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Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

As the warmer weather welcomes us to the beginning of the summer, it's a great opportunity to enjoy a little outdoor time, and what better way to relax on your patio or in the yard than with a glass of wine? This month we have an array of summer wines that will have you covered for that warm weather sipping. I personally love to dine on my patio this time of year and I relish what the outdoors does for food and wine enjoyment.

This month's Club Français wines are sourced from the country's cooler wine-growing regions, where more delicate, light and aromatic wines abound. These wines are perfect for summer. We have a lovely red Burgundy from the Chambolle-Musigny area. Elegant, perfumed and subtle, it's a perfect patio pick. We're also featuring a unique Sancerre grown in Silex soils. Unusual for the region, these soils create a whole new array of aromatics and minerality in the wine.

For the Signature Red Club we're focusing on a special area of California's coastline. The Santa Ynez Valley is one of the unique regions of Santa Barbara, with two inland AVAs that feature a rare combination of continental and coastal climates. We'll look this month at a Cabernet grown in Happy Canyon AVA, and a Syrah from Ballard Canyon AVA. Both wines exemplify the unique qualities of the terroir in the eastern part of the Santa Ynez Valley.

In the Premium Club we feature wines from two of our all-time favorite producers. One is a classic California Chardonnay from the Sonoma Coast, and the other a beautiful Merlot-based Bordeaux. Both wines are made by rockstar winemakers with top-notch reputations in their regions, and it certainly shows in the final products.

For our Best Buy Club members we have a similar theme this month, picking wines from two producers that we've worked closely with over the years. Our red is a friendly Syrah/Grenache blend from a small producer in France's Roussillon region, and our white is a lovely Chardonnay bottled under our Kalinda label from one of California's Central Coast greats.

Greg sets up a perfect contrast in this month's Club Italiano, with two Rosso di Montalcinos from two very different producers at different sides of the Montalcino region. Each is delicious in its own right, and the two make for a great side-by-side tasting, offering insight into the diversity that this little region boasts.

June is a Champagne month, and Gary features two wines from a longtime direct-import Champagne house for K&L, Franck Bonville. Both wines are made from all Grand Cru fruit in the Côtes de Blancs. One is a vintage selection, and the other a high-end non-vintage cuvée.

Here's to your summer!

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

## Le Club Français

As we enter summer with the finer weather drifting in our windows and blessing our gardens, it's the perfect time to enjoy the elegant wines of France's cooler winegrowing regions. This month we have a lovely red Burgundy from a little family-run estate in Gevrey-Chambertin, and a very different Sancerre.

Over 80% of the Sancerre region is made up of largely clay and limestone soils, with the exception being the small hillside vineyards of Saint-Satur on the eastern side of the Sancerre appellation, where flint or silex soils dominate. This month's white wine comes from this unique part of Sancerre. Gerard Fiou's nine-hectare estate sits on the hillside of Saint-Satur. The flint soils here lend his wines a whole different set of aromatics, and a very different type of minerality as well. We've chosen to feature Gerard's top cuvée, the **2016 Gerard Fiou "Le Grand Roc" Sancerre (\$31.99)**.

This wine is composed of fruit from the oldest vines on his estate—all at least 60 years old. The intensity of old-vine fruit is immediately apparent. While the wine is light and vibrant like any good Sancerre, it is also very textural on the palate, with concentrated tropical fruits and steely minerality. Gerard matures his wine in both stainless steel and new French oak barrels, and employs *battonage* to create the lovely textural palate of the wine. The use of some new oak is perhaps surprising in such a clean, crisp wine, but it further adds to the complexity of the palate while slightly taming the vibrant acidity. This wine is very intriguing in its own right, and it's also a perfect accompaniment to goat cheese and cured meats, or a rustic leek and potato galette.

