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Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

Spring is around the corner, and I know I'm not alone in hoping for a summer that's closer to normal this year. The year 2021 is unfolding with many unknowns and I'm wishing for a good and prosperous season for all. As I've watched the weather shift into spring here in the Bay Area, I've enjoyed a variety of new wines, including a few off-the-beaten-path finds. Some have made the cut and found their way into our club selections. May you enjoy this season of change with some new wine discoveries!

The Club Français is focused on two rather under-appreciated regions. Our red is a lovely Syrah from a unique region of the Roussillon that's known for its dessert wines. Visionary winemaker Gilles Troullier saw other potential here, and now makes a stunning array of varietal wines from single-vineyard plots in the area. Our white is a Chenin Blanc from the Loire, not from Vouvray but from a neighboring appellation, Saumur-Champigny, better known for its reds.

Signature Club members who were with us last year will remember the Ram's Gate Syrah that sold out so quickly last summer. We're thrilled to feature another of their Syrahs this month, this time from the Hyde Vineyard. Our second wine is a beautifully aged Pinot Noir from the Santa Rita Hills AVA. Both wines are produced by important men in the wine world, and are a steal at the modest club pricing.

I've selected the Premium Club wines this month simply because each is stunning in its own right—they are perfect cocktail wines to sip solo. Our red is a beautifully balanced Zinfandel from Amador County in the Sierra Foothills, and our white is from Greece and is a variety you may not have tried before. Malagousia is among my favorite white wines, and I'm delighted to feature a fantastic example from a passionate young man in Tirnavos.

Passion is a vital ingredient in good wine, and there's nothing I like better than a passionate producer realizing their talents and making great wine. Our Best Buy Club selections are from two such winemakers. One is in Bordeaux's Right Bank, the other in Spain. These wines are produced in lesser known appellations, and exhibit a quality and finesse that springs from the dedication and talent of the men making them.

There might not be a big holiday this month, but our Club Italiano members will have reason to celebrate. Greg has chosen to feature two of his favorite producers. The first is a Piemontese producer creating beautiful wines from Nebbiolo, and the second is a small producer of Prosecco, making bone dry sparklers that are a huge hit among the staff at K&L.

May the shift in seasons bring you good health and good wine!

Cheers,

Heather Gowen, K&L's Wine Club director

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Le Club Français

For this month's Club Français selections, I wanted to introduce you to two lesser known regions of France. This month we feature a 100% Chenin Blanc from Saumur-Champigny, an appellation of the Loire Valley that is better known for its reds. Our second wine is a stunning Syrah from the northern Roussillon. Languedoc-Roussillon is a broad designation; it encompasses many small, interesting pockets of viticulture. Our wine comes from a region with fantastic granitic soils which are a perfect medium for Syrah.

For seven generations, the family of Jean-Noël Millon have cultivated vines in the Saumur-Champigny region of the Loire Valley. Jean-Noël himself began farming a twelve-hectare plot at the young age of 20. In this little appellation the focus is typically Cabernet Franc, and Jean-Noël makes some lovely Cabernet Francs, but for this month's club I wanted to feature his **2017 La Source du Ruault "La Coulée d'Aunis" Saumur-Champigny Blanc (\$21.99)**. I found this 100% Chenin Blanc very complex and enchanting. It is made in a fresh, crisp and dry style and yet embraces the fuller-bodied, rich-textured side of the variety. Aged twelve months in barriques, the wine displays subtle hints of vanilla alongside honeyed stone-fruit aromas. A bright minerality and fresh acidity reflect the cool climate and add nice balance to the rich weight of the palate. The pairing options for this wine are numerous, and would include creamy cow cheeses such as Brie, rich fish dishes, roasted chicken and potatoes, or a quiche Lorraine.

This month's red is as food friendly as our white. One hundred percent Syrah, grown on granitic soils in the hot, dry region of the Côtes Catalanes, the **2016 Gilles Troullier "Boreal" Côtes Catalanes (\$37.99)** is deeply colored, rich and almost dense on the palate. It's a powerful wine, yet it comes across with an effortless balance. Winemaker Gilles Troullier is a native of the Rhône Valley and worked there for many years, and he was drawn to the Roussillon by the incredible value and quality of the terroir. The small region where Gilles Troullier's vineyards are located was formerly famous for the dessert wine Maury, and has been largely overlooked after the general decline in dessert wine production. The region remains abundant in a variety of textbook soils, with a great climate for top-tier wine production. It was near the small village of Trevillach that Gilles found a half-hectare vineyard of Syrah growing in ideal conditions, in granitic soils on an east-facing slope.

