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Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

A very happy New Year to all of our K&L club members!

I hope 2021 finds you and your families all well and in good spirits. I know most of us have been eager to start a new year, a new season, and we all have many hopes and goals for 2021. At K&L we are excited for the New Year. We have some great new producers to introduce to you. To celebrate the start of 2021, we have some extra-deep discounts on club wines this month. I also want to take a moment to thank you. Truly we have the best customers here at K&L, and I'm particularly grateful to you, our club members!

This month's Club Français is dedicated to one of our favorite newer producers from St. Joseph. Guy Farge is the man, and his wines are absolutely stunning. Buyer Keith Mabry found M. Farge's wines in France a few years back and brought them to K&L. I'm thrilled to be doing a double feature on his wines this month, as they are some of the very best that the Northern Rhône has to offer.

If you're in need of an elegant red, please take look at the two wines we are featuring in this month's Signature Red Club, because the discounts are enormous. We've chosen to highlight two organic and biodynamic producers, one in Sonoma and one in New Zealand. The talent behind these two wines is absolutely top notch, and involves some of the best names in their respective regions. See page 3 for the full story on these wines. You won't want to miss them!

This month's Premium Club is about family winemaking. We're featuring two husband-and-wife teams, each making fantastic wine on a smaller scale. The dedication and passion of these couples is palpable in their truly stunning production. We have a charming Syrah from Santa Barbara, and a fun white field blend from Marlborough, New Zealand.

For January, the Best Buy Club is all about classic winter reds. We've selected two food-friendly wines to warm up your winter nights. The Côtes-du-Rhône is made by a new producer whose wines we've just brought in, an exciting find and really great value for the Rhône. The Cabernet hails from one of my personal favorite locales for this variety—Australia's Margaret River. Whether you have stew, pot roast, or another winter classic in your future, these wines will make a great accompaniment at your table.

For our Italian wine lovers, Greg is zeroing in on Langhe Nebbiolo this month. He's keen on a new approach to the club, where he compares two similar wines, digging deep into the specifics of terroir for a given region. Look for more comparisons to come in this club, as Greg takes you on a tour of the country and vineyards he knows so well.

Cheers to you!

Heather Gowen, K&L's Wine Club director

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## Le Club Français

To welcome the New Year, we're bringing you a special feature on an exciting newer producer from the northern Rhône valley. We don't often feature two wines from the same producer in a month, but when buyer Keith Mabry sent me the full lineup of wines produced by M. Guy Farge of St. Joseph, I knew this was a time to do it, and it became a question of how to narrow down the choice to just two bottles. The entire lineup was stunning, and I was particularly drawn to the two wines we'll discuss below.

Guy Farge comes from a long line of vinegrowers, whose first family vineyards hail from 1920. For many years, the family sold grapes to Delas, Cave de Tain, and other producers. Guy decided to change this, and in 2007 he made his first cuvée. Since then he has continued to grow in his winemaking prowess and experience, and now he's joined by his son Thomas. The duo makes wines from several appellations, including St. Joseph, Cornas, Condrieu and Saint-Péray. They're based in St. Joseph, and some of the best production comes from within this appellation. The winery itself is situated in Saint-Jean-de-Muzols, and much of the vineyard land is planted on granitic soils, which gives his wines a strong mineral drive.

In tasting through the lineup of M. Farge's reds, I was immediately impressed by the **2018 Guy Farge "Passion d'une Terrasse" St. Joseph (\$34.99)** for its restrained and elegant interpretation of northern Rhône Syrah. The aromas are of muted olive and vibrant cassis with sage, blueberry and boysenberry making an appearance on the palate. The weight on the tongue is surprisingly full, yet the wine is far from jammy. Because this is 100% Syrah, there is a classic black pepper note throughout, and tangible tannin presence. It has all the bones to age properly, and with a good decant it is drinking beautifully even for such a young wine.

The white wines of the Rhône Valley are often overlooked, but offer some of the most exciting textures and flavor profiles you'll come across. Guy Farge has a fresh take on the classic Roussanne/Marsanne blend in his **2018 Guy Farge "Grain de Silex" Saint-Péray Blanc (\$24.99)**. Traditionally these blends are aged in oak and produce a very full-bodied, rich wine that sits heavily on the palate. Guy Farge's interpretation is lighter, albeit with great texture and depth of fruit. This cuvée, 90% Roussane and 10% Marsanne, is fermented with native yeasts and aged almost entirely in stainless steel. The use of stainless steel with the minerality derived from the clay and limestone soils of Saint-Péray lightens and elevates the blend. While it's difficult to compare this wine to another, the closest I've come to categorizing it is a fine white Burgundy from the Côte d'Or. Of course that's apples and oranges, but this wine has that texture, depth and strong minerality, and also the contrast of palate weight and vibrant acidity found in the best Burgundies. Enjoy it now, or age it for a couple of years and see how it grows in depth and complexity!