Our red Burgundy is produced by Philippe Leclerc in the family winery of his hometown in Gevrey-Chambertin. Philippe grew up in the vineyards and learned from his father how to tend the vines and make wine according to the best Burgundian traditions. Philippe has a deep passion for his work, and aims to make wines with a modern flair that are still in keeping with the traditions and regional particularity of Gevrey-Chambertin and the neighboring regions where Philippe has his own vineyard holdings. The **2017 Philippe Leclerc "Les Bons Batons" Bourgogne Rouge (\$27.99)** is sourced from fruit grown just outside Cham-

bolle-Musigny. It bears characteristics of this famous appellation, including the delicate, understated palate, the elegant and pronounced aromatics of wild strawberry, clove and young cherries, and a savory forest-floor element. It is almost reticent right now, and needs a good decant an hour or more before enjoyment. It will easily age into a lovely perfumed maturity after several more years in the cellar. Philippe has also designed this wine to be approachable in its youth. For near-



*One of the passionate young men behind the wines of Gerard Fiou is Florent Bourgeois, who works both in the vineyards and making the wines.*



*Philippe Leclerc is not only a renowned producer of Burgundy, he's also curator of a small museum of farming and viticulture artifacts which he has amassed.*

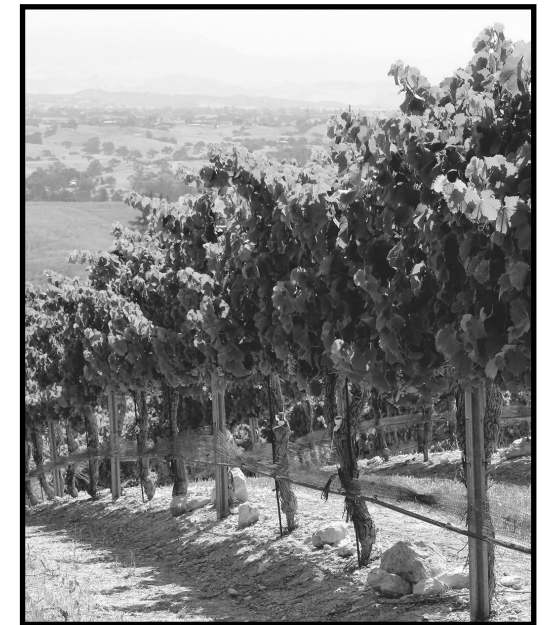
term enjoyment he recommends pairing it with a cheese course to contrast the wine's bright young fruit against something with a creamy texture.

## Signature Red Collection Wine Club

This month we are focusing in on two of the unique inland AVAs of California's Santa Ynez Valley. Santa Barbara's many AVAs are a well-known gold mine for boutique California wines, and the quality of the Pinot Noir and Chardonnays produced here is legend. A little less known are the quality Bordeaux and Rhône style wines being produced in the eastern reaches of the region. A few years ago I had the pleasure of exploring this area along with some K&L colleagues, and one of the most impressive visits was a day spent tramping around vineyards in Santa Ynez Valley's Happy Canyon and Ballard Canyon AVAs.

Our first wine is made by Adam Comartin of Comartin Cellars, a tiny family-run label. After travelling in Europe and Australia, Adam cut his winemaking chops at Testarossa, and he has been making wine under his own label for several vintages now. This month we feature Adam's Syrah. Elegant and full-blooded, it comes from Tierra Alta Vineyard in Ballard Canyon. We've featured other wines from Ballard Canyon in the Signature Club; there's a really great community of growers and winemakers in this exciting AVA. As the name suggests, Tierra Alta Vineyard sits on a ridge, and it is on the eastern side of the region. The dusty, sandy topsoil covers an ideal clay and limestone base. The vineyard is planted on the steepest grade in the AVA and is an ideal site for Rhône varietals. The quality of Syrah coming off this vineyard is pretty much unparalleled. The **2016 Comartin Cellars "Tierra Alta Vineyard" Ballard Canyon Syrah (\$24.99)** is a dark-fruited, brooding Syrah with intense minerality and perfectly balanced acidity and tannin. At four years from vintage date, the wine is drinking very well right now. The tannin has mellowed out a bit and marries well with the meaty, dark-fruited body of the wine. This is an excellent wine to pair with grilled meats, and should work well with any summer barbecues you have planned.