Gilles named this wine "Boreal" after the north wind that buffets the small plot continually. The grapes grown here are small and intense. The vineyard is head-pruned and must be harvested and tended entirely by hand. Gilles uses native yeasts for fermentation in concrete vats, and ages the wine in neutral oak barrels. The result is a stunning, powerful yet layered Syrah that is stylistically reminiscent of the Northern Rhône, yet has more intensity.



For Jean-Noël Millon, winemaking means being close to the land, and he works both in his vineyards and cellar year 'round.



Gilles Troullier's "Boreal" Syrah comes from a unique, half-hectare plot of head-trained Syrah vines planted in granitic soils.

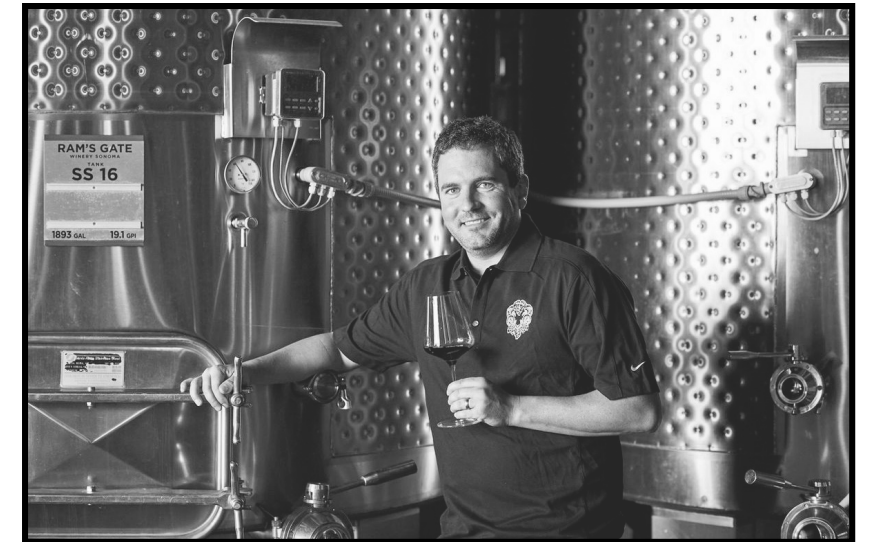
Signature Red Club

We talk a lot in the wine world about windows for drinking. If you're laying down a wine to cellar, it's a bit of a gamble deciding when to open it. Will it drink best in five years? Ten? The truth is, wines evolve. Sometimes they go through dull periods, and sometimes they hit a beautiful balance of flavors. The right window is can be hard to pinpoint and it's also a bit of a personal preference. Both wines I've selected this month have a few years of age on them and are drinking perfectly. Will they evolve further? Likely so, but if you want a wine that you don't have to cellar to enjoy, here you are.

We'll look first at the **2015 Ram's Gate "Hyde Vineyard" Carneros Syrah (\$24.99)**.

I was introduced to Ram's Gate last year, when we first tasted their wines for the club and fell in love with their elegant Syrahs. Ram's Gate is a relatively new winery, but since their founding in 2011 they have drawn acclaim for their classically styled wines, made in some of the best terroirs of Napa and Sonoma. Ideally situated on the gentle slopes above San Pablo Bay, Hyde Vineyard is one of the best regarded sites in Carneros. The Syrah grown here is cool climate, influenced by the breezes off the bay. The fruit for the Ram's Gate expression comes from the northeastern side of the vineyard, where the sunlight is strong and the Syrah grapes enjoy a long growing season, making for dark fruit with classic peppercorn and smoked meat notes. To me the wine is just hitting its stride. The tannins are still present, and are now adding a pleasant texture rather than anything too aggressive. The fruit has begun to lean more toward the savory side, with gamey notes showing though and complementing the intense blueberry and blackberry fruit. I always go for grilled meats with Syrah, and this will be a great pairing for grilled lamb.

