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October 2018

Hello K&L Wine Club Members,

Strange as it seems, October is here and autumn is in full swing. We've recently had a container arrive from France, with some fantastic Club Wines that I'm excited to share with you. Each of our three key clubs is going to have a Bordeaux this month along with some other fun selections, and of course it's a Champagne month as well, so don't forget to check out the new Champagne offers. And for our Italian lovers, Greg has picked some truly lovely Northern Italian wines for you from Piedmont and Lombardy. Don't forget that now is the time to sign up for our new Club Français, with shipments beginning in November!

In the Signature Red Club we're taking a look at "Place" and "Soil," two key elements in wine production that determine much of the character of the finished product. One of our wines comes from the famous clay soils of Pomerol, and the other from the sandy limestone soils of Santa Ynez Valley in California's Central Coast. Each wine exhibits unique characteristics that speak specifically of its place of origin and the soils it was grown in.

The Premium Club members will have fun with this month's wines, with the theme of "food pairing." Selected by some of our favorite foodies, both wines are great for experiments with pairing. The Bordeaux is a white wine of the more textured and savory style that works extremely well with a variety of recipes. The red is a Rhône blend with an emphasis on Syrah. We'll include some pairing suggestions and tasting notes from our two foodies.

Best Buy Club members can also look forward to a Bordeaux in this month's red—a killer deal from the Right Bank. Somewhat unusually for Bordeaux, this wine isn't aged in oak, but in concrete which gives it a fresher, brighter style with lovely berry fruit. Next to this we are featuring a Spanish classic: Verdejo. Not so well known in the US, this wine is really lovely and boasts complexity and texture while remaining crisp and refreshing.

For our Club Italiano members, Greg has picked out a high-end Barbera from a classic producer, a wine that might surprise you. His other selection is a varietal you would not expect in the Club Italiano—a Merlot. But this isn't any Merlot, this is a very cool Italian version from Lombardy and it's unlike anything you've tried. More on this intriguing wine inside.

In our Champagne Club, Gary is featuring a vintage selection from 2010 alongside a somewhat rare style of Champagne—a barrel-aged selection. Rare as barrel aging is in Champagne, it makes a beautiful wine with added layers of creamy texture and spice.

A quick note to Club Members who are on the lookout for a Special: Since the items can sell out quickly we've decided to publish them via email once a month rather than including them here in the print Newsletter. Don't forget to check your inbox for that Monthly Club Specials email.

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

Signature Red Collection Wine Club

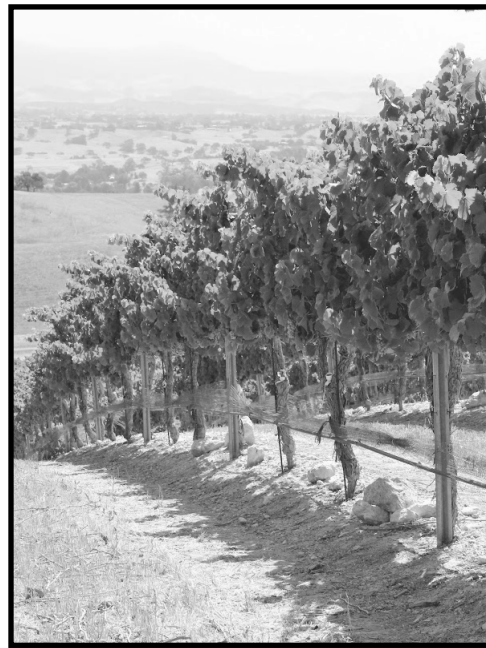
When I'm tasting wine, the element that I come back to time and again is Place. Nothing is more innate to a wine than its birthplace. Soils, climate, water levels, sunlight, all of the elements that go into the concept of *terroir* determine the final expression of a wine. This concept is built into the wine language of Europe, where most wines are named for place of origin rather than varietal. What makes a place into a world-class site for wine? This month we look at two locales and attempt to answer that question.

The first wine is from the region of Pomerol, one of the smallest appellations on the Right Bank in Bordeaux. The soils of Pomerol are dominated by clay, gravel and sand, with large iron deposits. The clay soils are particularly suited to Merlot, and generally the denser the clay, the more concentrated the resultant fruit. The dense clay soils of Pomerol make this appellation unique. The Merlot planted here is perfumed, concentrated and luscious. Pomerol has smaller portions of gravelly soils. Those are planted to Cabernet Franc, which is used to blend and balance the Merlot. The iron in the soils tends to lend a mineral depth and weight to the wines. Climatically, Pomerol shares with other Right Bank appellations a moderated maritime influence, which helps keep temperatures in an optimum range. While the summer days can get hot, it always cools off at night, which helps preserve acidity in the grapes.

We chose the **2015 La Croix de Mazeyres, Pomerol (\$24.99)** because it's a great example of the unique power of Pomerol. Winemaker Alain Moueix runs Château Mazeyres strictly along biodynamic principals, incorporating green growth between vine rows and encouraging fauna in the area. The winemaking follows the same principals of "less is more" and aims to direct and craft what is already existent in the fruit. Although they do use some French oak in the *élevation*, the primary vessels are neutral concrete and stainless steel. The resultant wine beautifully showcases the powerful smooth and dark fruit of Pomerol, well balanced by a classical structure with nicely integrated tannin. With the generous nature of the 2015 vintage coming into play, this wine is open and soft right off the bat. It's highly tempting to drink it right now, but I also expect great things of this wine down the line.

