres of olive trees. The **2015 Baldéro Chianti Classico (\$14.99)** is a blend of 90% Sangiovese and 10% Merlot. (It takes several years to receive organic certification, so this 2015 wine is organic, just not certified.) The San Casciano Val di Pesa commune frequently produces higher acid Sangiovese, so this wine's dash of Merlot rounds out the edges and plumps up the mid palate. The wine sees seven months in used barriques and tonneaux, then does most of its aging in stainless steel tanks to preserve the fresh fruit and supple mouthfeel. Enjoy!

Montalcino has had an intriguing history. The town thrived when it was on the main road from Florence to Rome over the Via Cassia. The Abbey of Sant'Antimo was one of the most famous abbeys on the route for almost a thousand years (still beautiful to visit today) and all was well. That was, until the construction of Italy's freeway system in the late 1950s. The A1 Autostrada from Milan to Rome, constructed in anticipation of the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, bypassed Montalcino and the town slid into a distant memory. In 1992 the La Fiorita estate was established by consulting winemaker Roberto Cipresso and two of his friends from the Veneto. It was a tiny estate, with a tiny



*Carus Vini's vineyards are nestled in this valley not far from Florence.*



*La Fortezza di Montalcino at sunset.*

cellar in the basement of the house. They produced 1000 bottles of Brunello for their first 1993 Brunello release. Gradually more plantings increased the size of the winery to just over 2000 cases of Brunello. In 2011 the winery was sold to Natalie Oliveros, an American entrepreneur with a passion for Italian wine. She retained Cipresso as the winemaking director for the estate, and in 2014 she started more plantings, all certified organic, in southwestern Montalcino. In 2018 they started on a new cellar with state-of-the-art equipment, finishing in time to handle the 2019 vintage, which will become one of Montalcino's most famous. The **2015 La Fiorita Rosso di Montalcino (\$24.99)** is a powerful wine from a powerful vintage. The wine is fermented in Slavonian oak barrels for ten days and then aged in used 5-hl French oak barrels for ten months. I suggest you decant this wine an hour or two ahead of time, and have it with rich pasta dishes or a grilled T-bone.

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

My favorite part of selecting Champagne for the club is the adventure of covering all the different styles and regions in this compact but diverse appellation. This month marks 20 years for me at K&L, and even after over 30 trips to the Champagne region, the area is still full of surprises and excitement for me.

This month, we have two all-Chardonnay blanc de blancs from parts of Champagne that are almost unknown in the USA.

Chardonnay is the most sought-after grape in the region. It makes delicious wine almost anywhere it is planted within Champagne. The problem with it is that it buds too early in this cold northern environment, and when frost hits it after budding, there's no crop at all.

Chardonnay can only yield a crop consistently if it is planted on steep, east-facing slopes where it gets morning sun and can avoid the frost. The Côtes de Blancs, where most Chardonnay is grown in Champagne, is one big east-facing slope—and it also happens to be on the purest chalk in the region.

The village of Bassuet is the eastern frontier of Champagne, 50 miles east of Epernay. This month we have the **Bernard Lonclas Blanc de Blancs Brut Champagne (\$34.99)** from this village. This wine shows off the Turonian limestone soil that this region is famous for. When I tasted this wine, I was shocked at how much Chassagne-Montrachet-like weight and minerality it had. The nose is full of the creamy, baguette toast that one would expect from a top-quality Champagne, and it also has intriguing notes of coconut and Meyer lemon. This will make a great apéritif, and also pairs very well with oysters or even lobster.

The **Courtois Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$34.99)** could not come from farther away or taste more different than the Lonclas. You would have to drive 100 miles, across the entire Marne Valley, to get there. Here the soil is a mixture of limestone, clay and chalk that gives rich wines with plenty of weight. This wine is very full bodied, even grassouillette, making it perfect as an end-of-winter apéritif. It will also go very well with all manner of savory pastries and pâté. The wine itself is loaded with buttery brioche and comes across decadently loaded with toast. The best thing about the wine is how focused and fresh it is on the finish. This is dry and long wine with class. A toast to you! —Gary Westby



*The Lonclas vineyards are the furthest east in Champagne.*

# 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

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

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

2012 du Glana, St-Julien @ \$29.99 per bottle

This venerable claret needs a decanting to show its full potential, but after about half an hour or so 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, plus a hint of eucalyptus. All around well-balanced, and slightly lighter in body, this wine is absolutely built for food. In particular, I envision serving this with a rack of lamb or a steak and roasted root vegetables.