Our second wine is made by another interesting veteran in the wine world. Judd Wallenbrock has experience in almost every aspect of the wine business, and worked for Mondavi in one form or another for decades. He currently oversees the C. Mondavi and Family branch of the Mondavi empire, but for several years before this he ran his own micro winery, Humanitas. Based out of a lovingly named "ShedTeau" in his backyard, Humanitas was Judd's foray into small-scale craft winemaking, with a goal of supporting local charities. Unfortunately the Humanitas label has been sold, but luckily for us, we were able to buy some of the library wines recently. Tasting a couple of vintages, we were most impressed with the **2013 Humanitas "Rio Vista Vineyard" Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir (\$24.99)**. Judd used his connections to



Winemaker Joe Neilsen spent over a decade honing his skills at Donelan Family wines before joining the Ram's Gate team.



Judd Wallenbrock has years of experience selling, managing and marketing wine. His Humanitas label represents the passion for wine and people that he's carried into every aspect of his career.

source fruit from some of the top vineyards in the Central Coast, and the fruit for this wine comes from the well-respected Rio Vista Vineyard, on the eastern side of the Santa Rita Hills AVA. With almost eight years of age since the vintage date, this wine is absolutely singing in the glass. The fruit is still lush and full on the palate, but it is tempered by stunning savory notes of mushroom and forest floor. The acidity is still fresh and bright, making this a great food wine. I love the way this Pinot is drinking now, and it's a great example of how a fuller bodied Pinot can age gracefully and retain a beautiful balance if made well.

Premium Club

I love the challenge of food and wine pairing. There's something divine about getting the combination just right and planning a special meal around a wine, or vice versa. But if truth be told, more often than not I tend to drink wine on its own, cocktail style. I haven't always got time to plan a special dinner, and most nights I'd like to have a glass of wine handy that is intellectually stimulating, yet effortless. Something enjoyable entirely in its own right. This month's selections are just that. These two wines have style that is both seamless and intriguing.

This month's red is the **2015 Renwood Fiddletown Zinfandel (\$14.99)**. Amador County has made a reputation for itself for quality Zinfandel, and Fiddletown is particularly recognized in the Zin world. In the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, Fiddletown is one the highest elevation wine-growing regions in Amador County, and boasts volcanic soils of sandy clay loam from decomposed granite. Most vineyards here are dry-farmed so the vines have to struggle, sending roots deep into the volcanic soils. This lends complexity and intensity to the fruit. The sunlight hours are high, giving the berries the opportunity to ripen fully. For me, Zinfandel goes one of two ways: Either it's overdone, cloying and too boisterous, or it's charming and intriguing with pretty red fruits and a nice touch of pepper. Needless to say, this Zinfandel falls in the latter category. I tasted it among several other Zins, and it stopped me in my tracks. This does what good Zinfandel should do. It's at once friendly and complex, pretty and bold, full and delicate. It's a treat to pair this with barbecue or pizza, or simply enjoy it on its own. For me, this is the ideal red to have on hand.

I'm also pretty excited to present this month's white. One of our wine buyers, Keith Mabry, introduced me to the varietal Malagousia a few years ago, in a quick tasting focused on Greek wines. I fell head over heels in love with it. However, it's a challenge to get good pricing on wines like this, typically only imported in small quantities. Finally we can now feature the **2019 Domaine Zafeirakis "Microcosmos" Malagousia Tirnavos Greece (\$14.99)**. This stunning wine has become an almost weekly buy for me. Malagousia has a beautiful



Renwood vineyard is home to some very old Zinfandel vines, some of which are head trained. They grow more like bushes than traditional trellised vines.

aromatic quality, yet it's entirely dry here. Grassy and citrus-tinged, the wine shows ripe lychee and white peach, honeydew melon and a pop of lemongrass. Light bodied and dry to the bone, it's as refreshing a cocktail-style wine as you could ask for. Owner and proprietor Christos Zafeirakis made his first wine in 2005 after apprenticing with winemakers for several years in Italy and completing a master's in Oenology at the university of Milan. A native of Tirnavos, Christos comes from a family of vine growers, and he was the first in the region to establish an organic winery.



Christos Zafeirakis is proud of his native terroir. He champions local varieties such as the nearly extinct Limniona, and of course Malagousia.

Best Buy Wine Club

Running your own business is no joke. In the wine industry the rewards are slow, and turning a profit hardly happens overnight. It can be a roller coaster, but it can also be a dream come true. The wines we feature this month come from two very passionate winemakers, one in Bordeaux and one in Spain's Castilla y León region. Both have faced challenges running their wineries, but you can absolutely taste the passion and love in these wines. Finding producers like this is greatly rewarding for us as retailers, and I love sharing them with you, our club members.