The second wine for this month also hails from an exceptional site, albeit less internationally renowned. Some of my colleagues and I recently had the opportunity to spend a few days exploring California's Central Coast, in particular the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez valleys. These two valleys are unusual for California in that they run east-west. This orientation lets them channel the cooling breezes from the Pacific much farther inland than is typical along the coast.

I was particularly intrigued by the Ballard Canyon AVA in Santa Ynez, where you have a perfect marriage of higher daytime temperatures, cool nights, and cool breezes off the ocean. The wine I selected for the Signature Club is a GSM (Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre) blend from the Tierra Alta vineyard in Ballard Canyon. Winemaker Adam Comartin is a lifelong Grenache fan; he loves to play with the varietal in all its forms and expressions. He also is a believer in the philosophy that place is primary in winemaking. The **2014 Comartin Cellars "Cuvee Cassidy" Santa Ynez Valley GSM (\$24.99)**, named for Adam's youngest daughter, is a unique expression of the Tierra Alta vineyard. The soils here are very fine and sandy over a limestone base, which lends to the power of the aromatics. It is a relatively hot site for the Santa Ynez Valley, with a beautiful steep slope that takes advantage of both the breezes off the ocean to maintain acidity levels, and the morning sun exposure to develop fully ripe berries. The resultant wine is beautiful. Aromatically full of bramble fruit, cassis, sage, thyme and plum, it transitions on the palate into a medium-bodied wine with smooth tannin and a slight gamey undertone. The finish is long and savory with continued notes of cassis and sage. It's in a perfect drinking window right now, and would be a great pairing for lamb.



The steeply sloping Tierra Alta vineyard sits on the western side of Ballard Canyon.

Premium Wine Club

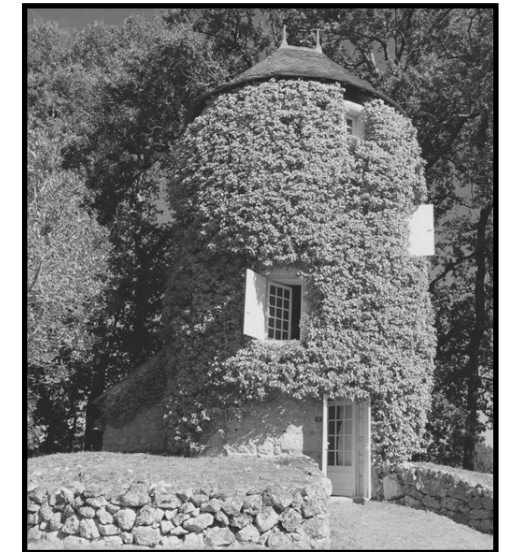
This month in the Premium Club, we are diving back into France with world-class wines from Bordeaux and the Rhône Valley. We all know that food and wine pairing can be fun. It's occasionally frustrating, but when you get it dead right it's extremely rewarding. No one knows this better than food critic and writer Patricia Wells, who lives in the picturesque Provençal village of Vaison la Romaine. She and her husband Walter own a 7.5 hectare vineyard called Clos Chanteduc, and together produce one of the best food wines I've come across. The second wine was discovered by our fellow wine and food enthusiast Charles Neal, whose name you have likely seen pop up on our blog as he travels France with our buying team. Charles imports French wines and spirits, and when he first showed us this wine, it was immediately apparent that this was a perfect selection for the table. His pairing suggestions only sealed the deal.

Let's start with the **2014 Clos Chanteduc Côtes du Rhône (\$13.99)**. Patricia Wells refers to the wine in humble language, calling it the perfect "everyday red" and speaking of it in terms of a bistro wine. It's a classic Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre blend, with a little more Syrah than is typical in the area. The lovely hillside vineyard of Clos Chanteduc overlooks the little town of Vaison la Romaine and commands a beautiful view of the Rhône Valley and Mont Ventoux. Most of the vines were planted in the 1950s, so the fruit is fully mature, bringing a concentration and depth that can't be produced by younger plants. The winemaker is Yves Gras of the famous Domaine Santa Duc in Gigondas. He also manages the vineyard for Patricia Wells, and pursues a fastidious attention to detail both in the vineyard and the cellar. So what makes this particular Côtes du Rhône the perfect food wine? Rhône blends already tend to be food friendly, and this one has a touch more Syrah, increasing the black pepper note, and a lighter bodied style with good acidity that plays perfectly with savory and salty elements. It might not surprise you that one of Patricia Wells' favorite pairings is black truffle spaghetti. You can find the recipe on her website, including instructions for making fresh black truffle butter and truffle salt, essentials for the dish.

Our second wine is the **2015 Château Tour de Mirambeau "Cuvée Passion" Bordeaux Blanc (\$15.99)**. I've always felt that Bordeaux Blanc is one of the best white wines for food pairing. The blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon brings acidity, fruit and a round palate weight. Add to this the classic barrel aging, and the wine gains texture and longevity. All of these elements present a great counterbalance to pungent foods, and can stand up to heartier dishes. Tour de Mirambeau is in the Entre-Deux-Mers region of Bordeaux, and is a long-established Château run by the Despagne family. It's named for the tower (*tour*) on the estate, originally a mill and the first home of the family. This is the top wine of the estate, and is composed of 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Semillon, harvested from the best sites in the vineyards. It is aged in larger 600L barrels to allow the wine to benefit from some oak exposure, while keeping its influence in check. With the fantastic 2015 vintage coming into play, this wine is absolutely stunning. The aromatics are brimming with honeysuckle and lemongrass, while the palate rounds these elements out with a creamy



Author and food critic Patricia Wells, owner of Clos Chanteduc.



