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May 2021

Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

Welcome to the merry month of May! Here in the San Francisco Bay Area, May is a month of gorgeous weather and the promise of a long summer ahead. As you begin planning for summer getaways and various happenings, it's a good time to take stock of your wine fridge and make sure you are armed for the sunny season. Our May selections encompass a wide variety of countries and styles and will help you ensure that you have the right wines on hand.

The Club Français features wines from two dynamic winemakers who've really made their mark in the wine world. The first is Jacky Blot of Domaine de la Butte in the Loire Valley. His Cabernet Franc expressions are like none other. The second is Bruno Colin of Domaine Bruno Colin in Chassagne-Montrachet. It's not easy to stand out in Burgundy, and Bruno's wines are head and shoulders above many competitors.

For our Signature Red Club members we are featuring two producers new to K&L, recently discovered by our buying team. The first comes from the Rhône Valley, and the wine is a charming expression of Gigondas, more elegant than I've found anywhere else. Our second feature is from Hay Shed Hill, a producer from Australia's Margaret River who is producing world-class Bordeaux blends.

Our Premium Club is getting two delicious and food-friendly selections from some current favorite producers. Fromm Vineyards in New Zealand is a pioneering estate with one of the best winemakers in the region. The passion and dedication to the craft is evident in the wines. Skylark too is the project of passionate and consummate professionals, two sommeliers who've brought their wealth of knowledge into the winemaking sphere.

In the Best Buy Club, both wines we feature are the perfect candidates for your summer staples. The easy-drinking Barbera is a fun addition to any wine-lover's table, perfect for almost any occasion from patio sipping to a dinner with friends. The Sauvignon Blanc is also a great summer wine with crisp, refreshing qualities that keep you coming back for more.

Italian wine lovers will be treated this month to two less common Italian varietals. One is a Carignane from Sardinia, a truly unique wine with exceptional character and complexity. The second is a lovely Friulano, one of Italy's best kept secrets in white wine.

Whatever the wine in your glass this month, may the sunny days ahead be filled with cheer!

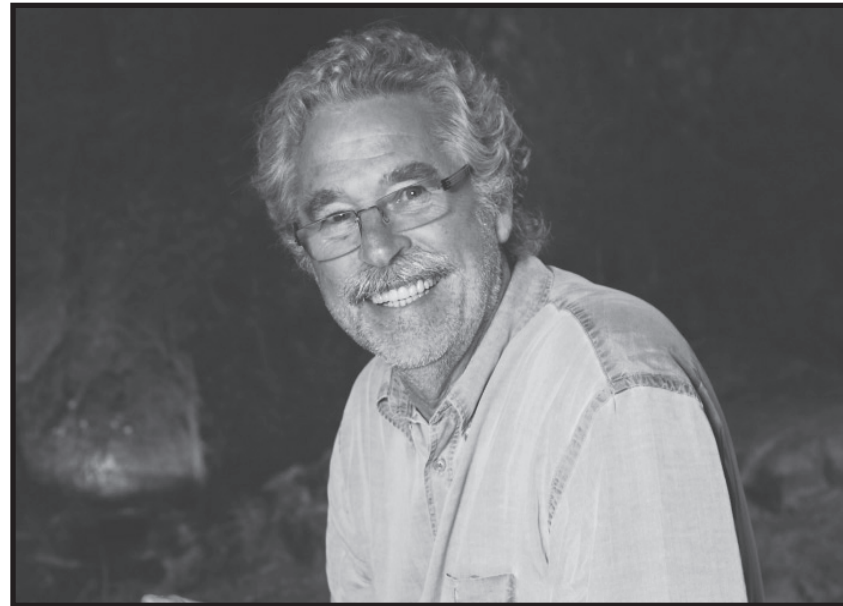
Heather Gowen, K&L's Wine Club director
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Le Club Français

A wine is as much about the winemaker as the terroir. In France, where many wineries are passed down generation to generation, the importance of the winemaker can be lost in the wake of both family history and house style. Still, some winemakers stand out in their surroundings, making incredible wine in very individual styles. We've chosen to highlight the wines of two such men this month. The first is a Bourgueil made by one of the most dynamic winemakers in the Loire Valley, and the second a stunning white Burgundy, crafted by a man who's passionate about making his mark despite the pressures and history of an inherited business.

