



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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Dear K&L Wine Club Members,

I hope you had a great holiday season and are unwinding with a nice glass of wine as you sit back and read this. I'd like to thank everyone for their participation this year in our wine clubs. In these challenging economic times we really appreciate your continued patronage. We promise we'll keep on working hard to find the best, most exciting and interesting wines for your money.

I think the two Signature Red Club selections are particularly exciting. First, the 2007 Alysian Pinot Noir Russian River Valley. With Alysian, famed vintner Gary Farrell and his longtime partners Bill Hambrecht and Denise Sanders are marking a triumphant return to their small winemaking roots. Our second red wine this month is the 2005 Bodegas Y Vinedos El Chantre Ramos Paul from the Ronda region of Spain. This wine displays everything I love about Spanish reds. It has depth, power and personality; it's oozing with dark fruit and spicy oak. Both wines clearly demonstrate the best of what their regions have to offer the wine-drinking world.

Most of the time the Premium Club selections are one white and one red. We scour the globe to find wines that are made from unique grape varieties, that are terroir driven and that represent great value because of their elegance and complexity. This month we have a rare two-red-wine pack, with both wines hailing from France. The 2007 Fombrauge St-Emilion is a stunningly rich and fruit-driven Bordeaux from what may become known as the last discounted Bordeaux vintage. The second wine is one of our perennial favorites and a direct import of ours, the 2008 Montfaucon "Baron Louis" Côtes du Rhône. This winery has been praised more than once by the *Wine Spectator* as a value-based Rhône producer.

The Best Buy Wine Club is all about the fruit. We are always trying to find gorgeous, fruit-laden and well-made wines from around the globe that you can enjoy economically. The goal is to provide you with the best possible examples of fun, daily-drinking wines that won't break your budget. This month we start off with the 2009 Spellbound Chardonnay, which is made by Rob Mondavi, Jr and is distributed and marketed by Michael Mondavi. This wine displays gorgeous fruit and balance and is a perfect example of California chardonnay that's done right and can fit into your budget. Back to France for our second selection, the 2009 Alain Corcia "Cairanne" Très Vieilles Vignes, one of the first Rhônes we have from 2009, which is looking like another stellar vintage in the Rhône.

Greg St. Clair, our Italian buyer, has once again put together an amazing Italiano Club offering this month, two great reds that are an unbelievably great deal: a fantastic 2005 Brunello from Solaria and a mouth-watering 2007 Chianti from Monastero. Both are great examples of what Italy does best from the Tuscan region. They give you an idea of the heights that the Sangiovese grape is capable of reaching.

This year our goal is to make the wine club an even better deal for you. We will have more exclusive offers to our wine club members, more six-pack deals like our Champagne and Italiano club packs and whenever possible we'll sneak an extra special offer on a selected Bordeaux or California cabernet sauvignon that just can't be beat. I hope this year you enjoy the wines as much as we enjoy choosing and writing about them. Have a Happy New Year!

Thanks & Cheers,

Alex Pross, Wine Club Director, K&L Wine Merchants & resident of the home of the WORLD CHAMPION SF GIANTS!

Signature Red Collection Wine Club

2007 Alysian Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley

Gary Farrell, owner & winemaker of Alysian, is one of the trailblazers of the California pinot noir movement. He was making world-class pinot noirs from the Russian River Valley long before this grape was cool. In 1971 Gary Farrell left the Southern California beach scene for Sonoma State to further his education, and met Russian River Valley wine pioneers Tom Dehlinger, Joe Rochioli, Davis Bynum and Robert Stemmler. Gary began to make wine in 1978 at Davis Bynum winery and shortly thereafter started making wines for Rochioli and Limerick Lane wineries.

Gary Farrell realized early on the enormous potential of the Russian River Valley to produce world-class pinot noir, and he set out to dedicate himself to fashioning truly great examples. He along with his partners slowly grew Gary Farrell Winery into a fairly large endeavor, which they sold eventually to a very large wine distribution company. After the sale, Gary and his partners decided to return to making small, artisanal pinot noir and chardonnay. They wanted to focus on vineyard-designated pinot noir from terroir-driven vineyards in the Russian River and North Coast regions. Thus they created Alysian.

The 2007 Alysian Russian River Valley Pinot Noir is a blend of juice from the Floodgate, Rochioli, Allen, Starr Ridge, Halberg and Toboni vineyards consisting of mainly Dijon clones. The 2007 Alysian Pinot Noir is a classic Russian River Valley pinot noir with alluring scents of lavender, blueberry and spice notes that lead to a palate of cascading flavors of dark berries, pomegranate and wild plum. Flavors continue to build and intensify on the palate as the blackberry and raspberry fruit remains focused while spice and lavish oak notes add depth, richness and amazing complexity to this sexy and silky pinot noir. Thanks to the cool climate this wine has good acidity and tannins, which provide excellent, balance, harmony and complexity. The finish displays refreshing, vibrant fruit and spice accents. It will be the perfect accompaniment for salmon, veal or pork.

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is: Inquire.

2005 Bodegas El Chantre Ramos Paul, Ronda

Andalucía is arguably the most beautiful and historically rich Spanish region. It is certainly the most synonymous with classic Spanish icons and visual representations. The city of Córdoba, the Alhambra, flamenco, sherry and countless other cultural treasures co-exist in this southerly region of Spain, an area marked as much by Arabic influences as by those of any other civilization that has conquered and settled the peninsula. One thing Andalucía is not particularly known for is the production of fine red wine.