The Tour de Mirambeau.

texture and soft notes of apricot, peach and nectarine. The close is crisp and focused with citrus-tinged acidity and slight oak tannin. Our friend Charles Neal recommends pairing this with herb-crusted roast chicken, salmon, or mildly spiced Indian cuisine. It has the weight and texture to stand up well to pork in addition to fish and fowl.

Best Buy Wine Club

A couple of months back we featured a Bordeaux in the Signature Red Club from what is considered a “marginal” region. I noted at the time that since the so called “marginal” regions in Bordeaux are seeing quite a bit of investment and expansion, that concept is getting outdated. Yet another example of a phenomenal value from one of these areas in Bordeaux has cropped up, and I’m pretty excited to share it with the Best Buy Club members. Additionally, we have a traditional Spanish white wine called Verdejo, from the Rueda region. Verdejo is a lovely varietal, making fresh, crisp wines tinged with citrus and brimming with heady aromatics. This dynamic duo should spice up your October with some great values.

I find that value and quality can often come from an unexpected source. That is particularly the case with our white wine this month. Central Spain has a largely negative reputation when it comes to wine. Toro and Jumilla are known for heavy, high-alcohol reds loaded with new oak, and Rueda and La Mancha produce many wines for the bulk market. But if you study the area in itself, you’ll find some fabulous terroir, primed for making interesting and distinctive wines in several styles. One producer who has done just that is Bodegas Vetus. Owned by the same family who pioneered Finca Villacres in the Ribera del Duero and Izadi in Rioja, Bodegas Vetus was founded in 2003 with the goal of producing elegant and transparent wines from some of the best terroirs in central Spain. The **2017 Flor de Vetus Verdejo (\$9.99)** hails from Rueda, and is both traditional and edgy in character. While Verdejo has long been farmed in this area, and there are some high quality traditional barrel-aged styles, this is done in stainless steel, aiming for a lighter, crisper style with elegance and character. It’s a lovely match to seafood, and would make a great substitute for Chablis with crab.

The **2015 Grand Moulin, Côtes de Blaye Rouge (\$9.99)** is our Bordeaux for this month, and comes from the lesser known region of Blaye, on the Right Bank of Bordeaux. Just across the Gironde



Bodega Vetus winery was designed to ensure premium quality in the wines.



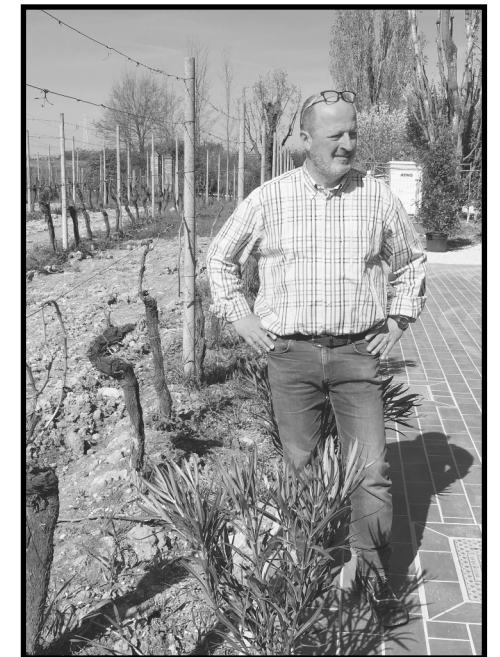
Fruit at Grand Moulin, handled by owner Jean-François Reaud.

from the Médoc, and a little north of St-Emilion, Blaye is planted mostly to Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Grand Moulin is one of the older estates in the area, and is run by fourth-generation proprietor and winemaker Jean-François Reaud. Reaud fell in love with wine for its finesse and complexity, and quietly displays these characteristics in his modest production from Blaye. The Grand Moulin is dominated by Merlot, planted in sandy soils that give the wine beautiful aromatics. Atypically for Bordeaux, this wine is aged in concrete, an inert vessel, in order to highlight the beauty and effortless elegance of the wine. Bright berry fruit dominates the palate with just a hint of underlying herbal notes, and the texture is silky and full. Although it is classically structured, it’s not a wine to lay down in your cellar for decades. Rather, it’s designed to drink well right off the bat. Jean-François recommends pairing it with the simple, ever-delicious French classic, chicken and herbs.

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

I love Lake Garda. It is one of my favorite locales in Italy even though there’s a bit of a touristy feel to it. I revel in it. From the spectacular northern end at Riva del Garda where the Alps fall directly into the lake, to Sirmione, the finger-like peninsula that juts into the lake from the southern shore, it’s beautiful. This **2013 Tenuta Roveglia Merlot (\$11.99)** comes from a few miles south of Sirmione. We started importing wines from Tenuta Roveglia about a year and a half ago based on a tasting I did in San Francisco. It wasn’t until last April that I actually visited the winery. There, I tasted through a selection of older vintage whites and then a rosé. I was all set to depart, when out came the Merlot. I really hadn’t even thought of them as red producers but here it was in front of me, 2013, the current vintage. Merlot obviously has gone through a tough period. The swill that was being hawked in California at the time of the film *Sideways* was a poor representation of what the great grape can produce. This wine, the 2013 Tenuta Roveglia Merlot, won’t remind you of any New World Merlot. It’s more like a Bordeaux in structure and flavor. The grapes are harvested the first week of October after a long growing season, but this is not a late harvest; it’s the normal period for the region. It is fermented and aged in stainless steel and then released a few years later. The nose immediately shows a wine with earth, leather, iron and spice; nothing simple-fruity here. On the palate the wine shows a bit of tannic grip, followed by cherry and licorice flavors. Time to grab your fork; this would be perfect for the more savory Italian style pasta Bolognese, rather than the tomato-driven American version. Enjoy!

