



K&L Wine Merchants
3005 El Camino Real
Redwood City, CA 94061
Orders: (800) 247-5987
Wine Club Extension: 2744
wineclubs@klwines.com

February 2023

Dear Wine Club Member,

It's February, and love is in the air! It's also flowing in our wine glass—in the form of this month's delicious Club selections. Whether you're celebrating Valentine's Day with a romantic partner, a platonic partner, a beloved pet, or by treating yourself extra well, we hope that a nice glass of wine has a part to play in your day.

This month's wines are sure to get your hearts racing. In our Signature Red Club, Buyer Ryan Woodhouse has chosen a Napa Cabernet from stalwart producer Martin Ray at an insane price. Their access to stellar fruit and winemaking talent makes this gorgeous bottle a case-buy at \$24.99. For Pinot lovers, the Torti Pinot in our Italian Club is a perennial staff heartthrob. And it's a Champagne month, with two excellent selections from our in-house Champagne Lover Gary Westby. No matter which Club you belong to, you can always purchase any Club wine at the discounted price. We're sending our love to our Wine Club Members!



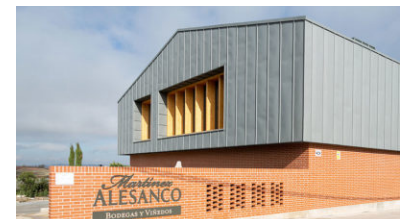
Reordering is easy!

Visit klwines.com/wineclubs
or scan the QR code

Best Buy Wine Club

2021 Pedro Martínez Alesanco Blanco Rioja Club: \$11.99, Retail: \$8.99

Martínez Alesanco is a bodega producing expressive, regionally specific wines at very reasonable prices in the southern Rioja Alta region. They grow all of their own grapes, with vineyards from their home village of Badarán. This is one of the coldest zones of Rioja Alta, lying close to the Sierra de la Demanda mountains with dramatic elevation and snow-covered peaks. The 2021 Blanco is made from Viura, Tempranillo Blanc, Malvasia, and Sauvignon Blanc grapes from iron-rich clay soils. In fact, this red-tinged, iron-laden clay marks the wines as noticeably as it does the homes and structures of this off-the-beaten-path, soulful Rioja village. Given the coolness of the harvest combined with Badarán's unique colder climate, this is a zippy and bone-dry white that makes for a perfect aperitivo or foil to fresh oysters, sushi, nachos, jamon—you name it. Crisp, lively, and ever-so-drinkable, you're sure to love this bottle.



2019 La Roque de By, Médoc Club: \$10.99, Retail: \$13.99

Each year, winemakers Frédéric Le Clerc and Benjamin Richer de Forge produce one of our favorite clarets for solid, affordable weeknight drinking. With a winery located near the mouth of the Gironde estuary in Bégadan, their wines tend to have plenty of structure balanced by succulent, ripe fruit and delicious spice. There's enough tannin and acidity to put this in your cellar for a few years, but why wait? Pop it open tonight with a burger and you'll be delighted. 93WE: "Situated close to the Gironde estuary, this 24-acre vineyard has produced a ripe, impressively structured wine. With dark tannins and juicy blackberry flavors, the wine is generous and has potential. Drink from 2025. (RV)" (7/2022)

Signature Red Collection

2020 Martin Ray “Synthesis” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Club: \$24.99, Retail: \$29.99

The Synthesis Cab from Martin Ray is a wine that really lives up to its name. Synthesis by scientific definition is the production of a complex compound from simpler base materials. Martin Ray does this by selecting fruit from no less than eight sub-AVAs across Napa Valley (40% Oakville, 16% Stags Leap District, 12% Oak Knoll, 12% Yountville, 8% Rutherford, 5% St. Helena, 5% Mount Veeder, 2% Diamond Mountain District). The idea is to create a wine of depth and complexity that is greater than the sum of its parts. This breadth of fruit sourcing was never more important than in the challenging 2020 vintage. The Martin Ray team led by consulting winemaker Keith Emerson (Vineyard 29), winemaker Leslie Renaud, and associate winemaker Raemy Paterson certainly earned their paychecks with this bottling as it really comes together seamlessly and delivers luxurious flavors and textures not often found in wines of this price point. Then again, our Club Member-only price on this wine is some \$30 less than the winery’s SRP of \$55! The wine was fermented in small five-ton open-top fermenters then aged in 40% new French oak for 18 months. The final blend is 96% Cabernet Sauvignon with just a splash of Merlot, Cab Franc, and Malbec. It’s packed with crème de cassis, mulberry, charred oak spices, vanilla, deep loamy soil tones, leather, and graphite. Lush and full bodied with ripe tannins and a juicy supple texture. Enjoy now or anytime over the next 5-10 years.