Jacky Blot is behind two original and dynamic domaines in the Loire Valley. In 1988, Jacky purchased a small plot of old-vine Chenin Blanc in Montlouis-sur-Loire, and introduced what was at the time pretty novel in the Loire Valley: organic farming. Jacky's commitment to organic farming and winemaking has continued over the years, and he's also added a second domaine, Domaine de la Butte, located in neighboring Bourgueil and home to his expressive, site-specific Cabernet Francs. The **2018 Domaine de la Butte "Les Côteaux du Levant" Bourgueil (\$27.99)** comes from an old-vine parcel in Bourgueil with ideal southern exposure. All the vines planted here are 50-plus years old, and bear fruit of great intensity and minerality. The wine absolutely requires decanting, but after a half hour in the decanter it opens up beautifully and reveals a surprisingly full bodied, spice-laden palate with bright red fruits, innate savory qualities and well-integrated tannin. One of the challenges of Cabernet Franc in the cool climate of Bourgueil is to produce wines with enough body and fruit to balance out the variety's tendency toward bell pepper and astringent tannin. Jacky is a master of his wine, and has managed not only to produce a perfectly balanced Cabernet Franc here, but to present it with a flourish of layered and nuanced flavors. This wine will absolutely age for the long haul, but I'm enjoying it young with braised lamb.

Our second producer is Bruno Colin, of the Colin-Deléger house in Burgundy. Bruno and his brother Philippe originally worked under their father, Michel Colin-Deléger. Then in 2003, the family decided to split the estate three ways, with Philippe and Bruno each launching their own domaines and Michel continuing on with his own. This quintessentially Burgundian arrangement left each brother with very small holdings in a variety of vineyards across the Côte d'Or. Bruno has taken up the challenge with zeal, and today produces some of the best quality wines in Burgundy, all in a very distinctive style. The **2017 Domaine Bruno Colin Bourgogne Blanc (\$31.99)**



Jacky Blot's work in Bourgueil has breathed new life into the region, and his expressive wines both here and in Montlouis-sur-Loire have earned him worldwide acclaim.



A believer in barrel aging, Bruno Colin is particular about his barrels and works with only the finest French Oak coopers for all of his whites.

comes from some of Bruno's vineyard holdings in Santenay, rich in limestone. The minerality and lifted aromatics speak to this soil profile. Bruno is also a believer in oak for his wines, and this one saw ten months in French oak barrels, of which 20% were new. This introduces a beautiful, subtle creamy and nutty note to the wine along with vanilla and almond. Also displayed are yellow pear and Honeycrisp apple, with plenty of texture and a vibrant, lingering finish.

Signature Red Club

I love discovering a new producer, especially when the wines are stunning. Both of the wines for this month are from wineries that we haven't featured before in the K&L Clubs. While it was fun tasting and learning about the producers, what I love most about these two wines is how well they capture the strengths of their respective regions. Gigondas is one of the superstars of the Rhône, and this small appellation boasts some of the best values in the valley. The Gigondas that we feature this month shines a whole new light on the region, painting its more delicate side. Our second wine is as classically structured and majestic a Cabernet as you could ask for, and comes, surprisingly, from Australia's Margaret River region.