The Langhe hills, home to Barolo and Barbaresco, don’t have the ancient heritage of let’s say some Chianti Classico producers who can trace their wine-producer origins back more than 600 years. The Langhe hills weren’t even the most famous Piedmont appellation a hundred years ago; a bunch of small regions in Alto Piemonte such as Gattinara, Boca, Ghemme and Lessona were better known. The foundation of wineries that exist today in the Langhe was mostly after the 1861 *Risorgimento*, the unification of Italy. Then in the mid 1970s a revolution began, starting with the Barolo Boys Luciano Sandrone, Elio Altare, Domenico Clerico and Enrico Scavino. They revolutionized the Langhe. In some circles it’s debatable whether that was for good or bad. I see the change as good, as it prodded dozens of grape growers to start making their own wine instead of selling to the cooperative.



Giovanni Talenti, owner of Tenuta Roveglia.

It was in this period that Elio Grasso started to return to his winemaking roots and bottle his own wines. He's in the village of Monforte d'Alba, my favorite Langhe wine village. It has sort of a confluence of styles, with the elegance of La Morra and Barolo meeting the power and structure of Serralunga and Castiglione Falletto. This month's wine, the **2015 Elio Grasso Vigna Martina Barbera d'Alba (\$27.99)**, is sensational. Bold fruit, complex terroir, supple, long finish... you're going to love it. The wine is from a 35-year-old, south-facing vineyard at about 1200 feet. It's harvested at the end of September and beginning of October, gets stainless fermentation and is then aged in 50% new and 50% one-year-old barrique. Barriques too often can overwhelm a wine, but not this wine. It is spectacular and you really don't see the barrique influence at all. Enjoy!



Elio Grasso's estate in Monforte d'Alba, Langhe hills.

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

Autumn in the Marne As I type, the *Champenois* are finishing up with the 2018 harvest, and it promises to be a great one. They are not prone to hyperbole in the north of France, yet comparisons are being made to 1959! It will be at least another six years until we see vintage wines from the 2018 harvest, but in the meantime we have plenty of other delicious bottles to choose from. This month we have two from the western part of the Marne, both long aged and both full of autumnal flavors. To me,



Paul Fallet in the family kitchen in Drachy.



Jean-Baptiste Jacquesson in his tasting room in Troissy.

this area is the most beautiful in all of Champagne. It's a must for any visitor to the region. If you are thinking of making a trip, please reach out to me at garywestby@klwines.com. Champagne is waiting for you!

Jean-Baptiste Jacquesson farms 17 acres in Troissy, a tiny village right in the middle of the western Marne. His estate is a four-person operation, and so hands-on that Jean-Baptiste even welds some of his own tanks! They make between 30,000 to 50,000 bottles a year total, and for this month, we were lucky enough to get his top wine. The **Gilbert Jacquesson "Cuvée Prestige" Brut Champagne (\$34.99)** is entirely barrel fermented and aged for six years on the lees. It is composed of 40% Meunier from the 2010 harvest that spends a year in barrel before bottling, and 30% Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from 2011. This is a creamy, deep, brioche-laden Champagne with a truly unusual amount of complexity and depth. It is an ideal partner for pâté or charcuterie. Less than 3000 bottles of this were made, and the Champagne Club took a third of the entire production!

Some of you are already familiar with Paul Fallet, as he came to K&L's tent events last year. He is the 17th generation of his family to farm vineyards in Drachy, which is on the far western edge of Champagne closest to Paris. In this shipment, we have his **2010 Fallet-Dart Vintage Brut Champagne (\$34.99)**, which is composed of 70% Chardonnay and 30% Pinot Noir. This is bright, clean and refreshing Champagne that is perfect for an apéritif by itself, or paired with some little appetizers. I love the citric, white flower flavors in this Champagne, and the tight bead that the seven years on the lees has given it. —Gary Westby, *K&L Champagne Buyer*

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

Signature Red Club Previous Offerings

2016 Comando G "La Bruja de Rozas" Garnacha @ \$23.99 per bottle

This is composed entirely of Grenache from vines in the 50- to 70-year age range, from a few organically farmed vineyards surrounding the little town of Las Rozas de Puerto Real. Grenache is one of the varieties most suited to the area, given the hot and arid climate. This example is a bit lighter and more aromatic in tone than what you might expect. Garcia and Landi are very particular with their winemaking, hand-harvesting all the fruit, and only using native yeasts to ferment the must. Use of neutral oak adds a subtle texture, and balances the soft tannin nicely.