*In 2018 Thomas Farge officially joined his father Guy at the helm of the Domaine.*



*The steep, terraced slopes surrounding the winery in St. Joseph must be harvested and tended entirely by hand.*

## Signature Red Club

We have two incredible deals in the Signature Red Club. Both wines are offered at a significant discount for club members from our usual retail pricing. These are two of the best examples I have come across for seamless, pure expressions of organic and biodynamic winegrowing and winemaking. We are all more or less familiar with organic farming these days. The biodynamic approach is a subset of organic farming. Biodynamic philosophy has received much criticism, and yet many top-tier producers have adopted this approach, including Château Latour and now Château Yquem, finding that the wine quality improves almost inexplicably. The biodynamic approach is, at heart, a belief in the interconnectedness of all things, and involves a special calendar that dictates planting, pruning, harvesting and rest days for the vineyards according to the movements of the planets and moon. The biodynamic approach has many other facets, and while I'm no expert, I have to say that I am very impressed with some of the wines coming out of this movement. One of this month's wines is a Bordeaux à la Rhône-style blend from a premier Sonoma property in the Annadel Gap, and the second is a Pinot Noir from an exciting collaborative project by some of New Zealand's best wine talent in the Waipara Valley.

Westwood was founded in 1998 by Carl Stanton, an avid wine collector and investor from Philadelphia. Carl has drawn a star-studded crew to Westwood and the wines are made by world-renowned Philippe Melka, the prized winemaker and consultant for some of Napa's top properties. The biodynamic program at Westwood was organized and established by Philippe Coderey, who worked closely with the M. Chapoutier Domaine in the Rhône Valley, aiding their biodynamic conversion as well. Managing director David Green has a litany of managing and business directing expertise including work for Dana Estates, Cliff Lede, Clos du Val, etc. The list of other stars in the Westwood family goes on, but I wanted to highlight these men to underscore the incredible quality production here. The **2017 Westwood "Legend" Sonoma Red Blend (\$27.99)** is an intriguing blend of Bordeaux and Rhône varieties, including Cabernet, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Grenache, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Merlot and Malbec. Rich and intense on the palate, with sweet dark berry fruit, mocha and coffee notes, and layered spice and savory earthy tones, the wine is surprisingly smooth and effortless despite its full, luscious palate weight. It's a perfect example of the best of Sonoma, and at this much discounted club price, it isn't likely to last very long on our shelves.

Our second wine is also a star-studded collaboration, this time by six friends and wine-industry professionals who joined forces in New Zealand's Waipara Valley to create the Tongue in Groove label. Since launching in 2012, the label has been immensely successful. We were lucky enough to get



*Westwood's estate vineyard, Annadel Gap, is home to some old Syrah vines that pre-date the winery, and produce incredibly complex and intense fruit.*



*Lynette Hudson is the winemaker at Tongue in Groove. Many consider her one of the best winemakers in the country.*

in on the secret early and convince them to part with sizable chunks of their production to ship across the world to California for our enjoyment. The wines have been staff favorites for several years now, but we didn't have the opportunity to feature them in the club until recently, when our New Zealand buyer Thomas was able to reserve for us a larger than usual allocation of the **2016 Tongue in Groove "Cabal Vineyard" Pinot Noir (\$21.99)**. This single-vineyard Pinot from the Waipara Valley in North Canterbury is grown in gravelly soils along the Waipara riverbank, and is influenced by the long sunlight hours and cool nights of this South Island wine region. Cabal has always been my favorite Pinot Noir made by Tongue in Groove. It's a perfect balance of dark fruit, minerality, delicate aromas and smooth, fine-boned tannin. It's effortless to drink, and so elegant that it will pair best with delicate dishes such as salmon or mildly seasoned roast chicken.

## Premium Club

Great wines are often the work of passionate people, and we're lucky enough at K&L to get to know some of the incredible people behind our favorite wines. This month we'll focus on two couples who make great wine on a small scale. The wines themselves are fresh, easy-drinking and fun—a perfect start to the New Year!

Good things happen when two wine professionals join forces, and that is the story of Peter Hunken and Amy Christine, MW (Master of Wine). Peter has been involved in the Santa Barbara wine scene since 2001. He worked as assistant winemaker at Stolpman Vineyards, and was one of the co-founders of Piedrasassi. Amy and Peter began making wine together in 2005, and Amy is one of only thirteen women in the US to hold the prestigious Master of Wine degree. The couple's combined passion, experience and knowledge has led them to plant and farm their own vineyard and make a beautiful array of wines that express the best of Santa Barbara. For this month's red we've chosen their **2016 Hocus Pocus Santa Barbara County Syrah (\$13.99)**. The fruit for this exquisite Syrah comes from three cool-climate sites in Santa Barbara: John Sebastian, Presqu'île, and The Joy Fantastic. The latter is the vineyard planted and farmed by Amy and Peter. The wine they've crafted from this fruit is luscious and dark fruited, with blueberry, blackberry and olive showing on the palate. It's surprisingly light on its feet with a fresh burst of acidity, and strikingly well balanced. Aged for 11 months in neutral French oak barrels, it has nicely softened tannin and lacks the sometimes aggressive black pepper notes that this variety can show. I found it a perfect wine to sip alongside a cheese and charcuterie board, and it makes a nice companion to a winter evening.