For our next wine we go farther inland, up the Santa Ynez Valley to Happy Canyon AVA. In the southeast corner is a 75-acre ranch purchased by the Grimm family in 2010. Rick and Aurora Grimm met in London in the 1980s, and spent most of their careers in Europe. When they sold their company in 2010 they moved to California with their three children. After purchasing the ranch they were inspired to plant vineyards, and upon consulting with some top experts in the area they were delighted to find that it was a perfect location for Bordeaux-style wines. The Grimms have a European-inspired style, and it shows in their wines. Happy Canyon has a very continental climate overall, with hot days and cold nights. However, these diurnal swings are moderated by the cold ocean breezes that travel up the Santa Ynez Valley and keep the fruit from getting too hot in the afternoons. The valley likewise has a moderating effect at night, preventing temperatures from getting too low. Some might



*At the top of steeply graded Tierra Alta Vineyard, you can see across the entire AVA.*



*At Grimm's Bluff, roughly half of the vineyards are planted in the ancient "head-trained" method which allows more space for the individual plants and different exposure for the growing berries.*

argue it's the ideal marriage of continental and coastal climates. In any case, the **2016 Grimm's Bluff Cabernet Sauvignon (\$24.99)** speaks for itself. Beautifully balanced classic aromas of cassis, eucalyptus and graphite mark the opening, and translate to a medium-bodied wine with elegance, structure and bright, fresh black fruits. Sweet tobacco and a hint of cigar box close out the wine. This is a classic Cabernet, calling for a classic steak pairing.

## Premium Wine Club

Our clubs at K&L are a great way to explore new regions and producers. At the same time, it's good to revisit old favorites. This month we feature two of our all-time favorite producers who are no strangers to the K&L clubs. For the red we'll present the newest vintage of Château Haut-Musset, made by the talented young Jérôme Aguirre. As for our white, it's an elegant Sonoma Coast Chardonnay from Amici Cellars.

Bob Shepard at Amici has long been a friend of K&L, and we in turn have greatly appreciated his honest and delicious wines. We are lucky to feature this elegant Chardonnay at a deep discount for our club members. It's difficult to know where to begin when writing about Amici Cellars. It began as a venture between friends, and has grown to a world-class winery. From the very beginning we've been big fans here at K&L, and it's been thrilling to watch the vintages unfold with the wines becoming ever more polished and elegant. Today Amici is one of Napa's premier wineries, with two of the valley's most talented winemakers. Tony Biagi's name is well known in Napa—he helped shape many a famous winery including CADE, Paraduxx, Clos du Val, Hourglass, Plumpjack and Sinegal Estate. Tony knows the vineyards of Napa and Sonoma like the back of his hand. His co-winemaker is Jesse Fox, a former Cordon Bleu-trained chef who left The French Laundry to pursue the art of winemaking. Together Tony and Jesse are making some of the best wines in the Sonoma/Napa AVAs. This month's **2016 Amici Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (\$14.99)** normally retails for \$24.99 at K&L, and you'll see it priced higher elsewhere. We are lucky enough to have a good friendship with owner Bob Shepard. He always makes sure to allocate a good amount of his wine for us, and this year I was able to obtain this one for our club members. Considering the caliber of talent going into this Chardonnay and the superb fruit sources (Amici works with top growers throughout Napa and Sonoma), it's difficult not to fall in love with this wine. It's classic California Coastal Chardonnay at its best—creamy, nutty, with fresh orchard fruits and a pleasant round weight on the palate. If you are looking for a great deal in California Chardonnay, look no further.

Our second wine comes from a no-less-talented source. Jérôme Aguirre is well known in Bordeaux for his work with Châteaux Le Gay, La Violette, and more recently the Peter Kwok properties Haut Brisson, Tour St-Christophe and Patache. He works as technical director and consultant for the Kwok properties and has brought a beautiful modern touch to the wines. Together with his wife Véronique Abbadie, Jérôme also farms and makes wine on a small plot in Lalande-de-Pomerol. Véronique inherited the property from her grandfather, and met Jérôme while studying Oenology at the University of Bordeaux. The couple brings a dynamism and modern approach to their winemaking and crafts a beautiful wine that is often open and ready to drink shortly after release. The newest vintage is the **2018 Haut-Musset, Lalande de Pomerol (\$14.99)**. Contrary to many a Bordeaux estate, Jérôme and



*Amici co-founder Bob Shepard has long been a K&L friend, buying wine from us back in the 1990s and eventually selling wine to us after launching Amici. We're delighted to still receive allocations of his best wines!*

Véronique release their wines fairly young, and indeed this lovely little claret is ready to drink now. With about 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc, the wine is dark fruited and velvety with just enough structure underpinning the silky modern fruit to balance it nicely. It's a great accompaniment to grilled meats, and also works with pork or even poultry.