Located around vineyards situated 700 meters above sea level near the ancient picturesque village of Ronda, Bodegas El Chantre is proving the potential of grapes such as tempranillo, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and syrah in this comparably cool microclimate. Even higher up, at 1000 meters, the wine rests in French oak barrels in a newly dug out cellar, situated near the ruins of Acinipo below one of the most important amphitheaters in Spain. The winery is proud to produce the first serious, modern-day red wine to come from Andalucía, and to be doing it in so special and ancient an area.

There is a lot of history here. Wine has been produced in the region since Roman times, and only recently has regained its long-lost prominence. Ramos Paul is produced under the Sierras de Málaga D.O., specifically within the Serranía de Ronda subzone.



Gary Farrell, left, and Bill Hambrecht.



The vines at Ramos Paul, Andalucía.

The vineyard is composed of primarily clay, with lots of sloping hills nearby. It was planted densely, 5,000 plants per hectare. Harvest typically occurs in early October, and is always done by hand, never by machine. A second selection takes place on the sorting table at the winery prior to vinification. Stylistically, the wine tastes like a slightly richer, more generous version of a right-bank Bordeaux. Primarily dark fruit flavors show good intensity and persistence. Enjoy this delicious Andalusian red with a variety of main courses, particularly a bone-in rib eye or lamb chops, over the next five or so years.
—*Joe Manekin, K&L's buyer of Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American wine*

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is \$24.99.

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

2005 Solaria Brunello

When we hear the name Montalcino we think of the many walled towns in Tuscany that are centuries if not a millennium old. When we talk of wine production in Montalcino, the recent history is pretty slim. In the early 1950s after the war there were only a handful of producers. When the Conzorzio Brunello di Montalcino was founded in 1967 it had 25 members. Today there are 200 producers bottling 2005 Brunello di Montalcino. Brunello has become one of Italy's most prized wines.

Patrizia Cencioni's family ran a farm on her property before deciding to become Brunello producers in 1989. Patrizia's gentle hand and firm convictions have made Solaria Brunello popular around the world. The Solaria winery sits on a little plateau facing southeast at about 900 feet. It's on the east side of the town of Montalcino, nestled into its special sunny spot. Patrizia is neither a modernist nor a traditionalist; she prefers to make up her own mind, not follow the herd and not follow tradition for tradition's sake. Her Brunello is aged part in large Slavonian oak barrels (*botte*, which hold about 340 cases of wine in each) and part in French Allier oak *barrique* (which hold about 25 cases of wine in each). The combination of the two aging methods allows her to impart the benefits of both while limiting the drawbacks of both. The final product is a wine full of forward fruit, plums, cherries and strawberry coupled with a delicate nuance of earth, vanilla and spice. On the palate the wine is supple, warm, and flowing. It has hints of structure from the barrique but it relies on the core of acid that is Sangiovese 's hallmark expression for its depth, length and aging potential. I would suggest splashing this wine around in a decanter a couple of hours before you want to drink it. Sangiovese is inherently acidic, so if you have this with pasta try to match it with sauces that are not tomato-sauce dominated but more olive-oil driven (as in Tuscany). A roast pork loin with rosemary and sage would work well too.

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is \$29.99.

2007 Castello di Monastero Chianti Superiore

Tuscany's 2007 wines bring me memories of the outstanding 1997 vintage in Tuscany: rich, complex and delicious. I think that 2007 is inherently a more balanced vintage than 1997 was, yet it still shares the warm, supple nature of the 1997.

The Castello di Monastero is the brainchild of Lionello Marchesi. Those of us who know Lionello know that nothing is truly impossible. He is a Milanese engine of production and energy. I don't have enough room in this article to document the extraordinary life this man has lived with its ups and downs; he is forever re-creating. This month's wine is the 2007 Castello di Monastero Chianti Superiore. And what does that mean? Without spending the entire article dissecting Italian wine law (you really don't want that), I'll say the main difference is that, for the Superiore DOCG, the wine must come from one or a blend of the six DOC Chianti regions (not Classico); it can't use a regional appellation (e.g. Rufina or Colli Senesi). This differs greatly from the truly base Chianti DOCG that can contain a sizable portion of

grape must from just about anywhere. This appellation was created by producers trying to make better wine and differentiate themselves from people making a Three-Buck “Luigi” Chianti.

The 2007 Castello di Monastero Chianti Superiore is a really delightful wine that tastes of Tuscany and is rich enough to drink on its own. For you Club members it's a real steal, so you can have one Wednesday evening with Tuesday's leftovers and still feel like a Tuscan Baron! This is a wonderful match for roast chicken, creamier pasta dishes or classic veal dishes such as Veal Scaloppini or Veal Saltimbocca. Enjoy.

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is \$7.99.