Constructed in the 16th Century, Château la Croix des Pins has a lengthy and complex history, and has always been home to vines. In 2010, the estate was taken over by Jean Pierre Valade and Eric Petitjean. They have invested in the estate, farming and making the wines organically and extending the vineyard holdings. The vineyards in Gigondas are the best that they farm, and this month's **2016 Château La Croix des Pins "Les Dessous des Dentelles" Gigondas (\$25.99)** represents the best of their production. I love the elegant and beautiful aromatic qualities of this wine. The nose is bursting with lush red berry fruits and a sprinkling of fresh ground black pepper from the Syrah. On the palate the wine has perfect tannin and acidity structure to complement the bright red berry fruit. It is just starting to develop a savory side, and has more aging potential as well. While the wine drinks beautifully all on its own, the tannin and acidity structure make it an ideal accompaniment to red meats or seasoned and grilled pork.

Our second wine hails from Margaret River, Australia. I love this region, and its classically



The vineyards of Château la Croix des Pins in Gigondas are planted on steep slopes in the heart of the Montmirail Dentelles.



Michael Kerrigan came to Hay Shed Hill with a wealth of winemaking experience, and continues to make expressive wines at this unique location.

structured, coast-influenced wines. The Willyabrup Valley is one of the best sub-regions of Margaret River, and here, just five kilometers from the coast, is the Hay Shed Hill vineyard. In the afternoon a cool breeze comes off the Indian Ocean and counterbalances the warmth of the sun, making for a premier growing region. Cabernet and Merlot particularly shine here, and this month's **2018 Hay Shed Hill "Morrison's Gift" Bordeaux Blend Margaret River (\$23.99)** is as classic a Cabernet blend as you could ask for. Michael Kerrigan, the owner and winemaker at Hay Shed Hill, is one of the most respected winemakers in the country. After nearly 30 years making wine, with almost 15 at Hay Shed Hill, Mike knows his vineyards like no other and crafts his wine with precision and artistry. The wine is perfectly poised with just the right amount of tannin structure complementing the exuberant plum and blackberry notes on the palate. If you've yet to fall in love with Margaret River Cabernet, now is the time. This lovely wine isn't likely to last long on our shelves.

Premium Club

Launching a winery is an intense labor of love. Most winery owners realize their dreams only with much patience, sweat and determination. Some will continue in another career alongside the winery, or may need to balance an existing family business on the side. Both of the wineries we are featuring this month are the pet projects of dreamers, people who have pressed on to found their wineries despite the many demands of life.

Our red is a joint project of the two wine directors at the famous Boulevard Restaurant in San Francisco. John Lancaster and Robert Perkins are two industry veterans, with many accolades and a shared passion for light, aromatic whites and spicy, medium-bodied reds. While their experience and travels brought them into contact with many industry professionals including winemakers, growers and producers across the globe, John and Robert fostered a dream to make their own wine someday. What started as a one-barrel project back in 2002 quickly snowballed into the Skylark Wine Company, and today John and Robert balance their restaurant careers with their winery business. As can be expected from two such consummate professionals, the wines are phenomenal, beautifully balanced and great with food. The **2017 Skylark "Red Belly" North Coast Rhône Blend (\$14.99)** is a blend of 45% Carignane, 36% Grenache, and 19% Syrah. Inspired by the reds of Southern France and the Rhône Valley, the wine is medium bodied with pretty, red berry fruits and an earthy, smoky undertone. The acidity is fresh and bright, balancing out the sweet fruits of the palate, and the wine has a perfect tannin texture to lend it interest and depth, without dominating. Easily a new house favorite, this wine can pair with an array of weeknight meals from hamburgers to burritos or pizza.

Georg Fromm and winemaker Hätsch Kalberer are another pair of dreamers. They conceptualized and eventually founded Fromm Vineyards in the early 1990s in New Zealand's well-known Marlborough region.



One of the two founders of Skylark, Robert Perkins is an accomplished painter as well as a sommelier, and brings his passion for precision in art to bear on winemaking.