2015 Château du Mourre du Tendre Châteauneuf-du-Pape @ \$29.99 per bottle

This Châteauneuf-du-Pape 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, but 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.

2017 Domaine Bart Marsannay “Les Finottes” \$23.99 per bottle

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

## Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

2018 Stolpman Ballard Canyon Grenache @ \$24.99 per bottle

The unusual terroir of Ballard Canyon is surprisingly well suited to Grenache, a somewhat finicky varietal. One of the most inland AVAs of Santa Barbara, Ballard Canyon is a hotter, drier climate than most, but still enjoys the cooling influence of the ocean, funneled down the Santa Ynez Valley. This influx of cool air keeps the acidity in the ripening fruit and makes for a beautiful expression of Grenache with full, rich palate weight and stunning aromatics. Although it’s a bit youthful, this Grenache displays boisterous berry notes both in the nose and on the palate. It’s

vibrant with plenty of fresh acidity to bolster the softer texture of the tannin. It's a wine that's lovely to sip on its own and would also accompany poultry very well.

#### 2016 Aramisque Cabernet Sauvignon Uco Valley @ \$24.99 per bottle

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

#### 2015 Von Strasser Diamond Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$29.99 per bottle

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. The 2015 vintage was particularly fine in Napa, and although the Von Strasser Cabernets are built to age, this wine is already showing so many fine characteristics that it's difficult to wait for a future date to open and enjoy it.

#### 2015 Keenan Napa Valley Merlot @ \$19.99 per bottle

This is Merlot that 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 your special club pricing is literally half off.

#### 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.

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

A very special private-label bottling, 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.

## Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2017 Castello di Volpaia Chianti Classico @ \$16.99 per bottle

I tasted this wine last fall with our buyers and found it a perfect little Chianti Classico. Not only is it bright and fresh, bursting with red cherry and sandalwood notes, it also has the seriousness and depth of much pricier Chiantis. Volpaia's Chianti vineyards are some of the highest elevation in the DOCG, and their Chianti features much brighter, more elegant fruit than many from the region. For me, this is the ideal Chianti: medium bodied, beautiful aromatics, crisp red berry fruit, and nice layered earthy tones.

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

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

2018 Aurore Dezat Sancerre Rouge @ \$14.99 per bottle

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

2018 Bravium Chardonnay Russian River Valley \$14.99 per bottle

This Chardonnay is a beautiful rendering of the Reis Vineyard, from which it hails. 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 winemaker Derek Rohlff's careful handling in the cellar makes for a stunning Chardonnay with body, depth, and lift.

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.

## Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2016 Enrique Mendoza "La Tremenda" Monastrell Valencia Spain @ \$9.99 per bottle

Full-bodied, inky and bursting with dark cassis, licorice and bramble fruits, this beautifully intense wine hails from Valencia, in the Alicante area of Spain. "La Tremenda" refers to the vineyard site from which this wine hails, and indeed the effort of the vines in this arid and rocky terrain is tremendous in the best sense of the word.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

2018 La Fortuna “Magnus” Sant’Antimo Bianco @ \$15.99 per bottle

This wine is 100% Viognier, and definitely unique in Montalcino. It is a classic representation of the varietal’s aromatics. It’s full of white peach and apricot notes, and on the palate it has a supple richness but still shows excellent acidity. This is a lower alcohol version, only 12% showing more elegance than power. I’d suggest you try this with your favorite Halibut dish—you’ll love it.

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

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

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

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

2014 Cantine Viola Rossoviola @ \$22.99 per bottle

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

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!

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

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

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

Le Gallais Cuvée des Cèdres Extra Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This Champagne, from the perfect exposures inside the walls of the Clos Boursault, did not need any dosage, and is actually a Brut Nature. It is composed of 45% Pinot Noir, 45% Meunier and 10% Chardonnay—very close to the Dérot 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.