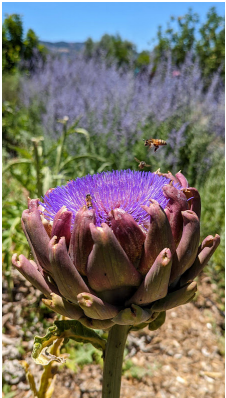




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March 2023

## Dear Wine Club Member,



As the days slowly grow longer, we switch our focus from deep, bone-warming reds to lively wines that herald the start of spring. Monday, March 20th, marks the Spring Equinox, and that means we'll start to see the first shoots of asparagus, English peas, and all the delicious greens that do well with a sprightly bubbly in your glass. This month we have two: a charming sparkler from southern France made by longtime K&L direct import producer Françoise Antech-Gazeau (Best Buy Club \$10.99) and a food-friendly Meunier-based Champagne from Didier Lapie (Le Club Français \$28.99). Both are a steal for the quality they provide and great way to celebrate the change in seasons.

With so much rain this year, we're sure to have gorgeous superblooms throughout the Golden State, and we can't wait. Pack a picnic, get out there and explore, and don't forget the Sancerre! We have a great bottle in our Premium Club made by Aurore Dezat, who took over her family's

winery a few years ago and has since skyrocketed the quality while still maintaining great prices. At a \$14.99 Club price, you're going to love it!

The elegant aromatics that waft from a glass of Monteci Rondinella (Il Club Italiano \$14.99) will put a spring in your step in no time! You may know this grape as a supporting player in Valpolicella, but we're excited to offer it showcased in a wine that really lets its delicate fragrances shine. However you spend your March, we hope you have some wonderful wine by your side!



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## Best Buy Wine Club

### 2019 Antech "Cuvée Eugenie" Brut Crémant de Limoux

Retail \$15.99 / Club \$10.99

by Keith Mabry, French Regional Buyer

Located in southwest France, Limoux is one of the world's great value sparkling wine regions. Though their production of sparkling wine predates Champagne, they have yet to receive much mainstream attention. But that's okay, that has kept the pricing sharp! The cremants from Limoux are as inviting and user friendly as the prices. It's these qualities that have earned Maison Antech a spot as one of our favorite producers in the region. Françoise Antech-Gazeau is an old friend, and our relationship goes back over a decade to when she took over the reins of the property from her father. Since then, she has elevated their wines to new heights. She is always experimenting with new cuvées and loves to play with the local grape Mauzac to make some very special releases. It is still the Cuvée Eugenie that is the bread and butter of her lineup. The wine sees at least a year of aging sur lie, developing nice toast and biscuit qualities. The blend is always Chardonnay dominant, with some Chenin Blanc and Mauzac. It makes for a great daily aperitif and will pair beautifully with seafood and creamy cheeses. This is excellent everyday drinking! Cheers!



## 2020 Font de Courtedune Vaucluse Rouge

Retail \$11.99 / Club \$9.99

by Keith Mabry, French Regional Buyer

Vigneron Caroline Charrier is one of our newest Direct Import producers. With a winery directly next door to the famed Château Rayas, her family has had holdings in some of the best terroir of Châteauneuf-du-Pape and the Rhône Valley for decades. This Vaucluse is from vineyards just outside of both the Côtes du Rhône and Châteauneuf appellations, which means it provides an incredible value. In classic Rhône fashion, Grenache and Syrah are important components of this wine, but since they are outside of the appellation, a bit of Merlot finds its way into this cuvée as well. Inviting flavors of red berries, spice, and herbs make for a tremendous everyday value. This is hands-on, artisanal wine that is well suited for any delicious, casual dining, be it burgers and fries, carne asada, or a chicken tikka masala from your favorite to-go place.