This month's white wine is the fruit of another talented winemaking couple, Anna and Jason Flowerday of Te Whare Ra winery in New Zealand. If you've been around K&L long enough, you know by now what big fans we are of Te Whare Ra (TWR for short). TWR is an historic property in Marlborough, housing some of the oldest plantings in the area, and under the stewardship of Anna and Jason it has been converted entirely to organic farming. Anna grew up in a winemaking family in Australia's McLaren Vale, and Jason is



*The Joy Fantastic is the vineyard planted by Peter Hunken and Amy Christine on the western edge of the Santa Rita Hills AVA.*

a Marlborough native. In 2003 they purchased TWR and began to put all of their energy and passion into the property. It's likely that you've tried one of their Pinot Noirs or Sauvignon Blancs. Their production includes several other varieties as well, and one of my favorite bottlings is an aromatic white blend called Toru. The **2020 Te Whare Ra "Toru" White Field Blend Marlborough (\$15.99)** is a blend of Gewürztraminer, Riesling and Pinot Gris. These three Alsatian varieties are co-fermented and vinified as one, in the tradition of the field blend. Wildly aromatic, the wine has a nice palate weight and a deep-seated spice that nicely complements the heady fruit flavors. If you've been waiting for the perfect wine to serve with spicy food, this is it. It's a lovely accompaniment to spicier Thai and Indian dishes.



*Te Whare Ra is Maori for "house in the sun," and for Jason and Anna and their four daughters, TWR is exactly that.*

## Best Buy Wine Club

Winter is the best season for hearty meals and red wine. Of course you can drink red wine year around, but there's something about the chilly January nights that makes me want to sip a glass of full-bodied red. This month I've chosen two of my favorite hearty winter reds to share with you. Both wines are food friendly and sure to warm up your evenings.

Australia's Margaret River wine region is a hidden gem. Coastal and cooler in climate than the more famous Barossa, Margaret River offers a perfect location for growing Bordeaux varieties. Tasted blind, many a Margaret River Cabernet could be mistaken for left bank Bordeaux. One of the oldest wineries in the region is Xanadu, an estate founded in 1977 by an Irishman, Dr. John Lagan, and his wife Eithne. Today the winery is owned by the Rathbone family and has seen significant investment in new facilities and farming techniques. Winemaker Glenn Goodall, a native New Zealander, studied Oenology at the University of Adelaide, and has over two decades of experience in Margaret River. The **2017 Xanadu "Paradise" Cabernet Sauvignon Margaret River (\$10.99)** is a great balance of luscious dark berry fruit with hints of eucalyptus, cedar and tobacco and classic Cabernet structure. The wine has enough tannin and acidity to stand up to steak, but enough fruit and silky texture to enjoy right now, without having to lay it down for years. It's a perfect winter-night Cabernet in my book.



*The Xanadu Winery is named after the exotic and idyllic city in Samuel Colderidge's writings, home of Kubla Kahn.*

Next up is an exciting new producer for us from the Rhône. Lest you worry about your bottle's shape, let me say this is intentional. It's an old-fashioned bottle shape, almost irregular in feel, chosen by the domaine to represent their unique heritage. When Gaston Brunel first purchased the Château de la Gardine in 1945 he found a mouth-blown bottle in the cellar, and was inspired to replicate the shape for all his production. Today Gaston's sons Maxime and Patrick together with their families run the domaine. This month's **2018 Brunel de la Gardine Côtes-du-Rhône (\$8.99)** is a delightful wine, and a steal at the club price. Medium-bodied with gamey notes, red berry fruit and a pleasant black olive quality, this is food wine at its finest. If you're looking for a great pairing for poultry, pork, or even lamb, this bottle is a perfect choice.



*The beautiful estate of Château de la Gardine overlooks the Rhône river, and houses the tasting room and cellars of the Brunel family.*

## Club Italiano

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

We are all hoping that 2021 will bring us back to normal. It may be a new normal but I would like at some time to be able to eat at a restaurant without thinking about bringing a rain coat. I thought this might be the perfect time to launch a slightly different take on the Italian Club. This month you are getting two Langhe Nebbiolo. I feel that one can learn more by tasting things that are similar, all the same grape, same region and similar winemaking so that you can see the difference terroir makes. January's colder temperatures make it perfect for the food that Nebbiolo goes with: polenta, risotto and wild mushrooms.