2014 St. Jean du Barroux "l'Argile" Ventoux @ \$25.99 per bottle

This is a blend of Grenache, Syrah, Carignan, and Cinsault. Philippe Gimmel, the proprietor and winemaker, uses all native yeasts in his winemaking, and the wine is aged in neutral concrete vats before bottling. You may have noticed that this wine is a bit older than most on the market currently. That is because Philippe never releases a wine until he feels that it has begun to drink well. That is not to say that the wine needs to be drunk now. It certainly could be (perhaps paired with roast lamb), but it is made with such careful precision that it could easily age another decade or so, like its more renowned counterparts from Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

2013 Keller Estate “El Coro Vineyard” Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir @ \$24.99 per bottle

This Pinot Noir comes from the highest elevation vineyard at Keller, right up on the ridge of the Gap. The berries have great exposure to both the cooling winds and fogs, and to the California sunshine. The wine is very vibrant with excellent fresh acidity and deeply expressive red and black berry fruit. Arturo Keller’s daughter Ana is now the winemaker at Keller. She has embraced a sustainable viticultural style and a more hands-off approach to winemaking. She feels that’s the best way to respect the extremely high quality of the fruit produced here.

2013 Robert Goyette Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$24.99 per bottle

This is old-style Sonoma Cabernet at its finest: pure fruit, classic structure and just the right kiss of oak. Being a few years from its release date, the wine is in top form. You’ve all heard praise for the 2013 vintage in Napa and Sonoma, and it’s great to see how these wines are developing. This Cabernet is loaded with dark cassis fruit and pretty red berry notes. It also displays a lovely savory character which brings into play a hint of tobacco, forest floor and clove. The finish is quite long, and the wine still has a good hearty structure that ensures its ability to continue to age gracefully. I would stick to the classics in terms of food pairing, and recommend this with your Friday night steak.

2016 Belle Glos “Dairyman” Russian River Valley Pinot Noir @ \$34.99 per bottle

The Russian River vineyard from which Joe produces this single-vineyard expression of Belle Glos Pinot is called “Dairyman” after the old dairy farm that used to occupy this area. It’s on the southern side of Russian River, with a picture-perfect climate for the AVA. Cooling and moderating influences come from the ocean in the form of fogs and sea breezes, which balance out the California sunshine and allow for a long growing season. The resultant fruit is concentrated and it fully ripens without losing its structure and acidity. This makes for a powerful, full-bodied style of Pinot Noir that’s difficult to argue with.

2015 Mas Gabinele “Faugeres” Languedoc-Rousillon @ \$26.99 per bottle

Thierry Rodriquez is the man behind this classic French GSM, and I have to say he does everything right. He started this small domaine back in 1997, and he hasn’t done things the easy way. The sandstone-schist soils in this area are extremely nutrient poor, meaning that the vines have to struggle and have naturally quite low yields. Even so, Thierry insists on sustainable farming practices and harvests all his fruit by hand, sorting out unfit berries right there in the vineyard. Handling in the winery follows the same philosophy, with long, slow fermentations, gentle extraction, and a discerning balance of old and new French oak.

Premium Wine Club Previous Offerings

2014 Buglioni Valpolicella Classico Superiore @ \$14.99 per bottle

While the Buglioni family produce many wines, from Amarone to Ripasso, and even a rosé, the Valpolicella Classico Superiore, jokingly dubbed “l’Imperfetto,” is where they really shine. It’s traditional in this area to use some Slavonian oak casks for aging, and that was done here. It adds a pungent sweet spice but doesn’t overwhelm the wine, which is so vibrant and charming on its own, the result is stunning. The nose is loaded with black cherry, plum, and baking spice. On the palate a sweet berry fruit emerges, contrasted beautifully with light tannin and soft velvety texture. The finish is dry and laden with perfumed clove and nutmeg notes. I would highly recommend pairing this with red sauce dishes, which are somewhat difficult due to the natural acidity of tomato, or with roasted beef or lamb.

2016 Kumeu River “Kumeu Village” Chardonnay @ \$14.99 per bottle

This is one of the best examples of serious New Zealand Chardonnay on the market. While showcasing plenty of ripe, tropical fruit notes, and a creamy texture from the malolactic fermentation that it undergoes, it still maintains a crisp acidity and stays light on its feet. Michael primarily ages this wine in stainless steel, with 25% used French barriques to add texture and a subtle sweet oak spice. What I love in this wine is the combination of traditional Burgundian techniques married to vibrant, ripe, yet balanced New Zealand fruit.

2016 Helen’s Hill “Ingram Road” Chardonnay Yarra Valley Victoria @ \$14.99 per bottle

This wine is absolutely stunning, and will likely throw on its head any expectation of Australian Chardonnay that you may have had to date. I have to admit I’m a complete devotee of white Burgundy, and tend to think Puligny is the best

Chardonnay in the world, but if I had to pick a wine to compete with that prestigious area, this is it. It’s blended from a few different plots on the property. The fruit is grown and selected based on its particular fruit character, then blended to taste, and also sees some French oak. Like white Burgundy, it’s taut and focused with plenty of minerality and orchard fruit, but also a subtle creaminess and an open character that allows it to drink well now.

2016 Helen’s Hill “Ingram Road” Pinot Noir Yarra Valley Victoria @ \$14.99 per bottle

This Pinot Noir is blended from several of the different clones on the Helen’s Hill estate. Most notably, the Old Block MV6 clone, whose original cuttings were taken from Clos Vougeot, one of Burgundy’s most renowned Grand Cru vineyards. The fruit from these vines is small and concentrated with powerful dark berry flavor. It’s complemented nicely by the Pommard clone Pinot that’s planted across the eastward-facing slope of the Range View Block. That fruit adds a nicely earthy and savory element, with red berry fruit and subtle baking spice. All of the Pinots produced by Helen’s Hill see some French oak, a judicious mix of old and new barrels, to impart a subtle sweet toast character and a great textural element.