## Best Buy Wine Club

The Best Buy Club wines this month also come from two of K&L's longtime favorite producers. Last month our Club Français featured a wine from of Séverine Bourrier of Château de l'Ou, and this month we feature another of her wines in the Best Buy Club. This charming red from the Roussillon is the perfect summer wine, friendly with a variety of cuisines, perfect for a picnic, or as a porch sipper. Our white wine is a killer deal. It's a Central Coast Chardonnay from one of the legendary producers in the area. Because we have this wine bottled under our Kalinda label we can't reveal the maker of this wine, but it is absolutely top notch.

Séverine Bourrier and her husband Philippe own and operate the Château de l'Ou in France's Roussillon region. Named "L'Ou" or "egg" due to the oval shape of the property, this little Château and its owners have pushed forward both the reputation and quality of biodynamic winemaking in the region. Séverine studied viticulture in Bordeaux, and moved to the Roussillon after meeting her husband Philippe at a wine fair. She makes wines of incredible complexity masked by a friendly and easy-drinking exterior. If you're really looking to drink well-crafted, top-notch wine at a bargain, Séverine's wines are the way to go. The **2018 Château de l'Ou Côtes de Roussillon Rouge (\$9.99)** is composed of 60% Syrah and 40% Grenache. Aromas of blueberry, black cherry and smoked meats jump out of the glass followed by a full-bodied palate with ripe fruit, fresh acidity and well-integrated tannin. The wine finishes with lingering fruit and an undercurrent of black olive and smoked meat. I can easily see this wine standing up to lamb or steak, and at the same time it is so friendly that it makes a good choice for a weeknight grill out.

Our second wine comes from one of California's Central Coast legends. Per our Kalinda label agreement, I cannot tell you the producer of this wine. We buy and bottle many wines from high-end producers under our Kalinda label to sell to our customers at a greatly discounted rate. This month's **2018 Kalinda Central Coast Chardonnay (\$9.99)** is an absolute steal. This wine would normally have a retail price much higher than ours, and for club members the discount is even greater. If you know much about the great wines of Santa Barbara and the valleys that stretch inland from the coast, you'll know that this is hallowed ground when it comes to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The folks making this month's Kalinda Chardonnay are some of the pioneers of the area, and have made first-class wines for many decades. 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.



*We had the pleasure of a visit from Séverine Bourrier a couple of years ago, when she shared with us the challenges and joys of making wine in the Roussillon.*

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

The name Banfi does not always get its just dues. This behemoth of an Italian wine producer, owned and created by an American family, has wineries in many regions in Italy and produces a broad swath of quality and styles. In Montalcino the name is revered. Everyone in Montalcino understands what Banfi and specifically Castello di Banfi did for the appellation. Before Banfi, Montalcino was an extremely poor backwater, hit by wars, depression and the nail in the coffin: being put into the hinterlands by a freeway. Up until the end of the 1950s the main road from Florence to Rome ran right past Montalcino. That was the Via Cassia, the old Roman road, the SS2. Then in a stroke of modernization with the world's eyes on Italy for the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Montalcino was bypassed by the first Autostrada, the A1. Its route from Milano to Bologna to Florence to Rome left the Via Cassia for locals and the rare weekend explorer.