The Langhe (*long-gay*) is a region just south of the River Tanaro (*TA-na-row*). Alba is its "city," with a population of just over 30,000, the center point for the area's more famous wine villages including Barolo and Barbaresco. The Langhe is a hilly area, a series of ridges flowing north. Its name comes from *lingua*, the word for tongue in Italian. If you lay your hand flat on a table and spread your fingers out you can imagine its shape: your fingers will be the ridges and the spaces between, the valleys. It is on top of these ridges that the famous wine villages are mostly situated. Nebbiolo is grown on the top of these ridges, with the highest vineyards sitting above the frequent fog level. Barbera and Dolcetto are on the lower slopes. I'm sure that I don't have to remind you purists, but if you are new to this Club, please note that Nebbiolo should be drunk from a Burgundy-style glass, one that has a broad bowl. It makes a real difference. This month we have one Langhe Nebbiolo from the Barbaresco zone



*The beautiful Ferrere Sottane valley where Ca del Baio makes their wine.*

and one from the Barolo zone. When you taste these you'll notice the slight tannic grip in your cheeks and on your tongue. That's Nebbiolo, nothing a fork and some risotto won't cure! I hope you enjoy the comparison.

Ca del Baio by Piemontese standards is a pretty good-sized winery, with over 65 acres of vineyards in the communes of Barbaresco and Treiso. *Ca* in Piemontese means house and *Baio* is a reference to a Bay horse which the earlier generations of the Grasso family owned. This is the fourth generation of wine growers in the family. Paola, Valentina and Federica are running their estate these days, along with their parents Giulio and Luciana. The **2019 Ca' del Baio Langhe Nebbiolo (\$21.99)** is made from young vines in their Barbaresco vineyards, planted in 2008 and 2009. (Replanting is a normal process in vineyards everywhere, done in a rotation so you're never totally out of grapes.) Stainless steel fermented and aged, this wine is made to be fresh, clean and easy to drink. Their Barbaresco shows the more powerful side.

Our second wine is the **2019 Marcarini "Lasarin" Langhe Nebbiolo (\$17.99)**. Marcarini is in La Morra, one of the Barolo communes. Manuel Marchetti and family have run this estate since 1990. Manuel's late wife Luisa was a Marcarini, and today their children Andrea, Chiara and Elisa all take an active role in the running of the winery. Their six-acre "Lasarin" Langhe Nebbiolo doesn't come from La Morra; it's from Neviglie, a small commune about three miles south of the village of Barbaresco. As with the Ca del Baio, this wine was fermented in and aged in stainless steel to offer a fresh, easy-to-drink wine.



*Elisa Marchetti harvesting Marcarini's latest vintage of Nebbiolo.*

## Re-order Offers

As a member of a K&L Wine Club, you have the opportunity to order previous offerings from any of our clubs. The following pages contain a "backlist" of each club. Please note the special club prices for each wine. You can make re-order purchases via phone, email or your online account. Our order desk is open 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. seven days a week. If you have any wine club-related issues, or wish to place an order, please call us at 800-247-5987. In addition, you can email us at [theclubs@klwines.com](mailto:theclubs@klwines.com). All wine can be purchased by the single bottle. Prices are shown after each wine listed.

**Tax (in California) and shipping will be added to each order.**

**For a complete, up-to-date inventory listing, visit us online at: [www.klwines.com](http://www.klwines.com).**

## Le Club Français Previous Offerings

2016 Château Gigognan "Clos du Roi" Châteauneuf-du-Pape @ \$29.99 per bottle

This Châteauneuf-du-Pape is about 60% Grenache, with 30% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre, aged in a combination of stainless steel and oak barrels. It's full bodied, packed with dense, dark fruit, and shows notes of licorice, thyme and pepper. Its structure isn't shy, but has started to integrate nicely with the bold fruit on the palate. While it's certainly a wine that can age, it also can drink well now with a decant of at least an hour.

Philippe Gonet TER Noir Brut Champagne @ \$29.99 per bottle

TER Noir is a classic Champagne in that it is roughly one third Chardonnay, one third Pinot Noir, and one third Pinot Meunier—the traditional Champagne grapes are all represented. Pierre, the winemaker, ages it in large-format, neutral oak barrels. The result is a Champagne that is bright and poignant. Without the influence of malolactic fermentation, the wine is without that rich creamy character of many Champagnes. It’s focused purely on the fruit and above all on the minerality.