Premium Wine Club

2008 Château de Montfaucon “Baron Louis” Côtes du Rhône

Our latest shipment of wine from Château de Montfaucon has finally arrived and will soon be flying off the shelves. This venerable 88-acre Rhône estate sits just across the river from the esteemed vineyards of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The estate is owned and operated by Rodolphe de Pins, a UC Davis graduate and former member of the winemaking staff at Domaine du Vieux Telegraphe in Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Over the years, Château de Montfaucon has developed a huge following amongst both our staff and our customers. The 2008 Baron Louis exhibits a lighter and brighter style than its 2007 predecessor. Crunchy, bright red fruits, a whiff of mineral and hints of that southern Rhône *garrigue* landscape make this solid Rhône red a wonderful choice with just about any Provençal-inspired fare. Try it with heartier foods such as sirloin steak dusted with fresh herbs.

The cuvée Baron Louis is a special assemblage from select parcels with vines that are 50 to 90 years old. The 2008 is a blend of grenache, syrah, cinsault and a dollop each of carignan, mourvèdre and counoise. Aging takes place over 12 months in small oak barrels. A step up in intensity and length from Château de Montfaucon's regular Côtes du Rhône, the Baron Louis can be enjoyed now, but it will be superb with several years of additional cellar time.

—*Mulan Chan-Randal, K&L Rhone Valley & French Regional Wine Buyer*

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is \$14.99.



*Above: Rodolphe de Pins, owner & winemaker at Montfaucon, with an 80-year-old vine.
Below: Château de Montfaucon itself.*



2007 Château Fombrauge, St-Emilion

Psst! I have a secret: 2007 Bordeaux is a hidden gem. 2007 may be the last discounted vintage we see from Bordeaux and after tasting hundreds of samples I can tell you the wines are way better than initially thought. The 2007 vintage was challenging for Bordeaux with some late rains, but with the vast improvements in winemaking techniques now at their disposal, the Bordelaise were able to make some

very charming wines. There are two hallmarks of the 2007 vintage. First, the wines are very approachable and drinkable now in their youth, with bright fruit and racy tannins. Second, the wines display a very strong feel of place and terroir—which only serves to reinforce what I like so much about Bordeaux. There's been so much talk about the rising prices of Bordeaux, but almost all of that is centered on the top 30 or 40 châteaux. The remaining 1000-plus producers continue to produce astonishingly good wines in the \$10 to \$30 range.

Château Fombrauge is owned by Bernard Magrez, one of the larger land owners in Bordeaux. Mr. Magrez owns Pape-Clément, La Tour Carnet and Magrez Fombrauge and a dozen other properties scattered around Bordeaux. He also owns wineries in the Languedoc, Roussillon, Argentina, Spain, Chile, Portugal, Uruguay, Japan and the Napa Valley. With so many holdings Bernard Magrez has winemaking down to a science. His wines always are fruit-driven without losing their unique sense of place and style.

The 2007 Fombrauge St-Emilion embodies everything you could expect and want from a fine St-Emilion. The wine starts out with aromas of blackberry, crème de cassis and mineral notes. The palate is an array of black plum, black cherry, blackberry, coffee, mocha and spice. The body of the wine is densely packed with fruit and spicy oak but displays remarkable balance and life considering its weight and size. The finish is long and supple with fading hints of dark fruits and one last gasp of sweet oak. This wine can be paired with a cheese course, charcuterie or steak.

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is \$14.99.



Fombrauge owner Bernard Magrez.

Best Buy Wine Club

2009 Spellbound California Chardonnay

Oh California chardonnay, where did it go wrong? You were once on top of the world, everyone wanted you, and now you're the forgotten star. California chardonnay was a victim of its own success with far too many wines being made in a formulaic style rather than allowing the grapes to dictate the best style possible, having the style complement what the fruit has to say. I am still surprised by how frequently I taste a very enjoyable glass of chardonnay that displays pretty, round, gorgeous fruit without being too cloyingly sweet or oaky. When I tasted the 2009 Spellbound Chardonnay I said to myself "Eureka!" I have found a California chardonnay that I feel comfortable putting into the Best Buy Club.

Spellbound Wines is a collaborative project, with Robert Mondavi, Jr. making the wine and Michael Mondavi doing the marketing and distributing. The goal of Spellbound is to make wines from up-and-coming California wine regions such as Lodi, Alexander Valley, and others, that can be enjoyed on a daily basis but are good enough to also drink on a special occasion.

The 2009 Spellbound California Chardonnay is the perfect daily drinking chardonnay. From the very first sniff this shouts gorgeous fruit and toasty oak. The nose is generous with its aromas of pineapple, banana and vanilla while the palate displays flavors of tropical



Geoff Whitman, a partner in Spellbound, at left, with winemaker Robert Mondavi, Jr.

fruits, guava, kiwi, crème brulee and vanilla bean. Thanks to the racy acidity this wine has vibrant, bright fruit. It's nicely framed by just a hint of the rich oak influence that gives a sumptuous feel without making it seem heavy or clumsy. This wine will pair well with roast chicken or your next seafood or pasta meal.

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is \$9.99.