After completing his Oenology degree at the University of Bordeaux, Jacques Chardat set out to find a property he could call his own, somewhere to practice his art of winemaking. Bordeaux is hardly a land of undiscovered gems, yet still there is a tendency to overlook certain appellations. This is why Jacques sought out the Côtes de Bordeaux region on the Right Bank. Here just outside the city of Blaye, a strong vein of limestone runs through the countryside, and in these poor soils Jacques found the rundown Château Lacaussade Saint-Martin. The property, founded in the 19th century, was small, but gradually Jacques added to his holdings



Jacques Chardat shares his passion for wine with his wife Sabrina, who has joined him in every effort since their acquisition of Château Lacaussade Saint-Martin in 1991.

and improved the farming, aiming at sustainable practices. Today he is a bright star in this little-known region, and his **2018 Lacassade Saint-Martin, Côtes de Bordeaux (\$9.99)** far outperforms its modest price point. The wine is at once powerful, dense and harmonious. It displays huckleberry and sweet baking spices on the nose with a classic tannin structure and full weight on the palate. It will doubtless age gracefully, so if you enjoy it now (with a good decant!) you may want to stash a few bottles away to age for another five to ten years. Jacques recommends pairing this with duck breast and porcini mushrooms.

Our next wine is from Castilla y León, a large region that encompasses a variety of terroirs and is known as the birthplace of inexpensive, largely unremarkable Spanish wines. That's an unfortunate association, as many of the unique terroirs in this region are well suited to high-quality winegrowing. Some areas, such as the Rueda D.O., are esteemed more highly, and that's where that entrepreneur and enthusiast Eduardo Poza founded Bodegas Verdeal in 2007.

Eduardo is a major proponent of the Verdejo grape, and has dedicated the focus of his winery to producing top-tier Verdejo, highlighting the strengths of this native Rueda variety. Originally from North Africa, Verdejo has been cultivated in Rueda since the 11th century. For many years it was the basis of a sherry-like wine, but it makes an excellent dry white in its own right. Eduardo's **2019 Verdeal "Ayre" Verdejo Rueda (\$9.99)** is crisp, clean and modern in style with bright gooseberry and lemongrass aromas. On the palate it is lighter bodied with clean citrus notes and stone fruit. This is a great weeknight sipper, and I hope it will become a favorite for you as it has for me.



The gravelly soils of Rueda are poor in nutrients, forcing the vines to dig deep into the earth for sustenance, and the soils also provide great drainage for the vineyards.



Eduardo Poza has tested out several clones of Verdejo in his determination to find the best form of the variety.

Club Italiano

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

This month's first wine comes from G.D. Vajra, whose wine labels have always required some explanation. I can see the puzzled look in the eyes of a customer—it's that letter J, so confusing. Vaj-ruh, Va-hara? More often than not it's "what do you think of this one" with a finger pointing vigorously at the label. Well, the name is pronounced Vai-ruh. In Italian J is another form of the letter I. Same with the Y—they all have the exact same sound. Enough about the name because this is one of my favorite Piedmontese wineries.

The **2018 G.D. Vajra Langhe Nebbiolo (\$22.99)** is in Giuseppe Vaira's words their "quest for the innocence of Nebbiolo, its purest expression". Achieving their pure expression of Nebbiolo is helped by the fact that in 1971 Aldo Vaira, when still in Enology school, began farming the vineyards sustainably, organic certified. Now for almost 50 years, the Vaira family has been way ahead of the curve. They live for the farming aspects, for it is in nature that one finds balance. The grapes for this 2018 were harvested in the first three weeks of October, and this vintage is being compared to 2016 or even 2004, two spectacular years. The Vajra vineyards are at one of the highest portions of Barolo, a location that gives their wines more finesse, balance, and a lightness (not to be taken as thin) with great lift in the finish. The wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel vats and then sees a brief passage in neutral wood. This is a wine that cries out for food—I like to say you need a fork to drink it. Try it with a wild-mushroom risotto.