While the Fromms have had to return to Switzerland to care for their family winery in Malans, Hätsch Kalberer remains on at Fromm Vineyards, creating the same visionary wines that launched the business. Fromm Vineyards has made a name for itself with beautifully crafted Pinot Noir that can age for decades, and some fun whites, including a classic Sauvignon Blanc that's made with the same care and precision by winemaker Hätsch Kalberer. The **2019 Fromm Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough (\$14.99)** is bright, fresh and grassy as are most textbook New Zealand examples of this variety. However, Hätsch vinifies some of his wine in old oak barrels, which adds to the texture and body of the wine, giving it a bit more weight on the palate. I love the contrast here between bright, tangy grapefruit and lemongrass notes, and a slightly creamier palate with beautiful texture and depth. This is a great seafood pairing—beautiful with shellfish. It's also a great accompaniment to an al fresco picnic of goat cheese, cured meats and olives.



Fromm Vineyards is located in a premier area of Marlborough.

Best Buy Wine Club

When I think of a house wine, I have a particular profile in mind. Wines that have enough fruit to be easy drinking, enough acidity to keep you coming back for more, and enough interest to keep your brain engaged. If a wine has all these characteristics, in my book it's the perfect candidate to be a regular item in my wine fridge. I love finding wines that fit this profile, especially when they are affordable and punch above their weight. This month's Best Buy picks are exactly that. Both wines will get you in the mood for summer weather with their easy-drinking, fun profile, and will have you returning quickly for another glass.

It's been far too long since we featured Italian wine in the Best Buy Club, and I'm quite excited to



A third-generation winegrower in the Roero and Alba regions who inherited much knowledge from his parents and grandparents, Marco Porello really knows his vineyards.

introduce you to this month's **2019 Ca' Gialla Barbera d'Alba (\$9.99)**. Proprietor Marco Porello is the current generation owner of Ca' Gialla, and produces an array of stunning wines from his 15 hectares of vineyard land. His vineyards are located in the villages of Canale and Tanone, the former known for its marine-based clay soils and the latter for its limestone. Marco finishes his Barbera in a combination of stainless steel and concrete vats, which create a pleasant, fruit-forward, fresh and easy drinking style. This wine speaks of summer nights to me—it's full bodied but still light on its feet with fresh acidity and a nice tannin structure. The red fruits and savory components are a pleasure to the palate, and it's easy to drink all on its own or with finger foods.



Planted to Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc, the Kuranui vineyard sees very hot days and very cool nights. Good for the fruit, and challenging for the vineyard managers.

Nothing speaks to warm weather and sunshine more than a fresh, crisp glass of Sauvignon Blanc, and this month we've come across a great value from New Zealand to toast in the warm weather. The **2020 Kuranui Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough (\$9.99)** might be the best thing that came out of the year 2020. With our Southern Hemisphere friends harvesting their grapes during our springtime, the New Zealand wines are often the first of the year to hit our shelves, and I love what this vintage is showing for the Marlborough region. Kuranui is a single-vineyard site just south of Blenheim, and the name is a Maori word meaning "great treasure." Planted in 2003, Kuranui produces vibrant Sauvignon Blanc with tropical fruit notes balanced by fresh, citrus-tinged acidity and classic snap pea and verbena notes. Pleasantly round on the palate, the wine is quite balanced and avoids the pitfalls of being either too astringent or too sweet. Kuranui experiences large diurnal swings with hot days that allow the fruit to ripen and develop the more tropical notes, and cool nights which preserve the acidity in the berries. The result is a stunning Sauvignon Blanc, one of the most balanced and quaffable examples of the varietal that I've seen from Marlborough. It's a quick favorite for me and I hope you'll enjoy it as well!