2009 Comte Louis de Clermont-Tonnerre “Cairanne” Très Vieilles Vignes, Côtes du Rhône Villages

Now that sure is a mouthful for a label. Time for some history. The somewhat unknown village of Cairanne dates from the mid-8th century and is located midway between Orange and Vaison-la-Romaine. The wines from this area are known to be exceptional values as they are usually priced below their famous neighbors Gigondas and Rasteau. The small fortified settlement of Cairanne became a fortified village of the Knights Templar, who in 1123 began the construction of the ramparts. As was usual during these times the ramparts served both as a fortified wall and as housing for the local population. In 1312, the Templar order was officially disbanded by Pope Clement V. Some of its properties were assigned to the Knights Hospitallers, with much of it remaining in the hands of King Philip the Fair of France and King Edward II of England. Cairanne was henceforth ruled by the Knights Hospitallers, who later became known as the Maltese Knights. Now back to the wine.



Some très vieilles vignes of carignan.

We have been buying value-priced wines from Alain and Patricia Corcia for almost twenty years, and they have never let us down. We began buying red and white Burgundies from them in the early 1990s (They lived and

still live near Beaune), but their focus shifted in about 2000; they started featuring the wines of the Rhône Valley because in Alain's words, "The prices for Burgundy were crazy." He made some great connections in the southern Rhône Valley, and we began carrying his Rhône wines in 2001.

The Louis Clermont wines have been a staple at K&L, and we have featured several vintages of their Très Vieilles Vignes ("Very Old Vines") Côtes du Rhône Villages in our club. Well, this time I tasted the Cairanne 2009, and I really fell in love with it. It was the night of March 23rd at the Corcia household, and there was a line-up of Rhône blends in front of me. I tasted through the bunch, picked one I really loved and bought it on the spot. It had meaty overtones on the nose that followed to the palate. It had a very rich texture with a sweet middle palate and a long, lingering finish. The 2009 Southern Rhône greatness really shone through. It was bottled in September and here it is.

The 2009 Comte Louis Clermont-Tonnerre shows terrific black cherry fruit in a luscious format. With its dark ruby/purple color, big aromatics and excellent acidity and texture, this is a beauty to drink over the next four to five years. This cuvée comes from vines that are at least 60 to 70 years of age: very old. It is a fantastic value from the south of France.

I'll be making cassoulet for Christmas Eve, and I think I will pour this beauty with it. It has the strength and richness to hold up to this dish and with decanting one hour ahead, it should be perfect.

–Clyde Beffa

Your re-order price for this wine as a club member is \$9.99.

Re-order Form

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 prices for each wine. The phone number to place orders is 800-247-5987. The order desk is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you have any wine club-related issues, call us at x2766 and we will help you resolve them. We have a voice-mail system, and if we can't take your call immediately we will return it as soon as possible. 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

Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Maranet Syrah, Russian River Valley @ Inquire

The 2007 Maranet Syrah is a blend of juice from four vineyards, aged for 18 months in 50% new French oak barrels. It is fermented with native yeasts and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. The wine is a bright ruby purple in color with intense aromas of violet, plum, black raspberry, soy and just a hint of smoked meat notes. The palate displays a lovely, ripe fruit core of blackberry and boysenberry nicely accented by roast coffee and dried thyme, which complement the velvety mid-palate, balanced tannins and supple finish. This wine shows remarkable balance and has both power and refinement while staying fresh and vibrant from the first sniff to the last sip. It will pair well with grilled pork or lamb, grilled vegetables and smoked meats.

____ Bottle(s) of 2004 Château Montviel, Pomerol @ \$23.99

The 2004 Château Montviel is a gorgeous wine that absolutely screams Pomerol with its minerality, fleshy red fruit, spicy notes and layers of fine-tuned tannins. The wine starts out with aromas of red cherries and red currants followed by dried herbs and a hint of wet stone. On the palate, black cherry and blackberry fruit flavors mingle effortlessly with rich chocolate accents. This wine has great lift and it seamlessly melds its acidity with fine-grained tannins and rich, spicy oak notes. It will be great with prime rib or steak and can also match a roasted chicken thanks to its high-toned fruit.

____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Antinori “Il Bruciato” Tenuta Guado al Tasso, Bolgheri @ \$24.99

A blend of 50% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot and 20% syrah aged for eight months in oak barrels. The wine is an intense ruby red in color with fruity aromas of plum followed by delicate mint and green tea notes. On the palate is a dense array of red berries, chocolate, earth and herbs with a long, sinfully lush finish. This wine will age effortlessly for ten years and can be paired with grilled pork or lamb as well as a healthy cut of steak.

____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Monteviejo Artist label Bicentenario Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina @ \$24.99

The wine is generous on the nose, with ample black-cherry fruits, French vanilla and baking spices. On the palate the wine has a lush quality, with cassis, prominent but well-integrated oak, and a whole lot of rich fruit. It drinks well now and should continue to do so for five years. —*Joe Manekin, K&L's buyer of Latin American wines*

____ Bottle(s) of 2006 Noble del Sur Malbec Reserve Mendoza @ \$19.99

This wine is showing very well right now. Do not hesitate to drink your first bottle; then, set aside a few more bottles to age. We tasted the 2004 alongside the 2006, and it was also drinking quite nicely, with a dense, generous core of fruit that promises at least another several years of development. For maximum enjoyment of this wine, we suggest decanting it and serving it alongside a well-seasoned grilled steak. Make sure the steak is grass fed if you want to pretend that you're in Argentina. Enjoy, and salud!