Montalcino had been predominantly a sharecropping zone for centuries. In the 1950s, locals began buying out the cash-strapped landowners to take over the land they worked, and there were maybe 40 producers in Montalcino when, in 1978, the Mariani family purchased 7,100 acres on Montalcino's southwestern slope. They spent an ocean of money on technology and hired one of Italy's foremost winemakers, Ezio Rivella, to oversee the venture. Before long the Castello di Banfi Brunello di Montalcino label was everywhere in America. In an homage to the family, I've decided to include the **2018 Castello di Banfi Rosso di Montalcino (\$19.99)** in this month's Italian Club. This Rosso di Montalcino is aged in a combination of barrique and large Slavonian oak barrels. Try it with your favorite tomato-based pasta.

I thought it might be fun to compare the Castello di Banfi wine with something from a contrasting producer. Where Banfi produces thousands of cases, tiny little Lazzeretti produces fewer than 500 cases of their Rosso di Montalcino. Where Banfi sits on the sunny, dry western slope, Lazzeretti is on the east side of Montalcino, on the edge of the *crete senesi*, the lunar-like landscape used mostly for grass and grain. The east side of Montalcino traditionally has been far cooler than the slope where Banfi sits, and much wetter due to a series of springs that flow from this side. Lazzeretti is right next to La Fortuna, a name many of you will recognize as one of K&L's first Direct Import labels. Lazzeretti sits slightly further out in the valley.

Lazzeretti's story began with 18-year-old Montalcino resident Marco Lazzeretti dreaming of hav-



*Castello di Banfi on Montalcino's southwestern slope has been one of the area's most important producers since 1980.*



*The Lazzeretti winery looking east over the Crete Senesi. They made their best Brunello ever in 2015.*

ing his own wine estate. He later convinced his sister Lucia to join forces with him, and they split time between their winery and their wine shop in town. The land they acquired had been owned by their grandfather at one time, and their label is a stylized version of a key found on the property years ago and treasured by the family as a good luck piece. After a few years of planting and prepping, Marco and Lucia produced their first wine in the 2001 vintage. Their Brunello is made in large 35-40hl Slavonian oak barrels, the traditional method. The **2017 Lazzeretti Rosso di Montalcino (\$19.99)** is aged in French barrique and stays there for eight months. That choice is less about method and more about the small amount made and the space available. I'd have this with some grilled pork chops.

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

**Avize Grand Cru: A Tonic for Strange Times** After months of limited contact with others in these strange times, we all deserve a special treat. At the beginning of this year, I resolved to take advantage of the great strength of the dollar to bring the best Champagne to the club that I could. This is the first shipment that takes full advantage of a dollar that is trading almost at parity with the euro. Our special pricing would have been impossible even last year, due to the exchange rate.

We have been working with Champagne Franck Bonville for 17 years now, and for our staff and customers alike they are one of the most beloved producers of Champagne. Our first order from them included the last of their 1992s and the first of their 1996 vintage. Each time I order from them, I have to put extra cases of magnums into the order for K&L owner Clyde Beffa, who is always thirsty for Bonville.

The current generation to make the wine here is Olivier Bonville, the great grandson of Franck, who started to produce his own wines between the world wars. This estate is the envy of Champagne, with 50 acres, all planted to Chardonnay on the most hallowed, expensive ground in Champagne, the Grand Crus of Avize, Oger and Mesnil. The two wines in this shipment are both 100% Chardonnay, exclusively vinified in stainless steel, and come only from the Grand Cru of Avize. The difference is in the use of time, and the wines show of that contrast perfectly. The **2013 Franck Bonville "Millesime" Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$34.99)** usually sells for \$44.99 and is a great deal even at the higher price. This late vintage is under the radar, but at Bonville, I believe the wine is better than their excellent 2012. For me, this is the most elegant Champagne that has ever been in the club, with saline minerality, focused, crisp acidity and understated white flower aromas and flavors. For me it's the grace notes, the restraint and the super long, expansive finish that make this wine so special. This is drinking great right now, but given how good the 1977 showed on my birthday last November, it's worth setting down a



*Above: Olivier Bonville presents his 2013 in Avize.*

*Below: Olivier shows the special chalk soil of Avize in his vineyard.*



cases to drink over the next few decades if you end up loving it as much I do!