2016 Ferraton Père et Fils “Les Murailles” Gigondas @ \$29.99 per bottle

Mostly Grenache, this wine also has small amounts of Syrah and Mourvèdre, which bring color, weight and tannin to the blend. At four years since the vintage date, the wine is hitting its stride nicely. It can still use a half-hour decant, but once it opens up it is beautifully layered, rich and complex. The nose shows full, heady aromas of luscious black cherry and cassis, and hints of cedar and leather. The palate is a nicely weighted array of red fruits, licorice, ripe tannin and fresh, bright acidity. All of the elements come into play nicely here, and the wine offers a number of pairing options such as braised lamb and stew.

2018 Henri Costal “Les Truffières” Chablis @ \$29.99 per bottle

What I love in this wine is the poignant juxtaposition of bright tropical fruits and vibrant acidity with a heavy textural element that rounds out the palate and gives the wine more weight than initially anticipated. The “Truffières” vineyard is located in Villy, just north of the town of Chablis, and has a textbook example of the Kimmeridgian limestone soils for which Chablis is well known. The vines are farmed organically and the wine is aged in stainless steel for ten months, with a brief three-month finishing period in large-format oak barrels.

2019 Aurore Dezat Sancerre @ \$19.99 per bottle

Aurore Dezat’s small estate in Sury-en-Vau is home to three soil types: limestone, flint (or silex) and clay. The combination of these soils produces wines that have a real depth of character. The 2019 is another delightful vintage, and as soon as it hit our shores, we decided it needed to make an appearance in the Club Français. The aromas jump out of the glass, with wet stone, grapefruit, gooseberry and Meyer lemon. On the palate the fruit is clean and soft with bright acidity and layers of mineral depth.

2016 La Chablisienne Premier Cru “Vaucoupin” @ \$29.99 per bottle

This is a stunning example from this Premier Cru vineyard site. Vaucoupin is located on the south side of Chablis, with very steep southern-facing slopes abundant in the mineral-rich Kimmeridgian soils for which the best sites in Chablis are known. This lovely wine is still in its youthful bloom, drinking beautifully with bright tropical fruits, fresh acidity and vibrant minerality. It can also continue to age phenomenally well, and develop deep honeyed, dried stone fruit notes as it reaches maturity.

## Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

2015 La Fleur de Boüard, Lalande-de Pomerol @ \$26.99 per bottle

Silky, dark fruited and elegant, this still displays some underlying tannin. It is best drunk with a hearty meat dish such as prime rib. It’s already drinking beautifully, although I would recommend decanting it around an hour before enjoying it, to allow it to open up and have its full range of flavors showing their best.

2018 Prospect 772 “Black Tie Charlie” Sierra Foothills Red Blend @ \$22.99 per bottle

This blend is composed of 50% Petit Syrah and 50% Syrah. True to its name, this wine is dressed to the nines, decadent and almost flamboyant in its rich, luscious profile. It’s a bold choice of varieties—a Petit Syrah and Syrah blend could easily go off the rails and be far too tannic and dense—but it’s carried off with a seamless elegance that I can only attribute to the quality of the fruit and winemaking. Not only is the tannin restrained and nicely integrated with the fruit, the wine itself is already open and ready to drink.

2017 Casa Silva “S38” Colchagua Valley Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$24.99 per bottle

Crafted from a single block in the famous “Los Lingues” vineyard of Chile’s Colchagua Valley, this unique Cabernet exhibits massive dark fruit, mocha, sweet anise and hints of black pepper. Rich and luscious on the palate, the wine is well structured and will easily stand up to your best steak preparations.

2017 Quartz Reef “Bendigo Estate” Pinot Noir Central Otago @ \$24.99 per bottle

Quartz Reef winery is situated in the Bendigo sub-region of Central Otago. Bendigo is one of the warmer sites in Central Otago, and its Pinot Noirs have a deep, vibrant fruit core. The wine’s aromatics are pronounced, with black cherry, clove, allspice and wild strawberry. On the palate the fruit continues, with a pleasant weight, fresh acidity and very mild tannin presence. There’s a fantastic savory aspect to the wine as well that is reminiscent of olive, thyme, and sage. It’s really a perfect match for poultry of any kind.

2015 Domaine de Fontbonau, Côtes du Rhône @ \$24.99 per bottle

A joint project between Frédéric Engerer of Château Latour and Jérôme Malet, a grower from the Roussillon, Domaine de Fontbonau produces one of the best Côtes du Rhône on the market. Full-fruited and rich, with elegant structure and bright acidity, this Côtes du Rhône drinks like an elegant Châteauneuf-du-Pape, but with more approachability. At five years past vintage date, it’s completely integrated and the tannin structure has mellowed into a pleasant textural element as the fruit begins to show some depth and development.