____ Bottle(s) 2005 Schweiger Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain @ Inquire

The 2005 Schweiger is exactly what I want when I want a structured, powerful, mountain-grown cabernet sauvignon. It displays hedonistic aromas of red currant jam and baker's chocolate with hints of sweet oak. On the palate the wine has immense depth with dark, black fruit flavors as well as plum and dark chocolate notes. The wine has a supple finish, the tannins intermingling nicely with the acidity to make a wine that is harmonious enough now but can age gracefully over the next 15 to 20 years if you desire.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2007 La Peira en Damaisela “Terrasses du Larzac las Flors de la Peira” Coteaux Languedoc @ Inquire

Robert Parker’s *Wine Advocate* gave this 93-94 points. On the nose the wine displays a hedonistic blend of baker’s chocolate, rich oak accents, raw meat and raspberry kirsch. On the palate is a kaleidoscope of flavors including dark black fruits, tobacco, smoke, coconut, chocolate and a touch of earth. This producer is one to keep an eye on.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2006 Quinta Sardonía Ribera del Duero @ Inquire

93 points from Robert Parker’s *Wine Advocate*. The 2006 Quinta Sardonía is a stunning wine that really displays the lovely fruit that the Ribera del Duero is capable of uncovering. It mixes gorgeous, precise red fruits with an earthy terroir. There’s just enough oak to frame this large-scale, broad offering. The fruit is so delicious and precise, the wine feels vibrant and alive on the palate. This wine can pair well with meats, cheese or as an apéritif. It can age for five to 15 years easily yet is eminently drinkable now.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Ridge Paso Robles Zinfandel @ \$24.99 per bottle

91 points, *Wine Spectator*. This is 100% zinfandel and it absolutely screams zinfandel with the very first whiff. It’s all black and red fruit aromas mingled with spice and chocolate accents. On the palate it is smooth and rich with flavors of black plum, black cherry, gravelly earth, crushed pepper and sweet oak. With round, ripe tannins and lively acidity, this wine has great complexity and a long sensuous finish. It pairs perfectly with grilled meats, or pizza.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2006 Domaine Les Pallières Gigondas @ \$23.99 per bottle

This wine is gorgeous with a seductive nose of red fruits, fresh earth, flowers and hints of Asian spice. The palate is a kaleidoscope of dark berry fruit, earth, minerals and subtle spices, all of which play nicely against a backdrop of firm tannins and good acidity. You can enjoy it with rich mushroom, pork or lamb dishes. It can age flawlessly for the next five to ten years. It received 92 points from Stephen Tanzer’s *International Wine Cellar*.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Tarras Vineyard Estate Pinot Noir Central Otago New Zealand @ \$22.99 per bottle

The 2007 Estate has a bouquet that is bright and lifted with notes of plum, strawberry and cherry along with hints of earth and minerals. On the palate, the wine is elegant with excellent balance, smooth silky tannins and a long persistent finish. Enjoy this lovely wine with salmon, roast chicken or some grilled lamb chops.

Champagne Club Previous Offerings

_____ Bottle(s) of Michel Lorient Extra Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This all-estate wine is 80% meunier and 20% chardonnay, fermented in enamel-lined iron tanks instead of the more common stainless steel or fashionable wood. It is aged for four years on the lees. They had no dosage at all. The wine has a touch of gold in the color and is quite spicy and exotic on the nose, due in part I think to the fact that they do not allow the wine to go through malolactic fermentation. In the mouth it is quite rich for an extra brut, but with a pure, dry finish that will make it very good with a wide variety of foods. Try it with Parmesan crisps as the apéritif or a richer, saucy chicken dish if you choose to have it with a meal

_____ Bottle(s) of 2002 Ariston Aspasia Vintage Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

The 2002 vintage was a very good, even great harvest in Champagne, with excellent ripeness, clean fruit and lively acidity. Many parallels have been drawn between 2002 and the 1990 harvest. Paul Vincent Ariston ferments the wine in stainless steel and allows it to complete malolactic fermentation. The 2002 Aspasia is a blend of even parts chardonnay, pinot noir and meunier. It is very golden, and has a heady, toasty, powerful aroma. In the mouth it is decadent and creamy, the kind of Champagne that is almost a meal in itself. I find it to work very well with rich patés and even foie gras.

_____ Bottle(s) of NV Michel Arnould Verzenay Extra Brut @ \$34.99 per bottle

Although not labeled as a vintage, this is based entirely on 2005 juice. It is 100% pinot noir from Verzenay, the northernmost of all the Grand Crus in this northernmost of French wine regions. The whole village faces north—the wrong way, away from the sun—and yet miraculously ripens pinot noir, the most difficult Champagne variety to ripen perfectly. Some say it’s because of a meteor that in prehistoric times hit the area that is now the village, creating the faux de Verzenay, a forest where the trees bend and fold in on themselves like a dark wood in The

Lord of the Rings. I would pair this wine with salmon, smoked as an appetizer or even served as sashimi.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2005 Elisabeth Goutorbe Brut @ \$34.99 per bottle

If the vines of Verzenay bring me hazelnuts, the vines of Ay bring me chalk, and this wine's 9 grams of dosage seem to disappear and marry perfectly with its minerality. I would try it now with a Dijon chicken dinner, and then put some down in the cellar for five to 15 years and watch it evolve.