By contrast, the **Franck Bonville “Prestige” Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$34.99)**, which is always two vintages and always aged four years on the lees, is a much richer Blanc de Blancs. With fresh baguette aromas and very nice white stone fruit, this is one of the Champagne world’s most perfect apéritifs. I love the creamy texture of this Champagne—this is generous blanc de blancs for sure, but it always finishes dry, chalky and refreshing. It too sells for \$44.99 on the K&L shelf, making this a great deal for our club members.

## 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

2017 Reserve Saint Dominique “Crous St. Martin Hommage à l’An 1879” Châteauneuf-du-Pape @ \$27.99 per bottle

This wine is full bodied, rich and almost unctuous on the palate, with deep licorice, cassis and red plum notes. The tannins are soft and meld beautifully into the texture of the wine, and the acidity merely underscores the power of the fruit. The finish lasts minutes, and while the wine shows so well at this young stage, it could certainly also age into the next decade. If you’ve been on the lookout for a great Châteauneuf-du-Pape to add to your collection, now is the time to lay a few bottles down for the future

2017 Château de l’Ou “Secret de Schistes” Côtes Catalanes @ \$26.99 per bottle

This 100% Syrah is grown in brown schist soils in a high-elevation site in the Agly Valley of the Rousillon. It has a beautiful balance of intensity, rich fruit, weighty palate, and a fresh cut of acidity that belies all this. The secret of schist soils is that they are incredibly nutrient-poor, forcing the vine to dig very deep to sustain itself. This produces small, powerful grapes that carry a weight of minerality and depth that couldn’t be achieved in the same way elsewhere.

2018 Julien Schaal Kastelberg Grand Cru Riesling Alsace (\$24.99)

This Grand Cru Riesling is bone dry yet has a surprising weight and depth to the palate. The aromas are intense and stunning with lime zest, elderflower liqueur, honeysuckle and apricot all playing a role. On the palate the array of flavors continues and the finish is completely dry, leaving you eager for that second sip. This is a wine to age. You may enjoy it so much now that you’ll be surprised to hear that Grand Cru Alsatian Riesling is unspeakably gorgeous with about five to seven years under its belt. It can certainly be aged beyond that too. At the very least I recommend that if you like this wine, you get an extra bottle or two to lay down for several years.

2016 François Labet Bourgogne Rouge Vieilles Vignes @ \$24.99 per bottle

This cuvée is composed of fruit from the family’s oldest vineyards in and around Beaune. The wine 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 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.

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.

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

2015 Hendry “Block 7 & 22” Napa Valley Zinfandel @ \$24.99 per bottle

Grown and crafted in a serious style, this old vine Zinfandel takes the varietal to the next level. Deep red cherry fruit with an underlying kick of black pepper marks this as a classic Zinfandel, and the structure is artfully constructed—a nice fresh cut of acidity lightens the wine, while solid, ripe tannins add bulk to the palate and position this as a great food companion. The fruit is not the cloying, syrupy style of Zinfandel, but a bright young cherry fruit, complemented by black tea, crushed peppercorn and bitter cocoa. Think grilled lamb for a pairing.

2016 Vecchie Terre di Montefili Chianti Classico @ \$24.99 per bottle

Winemaker Serena Gusmeri spends much of her time traversing the vineyards, and believes her project is first and foremost to understand each season, allowing the vintage to truly express itself in the glass. Her wines are elegant and bold, and the Chianti Classico that we have from her today is a perfect marriage of styles. Ripe black marasca cherries jump from the glass, accented by a touch of sweet baking spice and a latent note of sandalwood. The full-bodied palate has a pleasant round weight with good acidity and tannin that shape this lustrous wine into the perfect food partner.

2017 Sojourn Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir @ \$26.99 per bottle

Stylistically, this is a fuller bodied Pinot Noir with rich, dark fruits and ripe, luxurious aromatics. In keeping with a modern style, it’s not a wine that has to be aged before its components come into harmony. It’s open and proportionate now—completely ready to drink. The founders of Sojourn Cellars, Erich Bradley and Craig Haserot, see life as a sojourn, which should be enjoyed with little moments such as a perfect glass of wine.