2018 Kalinda Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

We use the Kalinda label to bring you wines from top producers at deeply discounted prices. I can’t divulge who made the wine or say much about its origin. I can share a few facts. If this bottle had its normal label, it would retail for about \$70, but it’s not commonly available via retail. It’s a cuvée of fruit grown in a few different vineyards throughout the Sonoma Coast, and it’s a luscious, medium-bodied Pinot Noir with dark fruit, supple, ripe tannin and balanced acidity. The whole is seamless and elegant. The finish lasts for minutes, and the wine has the bones to age.

2016 Keller Estate “El Coro Vineyard” Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

The Petaluma Gap is a distinctive sub-region of the Sonoma Coast, which forms a sort of wind tunnel, pulling cool breezes and morning fog inland from the Pacific. With its high elevation, the El Coro Vineyard is particularly affected by the cool breezes and produces distinctive Pinot Noir with elegant aromatics, dark fruit and bright acidity. The wine shows an array of red fruits with fine-grained tannin that has mellowed and integrated nicely. It is slightly weightier on the palate than you might expect, and strikes a perfect balance of rich, luscious fruits and vibrant acidity.

2017 Precedent “Kirschenmann Vineyard” Mokelumne River Lodi Zinfandel @ \$26.99 per bottle

This ancient vineyard was planted in 1915, and the vines are own-rooted, head trained and dry farmed. The sandy silica soils and the river’s cooling influence make this vineyard one of a kind. Nathan’s winemaking hand has everything to do with highlighting this incredible fruit. When you think Lodi, you often think of an incredibly dense, high-alcohol Zinfandel, but here we have a highly aromatic wine (thanks to the silica soils) that is both intense and elegant. Although the wine is stunning on its own, it’s also sophisticated enough for a steak pairing, and would make a perfect companion to grilled meats as well.

## Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2019 Franck Millet Pouilly-Fumé @ \$14.99 per bottle

Franck and Betty Millet own vineyard land in three appellations, including Sancerre, Menetou-Salon and Pouilly-Fumé. The latter is where this month’s wine is born. Just across the river from Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé is known for having a higher level of Silex in its soils. This lends the wine a richer mouthfeel and less linear acidity, with beautiful stone fruit notes. The wine displays all of these classic characteristics, and represents another great vintage for the Loire Valley.

2018 Stolpman Vineyards “La Cuadrilla” Ballard Canyon Red Blend @ \$14.99 per bottle

Cuadrilla is a project developed by vineyard manager Reuben Solorzano. The wine is made by the crew members who farm Stolpman Vineyards, and the profits go directly to the crew members who care for the cuadra blocks. This year’s blend is 70% Syrah, 15% Sangiovese, and 15% Grenache aged in neutral French oak. I loved this wine as soon as I tasted it. It’s a pleasing, medium-bodied, fruit-forward wine with just the right kick of peppery spice. Food friendly, well balanced and easily quaffable, this is a house favorite.

2017 Simon di Brazzan “Blanc di Simon Tradizion” Friulano Isonzo @ \$14.99 per bottle

This is a standout white: it’s light and crisp, but not flippantly fruity or overtly simple. It has a depth and complexity that surprised me. The texture on the palate is great—creamy and with a pleasant weight that belies the crisp acidity and fresh citrus notes. It’s a beautiful combination of elements with subdued orchard fruits rather than bright tropical fruits, and a smooth, elegant finish. I loved enjoying this wine cocktail style alongside a nutty aged cheddar and toasted almonds.

2019 Astrolabe Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough @ \$14.99 per bottle

The wine is highly aromatic with gooseberry, quince and sweet pea aromas. On the palate it light and crisp, with ripe tropical fruits of mango, pineapple and papaya making an appearance. The finish is clean and snappy, with a hint of lemongrass and passionfruit. It’s a perfect match for an herbed salad with goat’s cheese.

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.

## Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2019 Domaine Jean-Michel Dupré Beaujolais-Villages “Vignes de 1940” @ \$9.99 per bottle

As the name suggests, this wine is made of fruit from vines planted in 1940. Jean-Michel explains that one of the reasons he is so drawn to old-vine fruit is the power and concentration of the berries, and here that is seen in spades. Dark fruited and rich aromas give way to a strong mineral bent, thanks to the granitic soils these vines are planted in. Lighter bodied as it is, this little wine carries plenty of gravity and depth in the array of intense flavors it presents in the glass.

2019 Domaine du Vieil Orme Sauvignon Blanc Touraine @ \$9.99 per bottle

Snappy sweet pea and gooseberry aromas give way to a softer palate with pear, white peach and grapefruit zest all making an appearance. The acidity is of course vibrant and fresh, and there’s a pleasing tinge of lemongrass on the finish. It’s a perfect accompaniment to seafood, and mussels make a particularly good match.