_____ Bottle(s) of Roederer Carte Blanche @ \$34.99 per bottle

This Louis Roederer "Carte Blanche" Extra Dry Champagne is the first "extra dry" ever in the club. The blend is 57% pinot noir, 33% chardonnay and 10% meunier and the wine is aged for three years on the lees. This is the perfect after-dinner Champagne and goes very well with fruit tarts and other delicate desserts. It is also just a great drink when you feel like something a little bit sweeter. Only 650 six-bottle cases imported. — *Gary Westby*

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

_____ Bottle(s) of 2009 Blason Malvasia @ \$9.99 per bottle

The 2009 Blason Malvasia IGT nose is so attractive. The wine has heady, spicy, less floral and more, earthy fruit, and it has a powerful presence on the palate. It is warm, ingratiating, layered with white flower and stone fruit flavors. A good acidity focuses the wine to the center of your palate. It is Dungeness Crab season now in the Bay Area and this wine would be perfect with your crab dinner.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2005 Angelo Negro Barbaresco "Basarin" @ \$29.99 per bottle

The 2005 Angelo Negro Barbaresco "Basarin" comes from Neive and is a powerful wine. I find the wines of the Barbaresco commune more aromatic and supple, Treiso more aggressive in structure. The Neive are generally long-lasting wines of structure and depth. Eighty percent of this wine is aged in large Slavonian oak barrels called *botte* (or *botti* plural) and 20% in 700-liter French tonneaux. The nose is full of spice, rose and primary fruit. On the palate the power of the Basarin vineyard layers structure, fruit and flavor, giving the wine distinct size. Loads of potential for long-term aging. If you have it now, try it with Brasato al Barolo (they only cook with Barolo in Barbaresco) or grilled sausage and polenta, or risotto with porcini mushrooms.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2005 Martina Brunello @ \$29.99 per bottle

This wine has real depth to it and will age well. You're going to want to drink it now, so I suggest you decant it two to three hours ahead of drinking it. If you don't have a decanter, use any container with a non-reactive surface; a Pyrex pitcher will work fine. If we were in Montalcino we'd be having cinghiale, wild boar, either in a sauce for your pinci pasta or a boar stew. A grilled T-bone will work.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2008 Conti Zecca Negroamaro @ \$9.99 per bottle

The wine is luscious. It sends waves of richness coursing across your palate. It is warm and full yet vibrant and has real focus to it. This is the perfect wine for pasta with tomato-based meat sauce (your classic American style). It is rich and easy enough to drink on its own, but great for the Ragu Americano.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2008 Tenuta Sette Ponti Crognolo @ \$23.99 per bottle

Crognolo is supple, forward, and friendly and is like the estate's very stylish owner Sig. Moretti himself, very smooth and easy to get along with. Like the textiles Moretti works with, this wine's signature is its texture. It lies somewhere between satin and silk with a little cashmere thrown in. The wine's aromatics are lush, with cherry and plum, brightly focused and yet rich and enticing ... imagine Barry White's voice in a glass while looking at George Clooney in an Armani suit on the shores of Lake Como. Enjoy this wine with grilled beef.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2009 Antichi Vinai "Il Mascalese" @ \$19.99 per bottle

I was introduced to the wines of Antichi Vinai through their Etna Rosato, yes, a Rosé, and was highly impressed, enough to go visit them at Vinitaly this year. There I found this wine, which wasn't going to be imported. It is vinified in stainless steel and sees no wood. It is an open, forward and wonderful initial expression of Etna Rosso, with depth, flavor and just an inherent drinkability. One word of advice: for drinking all nerello mascalese, I suggest a Burgundy glass. Good drinking!

_____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Ferrero Merlot Maremma Toscana "Me" @ \$19.99 per bottle

The 2007 vintage seems to be tremendous throughout Tuscany. It has given the wines richness without losing any

balance or brightness. This 2007 Ferrero Merlot Maremma Toscana “Me” is gorgeous, with layers of spicy berry and fresh plum with the slightest hints of toasty vanilla. The wine is so lively and rich on the palate it would be a perfect accompaniment for a Bistecca Fiorentina, the classic Tuscan T-bone.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2004 Baglio di Pianetto “Carduni” @ \$23.99 per bottle

A Sicilian viognier blend is not nearly as radical as a Sicilian wine that’s 100% petit verdot. That’s what this is made of! Petit verdot is used in Bordeaux but rarely, as the Italians would say, in purezza. Petit verdot has a lot of good qualities; it has body, color, and rich and complex flavors. In Bordeaux it is used in small quantities because it doesn’t always ripen. The wine is really striking, powerful and rich showing a density on the palate. The nose is full of very complex, camphor-like aromatics, hints of sage and a touch of vanilla.

Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

_____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Château Petit Manou, Médoc @ \$14.99 per bottle

This has a deep ruby red color and an intense, complex nose of red fruits, particularly raspberries, vanilla and light toasty oak, making this wine smell absolutely delicious. The wine has a medium-bodied palate with good fruit concentration and freshness that showcases the black and red berry fruit flavors as well as the good structure and supple tannins that help frame the elegant finish. The Petit Manou would be great with a grilled pork chop or with a nice crispy duck breast alongside wild rice.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2009 Pellegrini Pinot Noir Russian River Valley @ \$14.99 per bottle

The 2009 Pellegrini Pinot Noir has a dazzling nose, reminiscent of aged balsamic vinegar drizzled over fresh strawberries with a slight hint of black pepper. The palate displays bright strawberry and cranberry flavors and a touch of spicy sandalwood accents. This finish is bright and full, making it the perfect wine to enjoy by itself or paired with grilled salmon or pork roast.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2009 Kalinda Chardonnay Central Coast @ \$14.99 per bottle

A wonderful example of what the Central Coast is doing with chardonnay. This wine has a restrained nose of pear, acacia, honey and a hint of red delicious apples while on the palate the wine displays rich, exotic fruits such as mango, papaya and pineapple. This wine has great balance and zip. It’s got close to perfect harmony between fruit and oak with the acidity framing this masterpiece perfectly. It has enough fruit and power to satisfy the hedonist without being too cloying, and it has enough acidity and complexity to satisfy the Burgundy lover.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2006 Sierra Salinas Mira, Spain @ Inquire

The Mira (say MEE-rah) shows intense, juicy, fleshy dark fruits, some spice notes from aging in French oak for 18 months, and polished tannin integration. Clyde had these notes: “Superb richness and balance. Lush, sexy, lovely, and delicious wine.” We hope that you enjoy this as much as you enjoyed the 2005 bottling. The 2005 received 93 points from Wine Spectator and we think this vintage will receive a similar score.

_____ Bottle(s) of 2008 Schloss Saarstein Pinot Blanc @ \$14.99 per bottle

Schloss Saarstein prides itself on its individual style, not following fashionable trends. This pinot blanc comes from a monopole vineyard site in the Saar Valley. The vines are planted along a chilly, steep and mineral (Devonian slate) - laden hill, producing wines known for their light, bright and almost translucent elegance. Young spring herbs and fresh fruits like apple and citrus run through the core while the mineral-rich soils add power, intensity and elegance. This wine goes hand in hand with grilled white fish, sausages, and salads of all kinds, or you can simply enjoy it on its own as an apéritif. —*Eric Story, K&L buyer of wines of the Loire Valley, Alsace, Austria & Germany*

_____ Bottle(s) of 2007 Château d’Aiguilhe Querre, Cotes de Castillon @ \$13.99 per bottle

This 2007 has perfumey aromas mixed with coffee and tobacco. It is elegant and sweet on the palate, with tons of ripe fruit mixed with a touch of vanilla oak. The 2007s, like the 1997s, are fruit-forward wines that can be enjoyed young. They’re perfect restaurant wines. This wine can be decanted one hour ahead and enjoyed with a barbecued steak or prime rib. —*Clyde Beffa*

_____ Bottle(s) of 2008 Iron Horse Green Valley Chardonnay @ Inquire

The name Iron Horse came from a train that stopped at the nearby Ross Station in the early 20th Century. The

logo, the rampant horse on a weathervane, came from a weathervane that was unearthed when they were leveling the ground to build the winery. This 2008, all estate grown, is an exemplary cool-climate chardonnay. Notes of spiced pear, clementine and banana aromas waft from the glass. The palate is a mixture of minerality, lychee and apple flavors nicely juxtaposed against French oak barrels. A great food wine. Pair with salads, seafood or chicken.

____ Bottles of 2007 Watkins Family Cabernet Sauvignon @ Inquire

This wine demonstrates what I have long believed about cabernet sauvignon: It grows the best and shows the most complexity and expression when it is grown in mountain vineyards. This wine has depth, power, complexity and length without seeming too heavy or clumsy. The fruit is so gorgeous, with notes of dark plum, blackberry and spice as well as a hint of graphite. This wine has a structured, layered finish. It is perfect with grilled meats or can be enjoyed with strong cheeses, or on its own as a perfectly delicious cabernet sauvignon.

____ Bottles of 2008 Kalinda Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley @ \$13.95 per bottle

This wine has a hedonistic nose of black cherries and plums along with notes of chocolate. The palate is a deft mix of dark cherry, chocolate and smooth, mocha-laced oak. This wine is so plush and approachable you can almost finish a whole bottle without realizing it. Enjoy it with red meat or when you're craving a smooth glass of red wine. You could wait and let this sit in your cellar for a year or two, but why wait when it is drinking this well right now.

Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

____ Bottles of 2009 Hetszolo "Furmint" Tokaji, Hungary @ \$9.99 per bottle

The 2009 Hetszolo Furmint is a light golden straw in color with subtle notes of pineapple, lime zest, quince and acacia. On the palate flavors of citrus, nut oil, wet stone and hints of honey display themselves while the finish is elegant and complex. This wine will match perfectly with turkey or fresh crab, nuts and cheese.

____ Bottles of 2008 Domaine Vindemio "Regain," Côtes du Ventoux @ \$9.99 per bottle

A blend of 60% grenache and 40% syrah from young vines grown on calcareous soil, the 2008 Vindemio "Regain" Côtes du Ventoux is a wine I really, really like. It is a smoking little bottle of wine with zesty red-fruit aromas and cracked-white-pepper notes that spring from the glass while on the palate the wine shows wild red raspberry fruit with a touch of cherry kirsch and wild herbs. The wine has great lift and mouthfeel thanks to the zippy acidity and bright tannins. It has a smooth entry onto the palate and an effortlessly smooth finish. This is a great party wine, and also is the perfect match for spicy, grilled vegetables or Mediterranean food.