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

I think the **2017 Tenuta la Sabbiosa Carignano del Sulcis "Su Piede Franco" (\$29.99)** is the first wine from Sardinia that we've had in the Italian Club, and I'm sure you'd say it's about time! This grape variety Carignano (Carignane) came to Sardinia via the Spanish occupation, which lasted for several hundred years. It often ends up as a blending grape so you don't always see it as a single varietal. Tenuta la Sabbiosa is a small winery that Tessa Gelisio and Massimo Puscaddu have saved from extinction. This southwestern region of Sardinia is slowly disappeared enologically speaking; the grape in this region produces low yields and fell out of favor a bit. When I first tasted this wine I was blown away. In general I am not a fan of low-acid, very ripe wines, and that's what this wine is, but the definition in its massive body was surprising. The winery is located on the island of Sant'Antioco, and these vineyards are literally on the beach. You might think that would do a disservice to the vine, but it restrains the natural vigor of the vine. These vineyards produce one bottle of wine per vine, a pretty low yield. You also have to deal with the Mistral winds, the salt spray and perpetual drought conditions—it's amazing they can grow anything. One of the unique things about these vines is

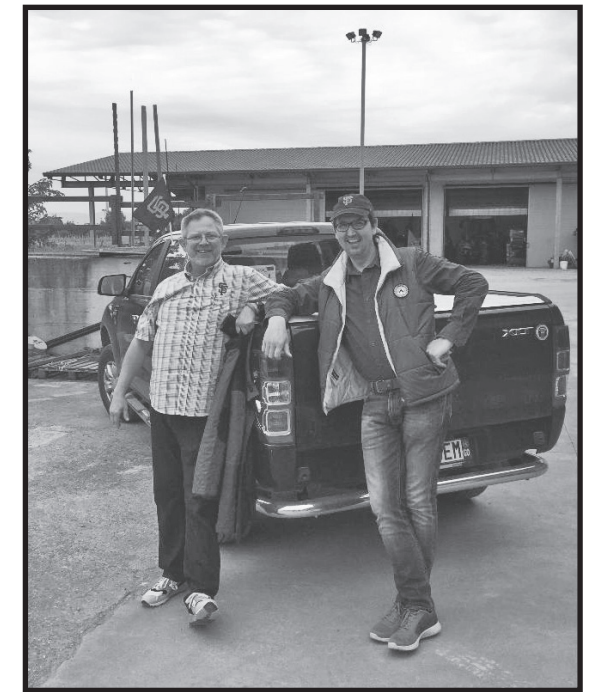
that because of the sandy soil the root-louse scourge of Phylloxera never took hold here. So all of these wines are on their own roots or "Su Piede Franco." I find this wine fascinating. It has a luxurious palate feel, just rolls across your tongue, yet it has real definition and even lift on the back end. This big, luxuriously textured wine is perfect to pair with a big hunk of Parmigiano Reggiano or your favorite barbecue fare.

I met Giovanni Blason almost twenty years ago when he was still wet behind the ears. He was just starting off, taking his family's vineyard production to wine production. His winery is just outside of the town of Gradisca, right along the Slovenian border. This area was the site of one of WW I's bloodiest battles, known as the 12 Battles of the Isonzo. It

was the Austrians vs. Italians and was mostly a stalemate with a lot of bloodletting. Giovanni's vineyards are an iron-rich, pebbly soil that is reddish, like remnants of the bloody battles. He still finds helmets and spent shell casings throughout the vineyard. The flagship of Friulian wines is without a doubt the Tocai Friulano. Since 2007 you can't call it Tocai Friulano; now it is just Friulano. That's an offshoot of a decades-old lawsuit. The Hungarian government was trying to protect their wine region of Tokaj. Personally, I think the name change was a step forward, easier for most folks to figure out—and truthfully Tocai Friulano was never well enough known for a change to make a difference. Anyway, Friulano is a great fresh start. It is also known as Sauvignon Vert or Sauvignonasse, not to be confused with Sauvignon Blanc—it is fuller bodied and far less aromatic. I have always found it has more white flower and peachy character with glints of tarragon, and it is decidedly full bodied. Giovanni's **2019 Blason Friulano Isonzo del Friuli (\$9.99)** is made from an old masal selection of the oldest vines in the vineyard. They produce a sensational wine. The wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel with ten to twelve days of skin contact that gives the wine a little more texture. It spends six months in the tank with regular battonage (stirring the lees) adding complexity to the flavor spectrum. I'd try it with your favorite fish dish, or with prosciutto. Giovanni says San Daniele prosciutto is his favorite accompaniment.