2016 Idlewild “The Bee-Flora & Fauna” California White Blend @ \$16.99 per bottle

Composed of 53% Muscat Canelli, 42% Arneis and 5% Cortese. Muscat Canelli, also known as Muscat Blanc or Moscato Bianco, is a wildly aromatic grape varietal native to northern Italy. In this case it’s grown on volcanic soils in Lake County, giving the wine a wonderfully mineral drive. Arneis is another native Italian grape (here grown in Mendocino), and produces firmly structured, stony wines laden with minerality and herbal notes. It’s the perfect complement to the Muscat Canelli, and plays well with the small amount of Cortese, which brings a fresh, citrus-driven acidity.

2015 Chateau d’Arce, Cotes Castillon @ 14.99 per bottle

This is one of those bottles that you could easily pass up on the shelf, if you didn’t know who’s behind it. In fact, newer though it is, with the Garcin-Lévêque expertise driving this Château, it’s definitely one of the best values in the store. What do you need to know about the wine? This is a classic right bank blend—mostly Merlot with some Cabernet Franc. It’s a great example of 2015 finesse, without being overly ripe or unbalanced. It’s charming, vibrant and elegant with a good depth of fruit, and also subtly structured with fine-grain tannin and fresh acidity. It’s easy to drink right off the bat without having to cellar it for years.

2014 La Grange Coteaux de Languedoc “Castalides” Reserve @ \$13.99 per bottle

A long-established winery, Domaine La Grange is a big supporter of biodynamic farming, and sustains a great diversity of plant and animal life in its vineyards. The Mas de Couy vineyard, from which this Reserve wine comes, is home to rosemary, thyme, wild gorse, olive trees, and quite a few critters. This little plot is situated perfectly for Grenache and Mourvèdre, the classic Languedoc varietals, to grow in the warm Mediterranean climate. The plot is hedged by Garrigue woodlands, and cooled by breezes from the nearby Cevennes mountain range. The vines themselves are over 50 years old so they’ve had plenty of time to assimilate the influence of the soils into their low yields. The winemaking is clean and guided. It doesn’t attempt to overpower what is essentially already very expressive fruit. The resultant wine is full-bodied, unctuous and subtly spiced. There’s an excellent savory quality that is derived purely from the old-vine character, and the whole is loaded with bright, expressive berry fruit.

Best Buy Wine Club Previous Offerings

2017 Kalinda Sonoma County Sauvignon Blanc @ \$10.99 per bottle

Overt floral aromas give way to waxy honeycomb and white peach fruit playing against papaya and mango on the palate. The slight grassy edge and sweet pea notes balance out all this tropical fruit beautifully, while the texture manages to be soft and creamy while still finishing with a crisp dry note. I have quite a few more descriptors in my tasting book, but I won’t overwhelm you with adjectives. I’d advise you to pour yourself a glass and simply enjoy!

2016 Mas Codina Cabernet Sauvignon Penedes @ \$8.99 per bottle

This Cabernet is deep purple in color with aromas of black pepper, cedar and eucalyptus mingling with cassis and boysenberry. On the palate it has juicy red plum and perfumed berry fruit with balanced tannin and a fuller body. I

was thoroughly impressed upon tasting the wine, and really couldn't look for a better sub \$20 Cabernet in the store, but at the wine club price, it's simply an outrageous deal.

2016 Le Paradou Vin de Grenache Rouge @ \$10.99 per bottle

This unusual single-varietal Grenache is a spectacular example of what the varietal can be all on its own. This wine is grown in the Minervois region and has to be classified as "Vin de France" since it is not the classic blend. This wine is based around the ideas of *Plaisir* and *Convivialité*, pleasure and conviviality. It's designed to enjoy with the family meal, an afternoon picnic or an evening with a friend.

2017 A.A. Badenhorst "Curator" White Blend Swartland @ \$8.99 per bottle

This is the antithesis of the cheap bulk wines made in the Swartland. With Adi Badenhorst's intimate knowledge of old vine sites across the region, he creates this blend from highly expressive fruit sourced from several of his favorite parcels. In this vintage, the wine is made from dry-farmed parcels of Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay and Viognier. Stylistically, the wine is fresh and light with crisp acidity and refreshing orchard fruit. But pay close attention—this wine has a great textural element and some exotic spice notes that add complexity. It qualifies in my book as both highly quaffable, and quite intriguing—exactly the kind of wine I want on any given weekday.

2017 Domaine Duffour Côtes de Gascogne Gros Manseng @ \$10.99 per bottle

This is not your average white. I think you may find it a refreshing alternative to Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay. Made entirely from Gros Manseng, the wine is bright, fresh and tangy with vibrant tropical fruit notes and an appealing aromatic quality. The Gros Manseng varietal is native to the Jurançon area in France. It was brought to Gascogne about 25 years ago, and has taken on a more expressive character here on the clay and limestone soils. Although a relative newcomer, this grape is making waves in Gascogne.