____ Bottles of 2006 Brassfield "Eruption" Volcano Ridge Vineyard, High Valley @ \$9.99 per bottle

The 2006 Brassfield "Eruption" Red is a blend of mourvèdre, syrah, grenache and petite sirah from young vineyards. Each block is picked at the peak of ripeness and handled separately throughout the fermentation and subsequent barrel aging. Ripe plums dominate the nose along with smoky tar, cedar, cigar box and toffee nuances that give way to a palate offering up blueberry, plum and hints of black pepper. This wine displays depth, power and concentration all without losing balance or becoming too heavy.

____ Bottles of 2009 Noble Aconcagua Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina @ \$9.99 per bottle

This Noble Malbec Mendoza is an entry-level wine but that's rather misleading, as the wine has so much depth of flavor and fruit intensity. It shows wonderfully soft, forward, plummy dark fruit, with a rounded texture and good persistence. Try it with some herb-roasted Peruvian roasted chicken takeout, with a generous side of fried yucca, of course.

____ Bottles of 2009 Monteviejo Festivo Malbec Mendoza @ \$9.99 per bottle

This wine is produced from 100% malbec sourced from various top sites in the Mendoza region. This 2009 has primary aromas of blackberry and black plum, with similar, intense fruit flavors on the palate, perhaps with a suggestion of red fruits intermingling. Polished, moderate tannins add structure and make this an ideal partner for many different dishes. Rotisserie chicken, a quickly grilled marinated tri-tip steak, pan-seared tuna, and heartier vegetarian dishes all make terrific pairings. It also works beautifully as a casual sipper without food.

____ Bottles of 2008 Miguel Torres "Las Mulas" Cabernet Sauvignon, Chile @ \$9.99 per bottle

This is a synergy of old and new world, with a rustic feel that permeates it from start to finish. The nose is reminiscent of old-world Bordeaux with dusty notes of red fruit and spice. On the palate the wine is elegant and poised with rounded

Additional Club Specials

2008 Belle Glos Las Alturas Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

K&L Store price \$34.99; Special price for K&L Club members \$31.99

Very dark burgundy color; aromas of black cherry and tilled earth are abundant and a delight for the senses. On the palate this wine is full, chewy and rich. It coats the mouth with flavors of berry pie filling, sweet spices, and plum, all encased by a complex textural structure that leads to an elegantly supple finish, calling for another sip. 91 points. —*Clyde Beffa*

2008 Belle Glos “Clark & Telephone” Santa Maria Pinot Noir

K&L Store price \$34.99; Special price for K&L Club members \$31.99

Scarlet in color; bursting with aromas of cinnamon, caramel and hints of ginger-spiced tea. On the palate, the plush weight coats the mouth with more brown spice and sweet oak flavors, layered into the deep blueberry and strawberry base. The viscosity paired with the flavors and lively acidity lead into a long finish with supple tannins. 91+ points. —*Clyde Beffa*

2004 Smith Madrone Spring Mountain Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

K&L Store price \$34.99; Special price for K&L Club members \$24.99.

This is old-school, mountain Cabernet that reminds me of those 1960s and 1970s I used to buy a long time ago. Must be decanted two hours ahead. Then, enjoy with a big rib steak. —*Clyde Beffa*.

“93 points. This is the opposite of those gooey, cult-style wines grown down on the Valley benches and floor. It’s pure mountain in the tannins, acidity and dryness... a food wine, with cassis, cedar and mineral flavors.” —*The Wine Enthusiast, Steve Heimoff, September 2009*

tannins, ripe fruit and complex flavors of minerals and fruit.

___ Bottles of 2009 Noble Torrontes @ \$9.99 per bottle

The 2009 Noble Torrontes is quite spicy, exotic and floral on the nose, with aromas that suggest rose water, perhaps even Turkish Delight. On the palate, white peaches blend with sweet fennel, maintaining focus and balance with decent acidity to tie the wine together. Drink this on its own, or to accompany your favorite ceviche recipe. —*Joe Manekin, K&L's buyer of Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American wine*

___ Bottles of 2008 Hexagone, Bordeaux @ \$7.99 per bottle

This wine offers fresh, pure fruit for immediate drinking, and a lot of bang for the buck. This AOC Bordeaux from 2008 is blended by Luc Thienpont from selected wines produced in the Entre Deux Mers region to the south of Saint Emilion. It is 80% cabernet sauvignon, 20% merlot. The vines have an average age of 25 years.

Vinification takes place in stainless steel tanks to preserve the full freshness of the fruit. Clyde says: “This wine is extremely spicy on the nose and palate. It’s a fresh and lively wine, a good party wine.”

___ Bottles of 2009 Weingut Allram Grüner Veltliner (1L) @ \$7.99 per bottle

This bottling comes from a blend of vineyard sites which consists of sand and profound loess, brown earth, primary rocks weathering soils (granite and schist). Fermented and aged in stainless steel and bottled with a crown cap, this is the perfect liter, fresh, light and snappy, delivering all the thirst quenching you look for in a wine like this. The nose is textbook Grüner filled with spice and pepper, snap pea and grapefruit. It is sleek, focused and juicy owing to the wonderful bright acid structure of the vintage.