2016 Trinity Hill “Gimblett Gravels” Syrah Hawke’s Bay @ \$22.99 per bottle

The Gimblett Gravels region in Hawke’s Bay is a rocky old riverbed, nutrient poor and with excellent drainage. These elements, together with the cool nights and long growing season, spell world-class Syrah. Right away you can tell from the nose that this is a serious wine—it’s loaded with blackberry, blueberry and bramble, fine ground black pepper and something savory that reminds me of black olive. On the palate the depth of flavors persists, and the full body is balanced and lifted by crisp, bright acidity. For such a rich and full wine, it is surprisingly light on its feet.

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 Atamisque 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.

## Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2018 Te Mata “Estate” Cabernets/Merlot Hawke’s Bay (\$14.99)

Blended from three different sites throughout Hawke’s Bay, this wine is a thoroughly elegant Bordeaux-style blend with bright, boisterous blackberry and plum fruit, elegant structure, and a beautiful balance of elements, speaking to the unique climate and situation of these vineyards. Matured in a mixture of new and used French oak barrels, the wine has the perfect structure to age gracefully for a decade or more, however beautifully it is drinking at present.

2018 Te Mata “Estate” Chardonnay Hawke’s Bay \$14.99 per bottle

This estate Chardonnay is a marriage of two styles, both old-school and modern. Some of the fruit is aged in barrel with traditional bâtonnage and malolactic fermentation, and another portion of the fruit is aged in stainless steel for a clean, light, pure-fruited expression. The two wines are then blended to form the final cuvée. A somewhat daring enterprise, the result is fantastic. The wine has the richness and nutty depth of a classic oak-aged Chardonnay, with the vibrancy and light, crisp body of a stainless steel-matured wine, all while reflecting the gorgeous fruit character of the best of Hawke’s Bay. It’s a perfect pairing with scallops in a simple butter sauce.

2017 Kalinda Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$14.99 per bottle

This is a richer style Cabernet with plush black olive and ripe, rounded plum and mocha notes. You can feel the glycerin on the palate, but everything is in balance here—the boldness of the fruit synthesizes with the weight of the fruit and the powerful underlying structure. The wine closes with lingering sweet fruit. Although it should develop nicely over the next couple of years, it is designed more to drink in the near term.

2016 Kalinda Médoc Bordeaux @ \$14.99 per bottle

This classic Médoc bottling is a lovely blend of dark fruits with black plum, boysenberry and cassis complemented by hints of sweet tobacco, vanilla, cocoa and baking spice. Certainly a decent amount of oak is employed, but it’s nicely integrated with the fruit character. All the components of the wine are already in harmony and it has a pleasant round weight on the palate. It also displays a serious backbone of structure that ensures a long life ahead.

2017 Eric Kent “Luke’s Grove” Russian River Valley Chardonnay @ \$14.99 per bottle

This Chardonnay that we’ve been lucky enough to land for the club is all Stiling Vineyard fruit, owned and farmed by the famed Dehlinger family. Owner/winemaker Kent Humphrey goes for a middle-of-the-road style, using some new French oak and some large-format, older barrels with frequent lees stirring to create a great mid-palate texture. The wine is at once bright and rich. It has beautiful clean aromas of yellow pear and Honeycrisp apple, and a palate that has beautiful creamy depth and a mélange of orchard fruits and lemon curd. The finish is surprisingly crisp and dry, making for a beautifully balanced whole.

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

NV Los Dos Cava Brut @ \$9.99 per bottle

This lovely Cava is made of the classic grapes of the region: Xarel-lo, Parellada and Macabeo. Blending vintages and vinifying the wine in the “Champagne” style with a secondary fermentation in bottle produces the complexity, nutty flavor and fine bead in this wine. The fresh fruit and spice elements from the grapes themselves further round out the profile and make for a truly divine bottle of bubbles.

2011 Taylor Fladgate Late Bottled Vintage Port @ \$9.99 per bottle

Late Bottled Vintage ports are matured in barrel for four to six years before bottling, so that when they are released on the market they are already drinking with the maturity of an aged vintage Port, yet have a price point closer to a Ruby. This LBV bottle is from one of the best recent declared Port vintages, and the wine was crafted by one of the best and oldest Port houses around. Taylor Fladgate uses oak aging on their Late Bottled Vintage Ports, and the style of the wine is powerful, with resonant dried fruit notes, toasted nuts and sweet baking spices.