Vineyard on the beach, Tenuta la Sabbiosa, Sardinia.



Mike Parres and Giovanni Blason, two of the biggest fans of the San Francisco Giants!

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

2016 Fombrauge, Saint Emilion @ \$31.99 per bottle

Unusually for St. Emilion, Château Fombrauge encompasses an entire 58.6 hectares of vineyard land. This large array of vineyards truly allows M. Magrez’s winemaking team to highlight the best of the Saint-Emilion appellation. They use the very best parcels to make the Grand Vin. The 2016 vintage is intense and elegant, with a sleek, modern profile full of luscious black fruits and bold tannin with hints of anise and mocha. Full-bodied and rich, this is absolutely a pairing for steak. I would recommend laying a few bottles down to age. The tannin will continue to integrate into the fruit, and the wine will evolve beautifully over the next decade.

2018 Château du Moulin-a-Vent “Les Terrasses du Château” Moulin-a-Vent @ \$27.99 per bottle

Moulin-a-Vent is one of the oldest appellations in Beaujolais and granite, rich in iron oxide, copper and manganese, adds significant complexity to the Gamay fruit grown on these sites. The resultant wines are stunning, with a power and depth that surprises. This wine is dark fruited, yet reminiscent of red cherries, powerful yet light on its feet, refreshing and light, yet structured and poised for aging. Drink it at cellar temperature or with a slight chill, and pair it with poultry.

2017 La Source du Ruault “La Coulée d’Aunis” Saumur-Champigny Blanc @ \$19.99 per bottle

100% Chenin Blanc, this wine is 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.

2016 Gilles Troullier “Boreal” Côtes Catalanes @ \$39.99 per bottle

Deeply colored, rich and almost dense on the palate, this is a powerful wine, yet it comes across with an effortless balance. Winemaker 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.

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.

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

2015 Inglenook Estate “1882” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$24.99 per bottle

It isn’t often that we can make a such a hallowed name available with club pricing, but thanks to our excellent Domestic buying team, we’ve managed to land this lovely 2015 vintage Cabernet. 2015 was a near perfect vintage in Napa, and the wine is drinking beautifully with just a hint of savory development coloring the dense, concentrated core of vibrant cassis fruit, olive, eucalyptus, and sweet oak spice. The tannin is still making itself known, and indeed the wine can age for another decade at least. If you’re interested in laying down some wine, you won’t have a better opportunity at this price to invest in a Napa classic.

2018 Michelini i Mufatto “GY” Malbec/Cabernet Franc Tupungato @ \$24.99 per bottle

Choosing to work with fruit from the high elevation Tupungato region, mother and son team Andrea and Manuel have devised a seamless blend of Malbec and Cabernet Franc, which highlights the strengths of the two varieties as well as the elegance of the region. The wine has gorgeous aromatics with cool blueberry fruit and a velvety mid palate, complemented by classic Cabernet Franc tannin structure and a slightly peppery finish. I could easily sip this wine all on its own, but it is extremely food friendly. It pairs particularly well with savory dishes that have a bit of umami presence such as wild mushroom or gamey meats.

2013 Humanitas “Rio Vista Vineyard” Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

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.

2015 Ram’s Gate “Hyde Vineyard” Carneros Syrah @ \$24.99 per bottle

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. 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.

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.

Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2016 Sebastiani “Gravel Bed Red” Sonoma County Bordeaux Blend @ \$16.99 per bottle

Cherry and red plum jump out of the glass, followed by subtle anise and black pepper notes. The tannins are still vibrant, and begging for a steak pairing. The finish has a pleasant mocha kiss which lingers delightfully on the palate. Silky and smooth, this wine is drinking beautifully right now, but you can also age it for another five years if you want to see how it develops further complexity. It’s a great match for any red meats, and grilled chicken or pork dishes too.