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## Signature Red Collection

### 2021 Bravium Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

Retail \$29.95 / Club \$24.99

by Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic Buyer

Bravium's ludicrously delicious 2021 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir is a wine that is simply captivating. It has that magical *je ne sais quoi* the great Pinot Noir always does. Rose petal aromatics, lifted and high-toned, black raspberry, woody spices, earth, a dark mineral streak—almost graphite-like. Despite its dark-fruited and earthy nature, it maintains wonderful lift and vibrancy. A pure, refined wine with compact layers of interest. Winemaker Derek Rohlffs makes this wine predominantly from 50-year old vines at Wiley Vineyard at the northwestern end of Anderson Valley, a cool-climate, hillside site considered one of the premier vineyards in the region. Just nine miles from the ocean, planted in 1972, these mature vines produce fruit with profoundly complex flavors and really speak of their terroir. Derek also blends in a small percentage of grapes from the aptly named Helluva Vineyard, another highly regarded vineyard designated by wineries such as Anthill Farms, Philo Ridge, Donkey & Goat. This fruit provides the perfect foil to the Wiley fruit. Helluva sits on the valley floor close to Boonville at the slightly warmer end of the valley. This fruit adds a pop of rich red fruit character and exotic Asian spice notes to the more savory, brooding Wiley profile. The wine sees a modest 20% new oak with the majority being matured in well seasoned neutral oak. It's a wonderful bottle of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir from top-notch sites. I'm very happy we managed to put a deal together to offer this wine out to our Wine Club members even after the wine recently picked up a nice 93-point \*Editors' Choice\* score from the Wine Enthusiast! Enjoy!

### 2019 Hendry "Estate - Block 14" Napa Valley Malbec

Retail \$29.95 / Club \$24.99

by Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic Buyer

Hendry is a wonderful family-owned estate at the base of Mt. Veeder. Vines have been planted on this site since 1859, and the Hendry family has farmed the land since 1939. By the 1970s grapes grown at Hendry were well known as some of the best fruit in the valley. A young Robert Mondavi bought all the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the estate and split the Cabernet Sauvignon with Opus One! To this day blocks of old vines from the 1970s continue to produce fantastic quality grapes. In the early 1990s the Hendry family started making their own wines and has done so ever since. Time and again, the wines overdeliver on quality and authenticity. For this month's Club, we managed to secure a small parcel of Hendry's 2019 Block 14 Malbec. The estate is planted to a patchwork quilt-like spread of individual blocks draped over the benchland terraces. In certain years particularly promising parcels are kept separate and bottled mostly for Hendry's own wine club and tasting room. Only 270 cases of the 2019 were produced. The wine is redolent with dark plum, blackberry, cigar box notes, briary savory tones, cedary, toasted spices from the French oak. Medium bodied, nice fine-grained tannins mean this has a great structure for winter stews or braised meat.



Chronicle / Craig Lee

## Premium Club

### 2020 Aurore Dezat Sancerre

Retail \$19.99 / Club \$14.99

by Keith Mabry, Rhone Buyer

Aurore Dezat and her partner David Girard are making some fantastic Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir together. She has rapidly become one of our favorite Sancerre producers. Aurore took over Domaine des Chasseignes, her family's winery, about 10 years ago. In the winery's early history most of the grapes were under contract to other producers. Since Aurore began her project, she has reclaimed many of the best parcels for her label. David (also from a well-known winemaking family) joined her a few years ago and the wines have only gotten better.

Most of her vineyards are on the calcareous limestone soils known as Caillotes and the Terres Blanches (calcareous clay-marl). Sauvignon Blanc excels on these soils presenting beautiful notes of grapefruit, passionfruit, freshly crushed herbs, and white flowers. This is a vibrant and fresh Sancerre that loves goat cheeses and sauteed fish dishes.



### 2020 Haut-Musset, Lalande-de-Pomerol

Retail \$17.99 / Club \$14.99

Haut-Musset is one of the up-and-coming Bordeaux properties you'd be wise to keep an eye on. A small estate of ten acres, it's run by husband-and-wife team Veronique Abbadie and Jerome Aguirre. Veronique's grandfather planted the vineyard. This dynamic duo met while studying enology and viticulture at the University of Bordeaux and share a Basque heritage that helped to cement their relationship. Jerome became the winemaker at several small, top-notch Pomerol estates including Le Gay and La Violette, where he fashioned many critically acclaimed wines. He has since moved on to making wine in St-Emilion at Tour Sainte Christophe, which has become a darling among Bordeaux aficionados for its quality-to-price-ratio. Jerome is one of Bordeaux's hot commodities and this is his personal, family property. Its core of black and bright brambly fruits are lifted by peppery aromas, baking spice and a long, lovely finish. An absolute delight to drink now, you could also enjoy this with 5-10 years of age on it.