2016 Farmstrong White Field Blend Suisun Valley @ \$9.99 per bottle

While the fruit for this wine comes from three separate vineyards, it was all picked and pressed as one lot and vinified with native fermentation. The variety breakdown is 41% Grenache Blanc, 35% Albarino, and 24% Verdelho. It has slightly floral aromatics with white peach, nectarine, papaya and pineapple showing on the palate. Winemaker Faith Armstrong ages the wine in neutral French oak and stirs the lees to create a great palate texture that contrasts nicely with the vibrant acidity and bright, tropical fruit notes.

2017 Sisters Ridge Pinot Noir North Canterbury @ \$9.99 per bottle

This great value in Pinot comes from the folks at Mt. Beautiful winery in New Zealand’s North Canterbury region. Lighter bodied, with bright, crunchy red fruits, it has an elegant nose of strawberry, golden cherries and clove. On the palate the fruit is balanced against crisp acidity and a nice clean finish. It’s a perfect pairing for turkey dinner, and also may be a good option to stock your wine fridge with if you’re a Pinot fan like me.

2019 Grand Bateau Blanc @ \$9.99 per bottle

Grand Bateau is a project from the team at the famed Château Beychevelle in Saint-Julien. Beychevelle is one of only ten Châteaux classed as fourth-growth properties in the famous 1855 classification. The quality of Beychevelle has always been high, and in the Grand Bateau wines, the quality is strikingly evident. The Grand Bateau Blanc is made from 100% Sauvignon Blanc, and is bright and tropical with a fresh, appealing fruit character and a slight touch of vanilla on the close. It’s a perfect pairing for fried fish and for goat cheeses.

2018 Grand Bateau Rouge @ \$9.99 per bottle

The Grand Bateau Rouge is dark fruited with bright acidity and fresh black olive and cassis notes. It’s a great accompaniment to a charcuterie platter with hard cheeses, toasted nuts and olives.

2018 Atance “Cuvée No 1” Valencia @ \$9.99 per bottle

This wine is 70% Merseguera and 30% Malvasia. While the Malvasia adds the stunning floral aromatics and the acidity to this wine, the rest is all the indigenous variety Merseguera, the star of the show. It offers a wine with medium body, subdued orchard fruits, tangy lemon curd and a vibrant mineral presence. Grown at high altitudes in an arid climate with sandy loam soils, the vines have to struggle and the roots are quite deep, contributing to the rich mineral character in the wine. This would be a treat with seafood paella.

2018 Kalinda Central Coast Chardonnay @ \$9.99 per bottle

This 2018 vintage is a classic rendition of the varietal, with notes of Honeycrisp apple, yellow pear, peach and a creamy texture underscored by just a touch of sweet baking spice and a subtle nuttiness. If you were looking for your new house Chardonnay, look no further.

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

2015 San Leonino “Monsenese” Chianti Classico Riserva @ \$23.99 per bottle

When this bottling was first created by Lionello Marchese, 100% Sangiovese wine was rare in Chianti Classico. This is one of the wines that changed the benchmark for the region. It is fermented for about 18 days and then aged in 300-liter French oak barriques just slightly larger than the U.S. versions. 2015 is a superb vintage and I think you’ll really enjoy this wine. I’d decant it a couple of hours ahead of time.

2016 Tenuta Novare Valpolicella Ripasso @ \$15.99 per bottle

Ripasso is a unique style of wine halfway between Amarone and Valpolicella. Here is what happens. The grapes for the Amarone are usually crushed to make the wine in early February. After the juice sits on the raisined skins for a few weeks the wine is pulled off the skins. Those skins still have a fair amount of sugar so the regular Valpolicella, already wine for months, is poured on top of the skins and a second alcoholic fermentation starts. This second fermentation adds to the body and complexity, getting flavors from the Amarone. This Ripasso is not a mini-Amarone however. It is ultra-complex yet has relatively modest alcohol at 13.5% and is an ideal food accompaniment. I love the wine with non-tomato-based pasta or a piece of Parmigiano Reggiano.

2016 Zenato “Alanera” Rosso Veronese @ \$17.99 per bottle

The Zenato family has been growing classic Valpolicella grapes here for decades, but for the Alanera they changed the blend a bit. This wine is 55% Corvina (the main grape in Amarone), 25% Rondinella and 10% Corvinone, rounded out with 5% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. I love the smooth texture of this wine and the layers of complex flavors. That different 10% in the blend gives the wine a flavor array that you just don’t see in regular Valpolicella. I think this wine is super as an everyday choice. Just sit around and enjoy it with a burger off the grill. Make that an Impossible Burger for you vegetarians!

2017 Gaudio Barbera del Monferrato Superiore @ \$21.99 per bottle

This wine is striking. One of the first things I noticed was the purity of the aromatics, and that comes from the vineyard’s being at almost 1000 feet. It’s just pure Barbera, wild cherry and plum. The vineyard for this wine is 30 years old and planted in maritime clay deposit. The wine is fermented in stainless steel and aged in first- and second-use barriques, which give a supple texture to the wine’s focused acidity. This is a boldly flavored wine. I would have it with grilled sausage and polenta.