2018 Anticura Malbec Mendoza @ \$9.99 per bottle

Grown in the high-elevation region of Vista Flores in Argentina’s Uco Valley, this versatile Malbec is both hearty and bold with a fuller body and bright, ripe fruit flavors. It’s not at all tannic or overpowered by oak. The little kick of peppery spice on the finish makes it very food-friendly. It’s big enough to stand up to a steak, and yet smooth enough to serve cocktail style with light appetizers or all on its own.

2015 Plateau des Chênes Lirac Blanc @ \$9.99 per bottle

A blend of Grenache Blanc, Roussanne and Clairette, this lovely little wine is at once floral, delicate and rich with a surprisingly weighty palate and a round quality on the tongue that enhances its depth. You might think a white from 2015 is a bit on the old side, but this little gem is just hitting its stride. With its couple of added years of age it has mellowed out, creating an almost honeyed quality in the glass that intensifies the complexity and lengthens the finish.

2018 Allram Grüner Veltliner Kamptal 1L @ \$8.99 per bottle

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. 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.

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

2017 La Monacesca Verdicchio di Matelica @ \$15.99 per bottle

I love Verdicchio (Lugana it turns out is made from the same grape and yes, I love those as well), and I especially love the Matelica zone for Verdicchio. This lifted Apennine valley transforms the grape into something extraordinary. The long hang time, with late October harvesting, really allows this grape to reach its full phenolic potential. Often we think of ripeness as a sugar level, especially here in California. That’s just the alcohol potential; the flavor component comes from the phenolic ripeness and as a wine ages it’s that portion that begins to show the depth it can attain.

2016 Zenato “Ripassa” Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore @ \$23.99 per bottle

This unique wine derives all its character from the region’s most famous wine: Amarone. Amarone is made in a unique way. The grapes are harvested and then the bunches of grapes are laid out and left to dry until late January or early February. The grapes for Amarone lose about 15% of their liquid but still are juicy. These dried grapes are then fermented and the wine is drained off of the grape must, leaving the skins in the tank. Then the real uniqueness happens, as a fresh Valpolicella wine (already having gone through fermentation) gets passed over the skins. The wine

picks up a bit more body, color and flavor from the Amarone skins during the brief secondary fermentation. The wine is then racked off the skins and placed in French tonneaux for 18 months of aging. The result is a “Ripassa” Valpolicella with an amped-up flavor profile and a fuller texture.

#### 2015 La Fiorita Rosso di Montalcino @ \$24.99 per bottle

This lovely Rosso, made by famed winemaker Roberto Cipresso, is a powerful wine from a powerful vintage. It 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

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

#### Thiénot Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This Champagne is composed of 45% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir and 20% Meunier. The light gold color and big brioche, cream and baked-apple nose gives way to a wine that’s packed with power and complexity on the palate. This full-bodied Champagne has a luscious finish that is very impressive. This Champagne is great on its own, but will also go very well with any number of tasty patés.

#### Palmer & Co. “Brut Réserve” Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This is a relatively new Champagne house, a cooperative in fact, established in 1947 by seven families of growers. Their focus is on fruit from the mountain of Reims, and this Champagne is composed of 50% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir and 10% Meunier and aged for a minimum of four years on the lees. This one of the toastiest, richest Champagnes the club has featured, and I loved the brioche, beure d’Issigny and Meyer Lemon curd in this Champagne. I find that the hazelnut-like fruit of Verzenay stands out in this bottle. I loved this as an apéritif, and I think it would also do very well with an equally decadent meal such as lobster.

#### Bernard Lonclas Blanc de Blancs Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This shows off the famous Turonian limestone soil of the village of Bassuet, on the eastern frontier of Champagne. When I tasted it 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 makes a great apéritif, and also pairs very well with oysters or lobster.

#### Courtois Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This wine is grown in soil that is a mixture of limestone, clay and chalk, and 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.