2016 Domaine de l'Ermitage "Victor" Costieres de Nimes Rouge @ \$8.99 per bottle

This classic Grenache/Syrah/Mourvèdre blend, made in the southern Rhône valley, is anything but traditional. Situated across the river from Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the property has been making wines since the 12th century. The Castillon family, who own the winery today, have modernized things. The vineyards are certified sustainable with the Terra Vitis organization, and the winemaking is simple and clean. The wine is aged in concrete vats for six to nine months, and is designed to be fresh, bright and pleasant. This isn't your traditional earthy and smoky Rhône wine, loaded with new oak spice. Nor do you need to lay it down in a cellar for a decade before it starts to show well. This is open, modern and ready to go.

2013 Stephen Vincent "Crimson" Red Blend @ \$10.99 per bottle

Robert Goyette, winemaker at Stephen Vincent, says this is his favorite wine of his whole portfolio, because there are no restrictions for him as winemaker. Basically, Robert's goal is to make a classy and bold wine that represents all the best of California. The varietal combination changes from year to year as with any field blend. In the 2013 vintage, Robert made the call to go with a high percentage of Petit Syrah. A few other California classic grapes are packed in here as well, including Syrah, Zinfandel, Cabernet, Merlot and Malbec. This may sound like a recipe for a strong and tannic monster, but Robert's winemaking captures the best elements of each grape and sets off the final product in a seamless manner. Being a few years from its vintage date, this wine is well integrated and ready to drink. In particular the Petit Syrah has taken on a smoky and spiced character that is absolutely begging for something grilled.

2016 Herencia Altes Garnatxa Negra Terra Alta @ \$9.99 per bottle

Terra Alta is located in the southernmost portion of Catalunya. With soil types ranging from calcareous clay to sand, along with a wealth of great Garnatxa (Grenache) vines, this is a great place to look if you are a fan of Côtes du Rhône or Grenache from elsewhere. Dark cherry aromas with hints of hot stone lead to a tasty palate, full of fleshy fruit, with balanced tannins and a mineral thread running through the wine. Very solid and tough to beat for the price! —*Joe Manekin, Spain, Portugal & South American Wine Buyer*

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

2016 Poderi Colla Pian Balbo Dogliani Dolcetto @ \$16.99 per bottle

This Dolcetto was manually harvested in mid September, and fermented in stainless steel for 5 to 7 days. This vintage is slightly different in style than the normal profile. The fruit character is more present. The nose is full of

intense fruit that bursts out of the glass, loads of brambly berry aromatics coupled with hints of earth. On the palate this wine shows a saturated flavor of dark berry and hints of woody complexity. You can sense the weight and density while the tannins frame the experience. The finish is powerful and the classic Dolcetto tannins emerge and leave a focused close to the wine. Whenever I taste Dolcetto I always think of grilled sausage paired with polenta. For me this is the best expression of what the grape can give: the fat from the sausage and the richness of the polenta soften the tannins and create a blissful marriage.

2016 Paolo Caciorgna "Ciauria" Etna Rosso @ \$22.99 per bottle

This wine is made from Nerello Mascalese on the north slope of Etna. Harvested in the second half of October, it is fermented in stainless steel and then aged in used barriques for 6 months. *Ciauria* means "perfume" in the local dialect, and this wine has a heavenly dose of it. On the palate the wine's supple elegance is accented by a veil of tannin on its outer edge. Balanced and expressive, the wine calls for food, and I'd suggest the classic Sicilian Pasta Norma. One last note: the wine is best served in a Burgundy glass.

2010 Fattoria Paradiso Sangiovese Riserva "Vigna delle Lepri" @ \$19.9 per bottle

In 1970 the first Sangiovese Vigna delle Lepri Riserva was born in this ancient winery. Today and 40 years after the first vintage you'll get to try Sig. Pezzi's wine. The vineyard, still the original planted in 1963, sits on a slope and is the portion of the estate that gives the ripest grapes. That allows the richness to tame the wine's acidity. I love the wine's richness, excellent balance and its different take on Sangiovese. I hope you do as well!

2016 Cordero di Montezemolo Barbera d'Alba @ \$19.99 per bottle

This Barbera is a blend of grapes from Castiglione Falletto, La Morra and the Roero, fermented in stainless steel and then aged for a brief seven months in a combination of French and Slovenian oak. You've probably heard about how great the 2015 vintage is across Europe. In the Langhe 2016 just might be better than 2015, and you can really sense it in this sensational Barbera.

2013 Alfio Mozzi "Grisone" Sassella @ \$27.99 per bottle

I've long been a fan of the Nebbiolo-based wines from this region. Alfio Mozzi is a newcomer. I first tasted his wines this year and I wasn't disappointed. Alfio farms about 8.5 acres in Sassella. He ferments his wines using just indigenous yeast, then ages the wine for 18 months in 25hl and 30hl French oak barrels. In this small valley, Nebbiolo shows a different character from what you'd find in the Langhe. The wines have more earth and grit, and to me seem more aromatic than their cousins to the west. This wine is beautiful. It has more weight and richness than most Valtellina wines but it never loses its sense of place. To fully appreciate it, try it with *Pizzoccheri*, the classic buckwheat pasta dish of the region. It has chard, cheese and potatoes and it's a truly hearty dish!