2016 Decugnano dei Barbi “A.D. 1212” Umbria Rosso @ \$19.99 per bottle

Decugnano dei Barbi is mainly an Orvieto producer but in an attempt to break out of the classic wines, Claudio and his son Enzo decided to make their top-of-the-line wine a blend of 65% Syrah, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Montepulciano, aged in French barriques. I have to admit that I was not looking forward to the blend, having tasted too many bad experiments, but I was pretty floored tasting this wine. It has power, suppleness, and a lot of character—and for this price it’s a superb deal.

2017 Tenuta San Francesco “Tramonti Bianco” Costa d’Amalfi @ \$19.99 per bottle

This charming white is a blend of three local grape varieties: 65% Falanghina, 30% Biancolella and 5% Pepella. The wine is fermented using indigenous yeast, and it’s fermented in stainless steel so you just get the

real character of the grapes and soil. The nose is full of honeydew melon and rhubarb touched with a bit of salinity. This is a wonderful, balanced wine, perfect with grilled snapper.

2017 Roberto Voerzio “Priavino” Dolcetto d’Alba @ \$22.99 per bottle

The nose is full of blueberries, violets, leather and spice. On the palate this Dolcetto has power, tannins (albeit easy to drink) and it fills your mouth with a dense richness. The flavors are bold and dramatic, with lots of ripe fruit, chocolate, leather, tobacco, and spice fleshing out the tannic structure. The finish replays the bold fruit character but sits up nicely and has real lift in the finish. The wine is all organically farmed and is fermented with indigenous yeast in stainless steel tanks; it doesn’t see any wood aging, fining or filtering.

San Venanzio Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore Brut @ \$11.99 per bottle

Compared with many other Proseccos from the area, this wine has a crisper, more focused character that is the growing fashion in America. I love this wine’s expressive vibrancy. It is the perfect afternoon Aperitivo. Or, if you want to upgrade your Aperol Spitz, use San Venanzio and you will definitely notice the difference!

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

2013 Launois Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This wine is made entirely from estate-grown, mid-slope, old-vine Chardonnay exclusively from massal selections, not clones. It is almost exclusively Mesnil, except for a plot from the Grand Cru of Cramant that was planted in the 1950s, added for mid-palate power. This is electric, dry, bracing Champagne that goes fantastically well with shellfish or Dungeness crab.

Pierre Paillard “Les Parcelles” Grand Cru Extra Brut Bouzy Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

Composed of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay, this Champagne is done almost entirely in stainless steel. Although dosed at just 3.5 grams per liter and labeled as extra brut, this is not an austere wine because of the steep south-facing slopes, and once again because of the massal selected, estate vines. While this wine will pair with perfectly with a salmon dish, it can also make a great apéritif.

Damien Hugot Brut Rosé Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

95% Chardonnay from the northern crus of Chouilly and Cramant. The color of this wine comes from an ancient plot of Meunier that Damien Hugot’s grandfather planted in the *sud*-Epernay village of Chavot. Even he does not know how old this plot is; he knows it is over 50 years. He keeps a solera of this red wine, which adds complexity to the Champagne, even though the final content of this profound red wine is only 5%. I find the wine to have a nose of French toast with subtle strawberry fruit, and exceptional texture and minerality, from the top-class, Grand Cru Chardonnay in the mouth. Delicate enough to have on its own as the apéritif, this also makes a great partner to salmon.

2014 Louis Brochet “Alain” Millesime Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This Champagne is composed of two thirds Pinot Noir and one third Chardonnay. It is 10% barrel fermented. The rest is done in stainless steel, and the wine goes through only partial malolactic. This wine reminds me of the best of the 2004s, and even the 1988s when they were young; it is a graceful, elegant wine with some lovely pain au levain and dark cherry Pinot Noir savor in the middle. If you like this as much as I do, it is worth getting some to age. “Classic” vintages like this are happening less than once a decade now.

Ariston Aspasié “Brut Prestige” Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

Paul Vincent makes this from a selection of his oldest vines spread across his estate in the picturesque hamlet of Brouillet. The Champagne is composed of 50% Chardonnay, 25% Pinot Noir and 25% Meunier and is 100% the 2012 vintage, although not labeled as such. As one would expect from a wine with seven years on the lees, this is a rich Champagne with lovely brioche character. The texture is exceptional, with lots of tiny bubbles, as Paul prefers to run a little over the normal six atmospheres of pressure for all of his wines. The far northern location of the vineyard insures virile acidity to balance the decadent old-vine richness. This is an excellent Champagne to serve with pâté as a starter, or with a barbecued salmon main course.