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## Le Club Français

### Didier Lapie Blanc de Noirs Brut Champagne

Retail \$39.99 / Club \$28.99

by Gary Westby, Champagne Buyer



This brut is made entirely from the indigenous Champagne grape variety Meunier and comes from vineyards just east of the grand cru of Ambonnay in the quaint village of Vaudemange on the Mountain of Reims. While this wine was not declared a vintage, it is in fact entirely composed of wine from 2018, disgorged in April of 2022 after three years of aging on the lees and dosed at 7 grams per liter.

This is a delicate style of Meunier with understated tarte tatin aromas and flavors, framed by clean, fresh baguette toast. It is a very fresh style with clean pear fruit and a nice dry finish that is not austere in any way, but still very refreshing. Meunier is the most flexible of the grapes of Champagne with food, and I love experimenting with pairings. My wife and I enjoyed it immensely with the fromage fort that she cooked up from our leftover morsels of cheese, and I think it would go with any savory appetizer that you served with it. It is also very nice on its own.



## 2019 Baron de Montfaucon Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Retail \$39.99 / Club \$31.99

by Keith Mabry, Rhone Buyer

Vigneron Rudi des Pins has been one of our longest direct-import relationships in the Southern Rhône. His Côtes du Rhône and “Baron Louis” Lirac wines are two all-time K&L favorites. So, we were excited when he recently acquired a small parcel of land in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and began bottling the “Baron de Montfaucon.” This single parcel wine is a blend of mostly Grenache and a small amount of Mourvèdre. Old vines planted in the classic galet soil of the region produce beautifully ripe and complex fruit. The wine is aged in primarily neutral barrels and has a lush berry compote flavor, notes of tobacco, Tahitian vanilla, and baking spices. The long and creamy finish makes this very drinkable now, but it is definitely a wine that will cellar well and develop for many years to come.



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## Il Club Italiano

by Greg St. Clair, Italian Buyer

### 2020 Monteci Rondinella Veneto

Retail \$14.99 / Club \$11.99



I find that the delicate nature of Italian wines frequently allows for a well-defined, expressive array of aromatics. I'll bet that this will be the first time that many of you will ever have tasted a 100% Rondinella. It is one of the grapes that goes into Valpolicella and Amarone, yet is rarely the star of the show—that's Corvina. But for me the elegance, purity, and expressive nature of this grape captures everything I love about Valpolicella. Great Valpolicella for me is never big but has the wildly intoxicating aromatics of wild cherry—and I'm not talking Luden's Cough Drop wild cherry. This is the Marasca cherry flavor that, thanks to Luxardo, you can buy

now and experience the deliriously good flavors instead of those neon-red “Maraschino” cherries that top banana splits. The wine has that swirling, wafting, heavenly aromatic presented in a delicate frame that allows the wine to feel complete without feeling heavy. It is lighter bodied and just a delight to drink, so full yet so easy, lower in alcohol, and a perfect food accompaniment. I love it with roasted chicken—that simple flavor of the chicken provides a backdrop for the wine. I know you're going to love this wine.

### 2021 Paolo Caciorgna “Guardoilvento” Etna Bianco

Retail \$34.99 / Club \$29.99

Last April as the Covid entry door to Italy creaked open, I visited Paolo Caciorgna (Ka-chorn-ya) at his family's estate in Tuscany, Pietro Caciorgna. Paolo is one of Italy's leading consulting enologists and a truly wonderful human. He has a perennial Zen-like calmness about him—it's like he's floating on a cloud. While helping Marc de Grazia select a property on Mount Etna years ago, Paolo found a postage stamp-sized vineyard that he bought for himself. We've been selling his Etna reds for several years now—I just love them—but recently was the first time I had tried the white. Predominantly Carricante (hard to know exactly when you're dealing with Etna as all of the old vineyards are field blends), which is the leading white variety on Etna. It is the perfect vehicle for portraying Etna's marvels. My first visit to Etna in 2008 was an eye opener, it is like no other wine region I've been to; having an active volcano under your feet adds to the excitement. The first thing that struck me is the light: there's something truly unique about it, and it's almost as if you can taste it in the wines. While this wine has body, depth, and texture, it is that razor-like focus that comes from the volcanic soil, light, and altitude. It gives the wine a certain buoyancy, lift, and drive that carry the flavors through to a long finish. I suggest you pair this wine with a rich seafood dish that will play out as a palette for the wine.