Back in Spring 2005 I was at Vinitaly and I was looking for a Prosecco producer for K&L to import. I had contacted a half a dozen or so to visit at the fair and made appointments to taste at their stands. Alberta and Silvano Follador said they didn't have a stand but they would come and meet me nonetheless. It was a rainy, cold, gray day in Verona and they came all bundled up with big heavy jackets. They are tiny folks and the jackets seemed bigger than they were. They were so young, fresh faced and cute they reminded me of Hobbits (but I didn't look at their feet). We went through the normal pleasantries and I asked where we were going to taste their wine. Silvano said, we didn't bring



On top of how good the Vajra wines are, the family behind them is exceptionally warm. Yes, their surname is spelled Vaira with a i!



From left: K&L's John Downing, Greg St. Clair and Mike Parres, with brother and sister Silvano and Alberta Follador.

any wine, we just wanted to see if we liked you, and we do, so we'll send you samples. Well, I'm thankful that I passed the test, as we at K&L have been in love with this producer ever since. This is the purest form of Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore that I have ever tasted. You might be used to Extra Dry versions of Prosecco, the most common type. The **2019 Silvano Follador Prosecco Superiore Extra Brut (\$16.99)** is even drier. Containing less than 2 grams per liter of residual sugar, it is bone-dry! Silvano and Alberta inherited four hectares of vineyards, about 9.6 acres (including 3.6 acres of the Caritzze vineyard) and they have farmed it bio-dynamically ever since. They also make a Champagne Method Prosecco, and if you like this one you should give that one a try as well.

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. 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.

Le Club Français Previous Offerings

2010 Grand Pontet, St-Emilion @ \$39.99 per bottle

2010 is widely recognized as a powerhouse vintage—one for the long haul. As we turn the corner into their second decade of life, some of the wines are starting to hit their stride, while others are still reticent and need further aging. The Grand Pontet is just beginning to drink well, and it does still have a long life ahead of it. Full-bodied and luscious, it's laden with ripe blackberry fruits, savory tobacco and licorice notes and ripe, softened tannin. It's seamless and bold, not shy. It's going to require something decadent to pair with, such as filet mignon or some other black-tie dish with plenty of flavor and rich umami presence.

2019 Domaine Tabordet “Le Champs de Vignes” Pouilly-Fumé @ \$19.99 per bottle

What I love about the best examples of Pouilly-Fumé is the combination of a pleasantly round palate weight, lean minerality and exuberant aromatics. That profile is seen in spades here, and the wine leaves nothing lacking. Shellfish makes a natural pairing, but it will also show beautifully with a whole array of dishes from risotto to paella to salad, or a simple charcuterie board.

2018 Guy Farge “Passion d'une Terrasse” St. Joseph @ \$34.99 per bottle

A restrained and elegant interpretation of northern Rhône Syrah, this wine features aromas 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.

2018 Guy Farge “Grain de Silex” Saint-Péray Blanc @ \$24.99 per bottle

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.

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.

Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

2017 Domaine de Bosquets Gigondas @ \$24.99 per bottle

This wine combines classic Gigondas earthiness with a clean, modern feel. Structured and poised with bright acidity and well-articulated tannin, it strikes a balance with full palate weight and dark blackberry fruit, accented by savory herbal notes. Already open and showing great integration, this will undoubtedly evolve and develop beautifully over the next decade. Julien, the winemaker, recommends having it with filet mignon, and has a secondary recommendation of roasted leg of lamb.

2016 Buehler “Estate” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$24.99 per bottle

A quality Napa Cabernet under \$40 is a bargain in my book, and this wine far outperforms its price, especially at the discounted club rate. Buehler wines stick to a classic style that is more difficult to come by in today's Napa Cab scene. More reminiscent of Dunn or Heitz Vineyard, the Buehler wines achieve a great balance between powerful dark fruit and classic Napa eucalyptus and menthol notes, and the 2016 is no exception. This is old-school Napa Cabernet and has the right bones to age like a Bordeaux. That said, it is fairly structured now and I'd highly recommend decanting it for an hour before enjoying, as it will benefit from some air and open up nicely.

2016 Tongue in Groove “Cabal Vineyard” Pinot Noir @ \$21.99 per bottle

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.

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.

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

2016 Iris Vineyards “Chalice Vineyard” Willamette Valley Chardonnay @ \$14.99 per bottle

I love a Chardonnay with a little well-balanced oak and a creamy palate. It’s a perfect comfort wine and goes so well with many classic dishes. Iris Vineyard’s expression of this variety is perfectly poised. It’s creamy and weighty on the palate without being too heavy or overly buttery. Lovely orchard fruits of baked apple, pear and peach show through brilliantly on the palate, complementing the light toast and vanilla notes from the oak. Enjoy this charming Chardonnay alongside a roast chicken and potatoes, a pot pie.