2016 DeLoach Russian River Valley Chardonnay @ \$12.99 per bottle

I was impressed by this wine’s classic Russian River character. Pure, unassuming orchard fruits of pear and Honeycrisp apple play on the palate, with a creamy and buttery profile from the time spent in oak. Classic in every respect, the wine is a great buy at this price, and is as iconic a picture of Russian River Chardonnay as you could ask for. Sip it on its own, or pair with a simple roast chicken.

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

2015 Domain Cabirau Côtes de Roussillon @ \$9.99 per bottle

This wine is about 70% Grenache, with Syrah and Carignan composing the balance. At just over five years from vintage date, the wine is absolutely singing in the glass. The Grenache fruit is still vibrant and full with nice red berry notes, and the Syrah and Carignan add a beautiful depth of earthy, gamey flavors and a nice peppery profile. The tannins have mellowed with age and the wine is just starting to show some beautiful savory development.

2018 Foxglove Central Coast Chardonnay @ \$9.99 per bottle

Creamy without being cloying, the wine presents ripe yellow pear and Honeycrisp apple notes, accompanied by a rounded and smooth texture on the palate. It finishes with the right pop of acidity, to keep the wine light on its feet and keep you coming back for more. You won’t find a more pleasant Chardonnay for under \$20, let alone the club price of \$9.99!

2018 Lacaussade Saint-Martin, Côtes de Bordeaux @ \$9.99 per bottle

This Right Bank Bordeaux 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. Winemaker Jacques Chardat recommends pairing this with duck breast and porcini mushrooms.

2019 Verdeal “Ayre” Verdejo Rueda @ \$9.99 per bottle

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. Odegas Verdeal’s expression of the grape is clean and modern in style with bright gooseberry and lemongrass aromas. On the palate it is lighter bodied with 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

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.

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.

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 G.D. Vajra Barbera d'Alba @ \$16.99 per bottle

One of my favorite producers in the Piedmont region, G.D. Vajra makes elegant Barolos, but the wine that they drink themselves on a daily basis is the Barbera d'Alba, along with their Dolcetto. I think you'll enjoy it very much!

2018 G.D. Vajra "Coste & Fossati" Dolcetto d'Alba @ \$22.99 per bottle

An extraordinary example of Dolcetto, this wine is one of the favorites of producer Giuseppe Vajra. It's a beautiful wine, and easy to drink on a regular basis!

2018 G.D. Vajra Langhe Nebbiolo @ \$22.99 per bottle

This wine is, in Giuseppe Vajra's words, their "quest for the innocence of Nebbiolo, its purest expression". 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.

2019 Silvano Follador Prosecco Superiore Extra Brut @ \$16.99 per bottle

Containing less than 2 grams per liter of residual sugar, this Prosecco is bone-dry! Silvano and Alberta Follador 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.

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

Pierre Mineral Mesnil "Vieillie En Fût" Grand Cru Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This 100% Mesnil Grand Cru Chardonnay Champagne is 50% 2014 from stainless steel, and 50% 2013 that was aged in 600-liter oak casks for a year. With six years of ageing on the lees, this wine has lovely brioche character, fresh Meyer lemon, and just a hint of vanilla from the large casks. The finish is as chalky, long and clean as they come.

2014 Jean-Jacques Lamoureux "Florine" Brut @ \$34.99 per bottle

This wine is composed of half Pinot Noir from fifty-year-old vines and half Chardonnay from forty-year-old vines. The Pinot is an old massal selection, while the Chardonnay is a clone from Chablis that does well in the Kimmeridgian soil that Les Riceys shares with Chablis. The wine has an understated, warm baguette nose and great savory black cherry Pinot flavor in the mouth. The best things about this wine are its easy, balanced, perfect texture and its great length.

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.