2015 Azelia "Bricco dell Oriolo" Dolcetto d'Alba @ \$11.99 per bottle

This Dolcetto comes from a family vineyard in the village of Montelupo Albese, about two miles east of Castiglione Falletto. The vineyard sits at an elevation of over 1,900 feet and its situation is a bit unique in the Langhe, first off because it isn't in the Barolo-producing zone. Also, this is a south-facing vineyard in a premier position, so it would not usually be used for Dolcetto grapes, but would normally go first to Nebbiolo then to Barbera. Yet in this case Dolcetto gets the best position in the vineyard. The vines in this five-acre vineyard are over 45 years old and at this altitude they get perfect ripeness, because the diurnal temperature range prevents the grapes from becoming overripe. This Dolcetto has wonderful aromatics and a medium weight, making it an ideal accompaniment to meals. I have always been a fan of rustic fare with Dolcetto and I like grilled sausage and polenta, an ideal match, but Tuesday night ground beef pasta alla Paul Newman sauce would be just fine too.

2016 Ermacora Malvasia Colli Orientali del Friuli @ \$13.99 per bottle

This wine's nose is full of stone fruit, plum, peach, and apricot with hints of lemon and jasmine. On the palate the wine has a powerful presence marked by a full-bodied character. There's a decided weight to it even though it sees no oak at all. In your mouth the fruit takes a back seat to the minerality, as its searing presence is notably buoyed by a bit of salinity and cries for a piece of fish. They do a bit of lees stirring on this wine so texturally you feel richness, which couples nicely with the savory salinity. The wine finishes with a creamy, tangy freshness that makes you feel you're at the seaside.

2013 Cascina Ca' Rossa "Vigna Mulassa" Barbera d'Alba @ \$25.99 per bottle

The nose of this wine is complex, with so many components it's difficult to think which portion is dominant. The fruit

quality is superb. It's a saturated aroma, so deeply aromatic that your senses feel about to explode, yet it shows no distinct "fruitiness." And then the spices emerge: cinnamon, clove, allspice, black pepper and coriander dominate for a second and then submerge as the earthy character jumps in. Porcini mushrooms, leather and soy take over and then subside. It is a heady experience. On the palate the wine shows focused richness. It stays on your tongue rather than being an amorphous flow. The flavors emerge, more fruit than earth and spice, and then rearrange in the next sip. This is all followed by an extraordinary finish, long and persistent; the flavors don't seem to go away.

2016 Treves Petite Arvine Val d'Aosta @ \$21.99 per bottle

With the help of his mother, Treves Gianni took over his grandparents' farm in Montjovet in Italy's Aosta Valley in 1997. Their legacy was a robust farm known largely for producing Fontina cheese, plus fruits, vegetables, potatoes, and a variety of grains and herbs. Their devotion to producing healthy, local food was the heart of the farm, and fortunately the farm continues now to produce a little wine.

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

Michel Arnould Verzenay "Brut Tradition" Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This Champagne is made solely from Verzenay Grand Cru Pinot Noir. This crazy Grand Cru is the heart of the Pinot Noir in Cristal, Veuve Clicquot vintage, and too many others to list. The wine has the classic hazelnut character that can so easily be mistaken for wood influence in a blind tasting. In fact, this Champagne is all stainless steel fermented, with three years of ageing on the lees. It makes a great, richer style apéritif on its own, and it's magic with cold smoked salmon.

Marcel Vezien Secret d'Eclaires Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

The Vezien family have a very small plot of Pinot Blanc on their property, and use 5% in this fascinating Champagne. The other 95% is composed of Chardonnay, making this an exotic blanc de blancs. This Champagne is extroverted, rich and exotic, with hints of mandarin along with white flowers and subtle toast. This is ideal on its own as your apéritif, as it is soft, elegant and full of flavor. I think a little truffle-salt popcorn makes it even better.

Château de Bligny "Grand Reserve" Rosé Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

This is distinctive for being the area's only Château-bottled Champagne, as all the other castle owners buy grapes rather than farming them. It is made the old fashioned hard way, on two old, manual coquard basket presses out of a half-and-half combination of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The wine gets its color from 10% Pinot Noir that is vinified red. The wine has a lovely fruit expression, with clean strawberry aromas balanced by pie crust. It is a very pure rosé that can be enjoyed as an apéritif, but it comes to life with savory food like charcuterie, or better yet game birds. This is usually \$49.99 retail, so it will go fast at your Club price of \$34.99.

2008 Fluteau "Symbiose" Brut Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

As you may already know, the 2008 vintage is perhaps the best vintage in a generation in Champagne, with stellar ripeness and power married to uncommonly high acidity and freshness. Cold east winds combined with lots of sun in the fall led to some of the most loaded, complex wines in a long time. Like the Bligny, the Symbiose is half Chardonnay and half Pinot Noir, but the Symbiose is vinified white. It has enjoyed eight years of ageing on the lees, yet is still as bright and fresh as you could want. This has great texture and a fine bead from the long ageing, but it is so vivacious right now that I would recommend having it with shellfish. Try it now, and then lay down a case to drink over the next ten years!

2011 Egrot Brut Grand Cru Champagne @ \$34.99 per bottle

Many of you in the Champagne Club have visited Elisabeth Goutorbe and Jean-Marie Egrot at their home in Aÿ, and even more of you have met her at tent events. A few years ago, they changed the name of the house from Elisabeth Goutorbe to Egrot et Filles, to avoid confusion with the many other members of the Goutorbe family in Aÿ. This Champagne is composed of two thirds Pinot Noir and one third Chardonnay from some of the chalkiest soil in all of Champagne. While this vintage proved challenging for many, some of the best plots in the grand crus did exceptionally well, producing wines of both power and finesse. This is one of those wines, and has plenty of richness for drinking on its own, but also the backbone of minerality to pair with the best salmon or tuna fillets.