2009 Château Sainte-Marguerite, Médoc @ \$14.99 per bottle

Predominately Cabernet with some Merlot in the mix as well, this Left-Bank Bordeaux is restrained in style with plenty of red berry fruit, forest floor and savory tobacco notes. After a decade-plus of aging, this wine is mellowed beautifully with pleasantly softened tannin, integrated acidity and fruit that still shows a surprising freshness. Clyde recommends having this with pork roast.

2020 Te Whare Ra “Toru” White Field Blend Marlborough @ \$15.99 per bottle

This wine 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.

Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2018 Hahn “Founder’s” California Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$9.99 per bottle

This is one of the best values in California Cabernet that I can think of. The nose is brimming with rich red fruit and sweet baking spice. On the palate it shows blackberry and red plum with a full body and ripe tannins. If you’re on the hunt for a familiar, easy-drinking everyday Cabernet, this is the wine for you.

2019 Domaine Begude Sauvignon Blanc Pay d’Oc @ \$9.99 per bottle

This stunning wine from the South of France is vinified in stainless steel to preserve a fresh, bright profile. Snappy and vibrant, this it shows notes of gooseberry, lemongrass and citrus zest on the palate, and is a great match to vegetable dishes. One of my favorite pairings for the wine is a fresh herbed goat cheese salad.

2018 Brunel de la Gardine Côtes-du-Rhône @ \$8.99 per bottle

This 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.

2017 Xanadu “Paradise” Cabernet Sauvignon Margaret River @ \$10.99 per bottle

This Cabernet is a great balance of luscious dark berry fruit with hints of eucalyptus, cedar and tobacco and classic structure. It 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.

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.

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.

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

2018 Poderi Luigi Einaudi "Vigna Tecc" Dolcetto Dogliani @ \$21.99 per bottle

Although Poderi Luigi Einaudi makes some rocking Barolo, it was founded in Dogliani, a quaint little village that's about six or seven miles south of the village of Barolo and is known for Dolcetto. The wine is fermented in a combination of stainless steel and concreted vats and then aged in large oak barrels. This is a powerful wine with structure and woody aromatics. I love this wine with polenta and grilled sausages, a perfect match.

2019 Quaresima "Diamante" Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore @ \$17.99 per bottle

Quaresima is a tiny producer in Ancona, and this wine has never gotten out of the Marche until now. The winery is run by two brothers, Donatello and Ivo, who took over for their father Aurelio. They have been producing this, their top wine, from a vineyard 25 miles to the west of Ancona, at more than 1400 feet, planted more than 80 years ago. The brothers describe their wine as having the typical flavors of times gone by: full-bodied, layered flavors with a touch of almond in the finish. This is perfect to drink by itself or with a piece of grilled halibut.

2019 Ca' del Baio Langhe Nebbiolo @ \$21.99 per bottle

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. This wine is made from young vines in the Barbaresco vineyards, planted in 2008 and 2009. Stainless steel fermented and aged, this wine is made to be fresh, clean and easy to drink, as compared to a Barbaresco.

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.

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

Forget-Brimont Brut Rosé Champagne @ 34.99 per bottle

This rosé is composed of 40% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay from the Grand Cru vineyards of Verzenay and Mailly, the northernmost of all the top-tier vineyards in Champagne, and 40% Meunier from the Premier Cru of Villers-Allerand. This wine is aged for three years on the lees. It benefits from 40% reserves, and it gets its color from just 5% of intense Verzenay rouge. The Champagne has a nice light salmon color and a creamy, sourdough character with just the right amount of subtle strawberry fruit. This Champagne is wonderful on its own and will also go well with smoked fish or charcuterie.

2012 Lété-Vautrain Brut Champagne @ 34.99 per bottle

The small 2012 vintage is thought of as a miracle in the Champagne region. Everything had gone wrong in the spring and early summer, but a golden autumn gave concentrated, complex and powerful wines in the end. This wine is composed of 40% Chardonnay, 40% Meunier and 20% Pinot Noir and aged for seven years on the lees. It has the brioche and cream richness that top vintage Champagne should, with top-class texture and a very long, detailed finish. I couldn't believe it when they made me the deal to get this one in the club! Try it on its own or with a white fish dish.