2020 Bodegas Azul y Garanza “Naturaleza Salvaje” Garnacha Navarra Club: \$24.99, Retail: \$29.99

Tucked at the edge of Spain’s Bardenes Reales Desert, at the foot of the Pre-Pyrenees, lies the Azul y Garanza vineyards, where harsh, remote conditions create small grapes of exceptional concentration. Garnacha vines thrive here amid shrubs and trees and myriad biodiversity. Many of these vines are more than 100 years old, and had been long abandoned until recovered by this winery’s founders Dani Sánchez, María Barrena, and Fernando Barrena. The Naturaleza Salvaje is made from organically farmed grapes and then fermented with natural yeast in concrete tanks. The wine is raised in amphorae then neutral, big barrels. This Garnacha is so fresh, clean, and juicy, that you’ll be reaching for a second glass in no time. Its aromas of wild, ripe berries and herbs make it an utterly enchanting accompaniment to pork chops, Jamón Ibérico, or grilled veggies.



Premium Club

2020 Valravv Sonoma County Pinot Noir Club: \$14.99, Retail: \$19.99

In Burgundy, the ancestral home of Pinot Noir, a producer like Valravv would be considered a négociant. A négociant typically buys grapes (or sometimes wine) from multiple vineyards to blend their own wines. In Burgundy, as here in California, the cost of land and vineyards has become so astronomically high the concept of owning one’s own estate is a but fairytale for most. With flexibility in fruit sourcing, négociants aren’t tied to a particular vineyard if hail destroys it, or powdery mildew runs rampant, or (sadly) more commonly in California, wildfire smoke taints it. So, savvy wine buyers (like yourself) have learned that these négociant types actually offer exceptional consistency and value for the money.

That is certainly the case with Valravv. The guys behind this brand are some of the very best in the business at this practice. With decades of expertise building brands such as Banshee and Averaen (huge K&L favorites) and winemaking experience that includes Donum, Ancien, Etude, and Beaulieu Vineyards, Valravv packs a ton of quality and pedigree into a very modestly priced bottle of wine. Consider the fruit sources for this very bottling that include top-notch vineyards such as Starscape (Russian River), Cleary Ranch (Freestone-Occidental), Gap’s Crown (Petaluma Gap), and Durell (Carneros). All of these vineyard names are typically seen on \$50+ bottles of Pinot Noir. But big-name vineyards aren’t enough on their own, no, proof as they say is in the pudding—so pull the cork, check it out, we’re confident you’ll agree it’s stunning bottle for the money that over-delivers in a big way.

2020 Baron de Montfaucon Côtes-du-Rhône Blanc Club: \$14.99, Retail: \$17.99

We adore the wines of Montfaucon—and the man behind them: Rudi de Pins, a world-class winemaker who took over the family's historic estate in 1995. He rehabilitated the vineyards, including a unique, old-vine block of Clairette Blanche. Clairette is mostly used as a blending component, playing second fiddle to Grenache Blanc. It grows well in some of the warmest and driest wine regions, like Morocco, Lebanon, South Africa, and Paso Robles, but is notoriously difficult to make. During the final days of harvest Clairette can turn on a dime: from stone fruit and crisp Fuji apple to flabby, high-alcohol, and boring. Rudi picks early to retain freshness and acidity. He blends it with Viognier for aromatics and a touch of Grenache Blanc for body. The end result is a beautiful, full-bodied wine that is balanced and delicious. A classic expression of Southern Rhône that showcases the character of Clairette and the talent of the person who makes it.

Le Club Français

2009 Gaudin, Pauillac Club: \$35.99, Retail: \$39.99

From the gravelly ridges of the famed Pauillac region, Château Gaudin boasts a prestigious zip code with some of the most famous neighbors in the Bordeaux pantheon. The estate has been in the same family for three generations, with a history that dates back to 1901. This bottle shows the inimitable flair of the 2009 vintage, one of our all-time favorite vintages in Bordeaux. Cabernet Sauvignon dominates the estate's plantings along with a smattering of Merlot and Carménère. This classic Pauillac wine frames black fruits, tobacco, and gravelly soil tones with robust and firm tannins providing structure enough to stand up to a delicious ribeye steak.

2019 Domaine Gérard Tremblay Chablis 1er Cru "Côte de Léchet" Club: \$23.99, Retail: \$29.99

Gérard and Hélène Tremblay are the fifth generation owners of their family's domaine on the northern edge of Chablis. This month's selection is from Côte de Léchet, one of Chablis' most well-known vineyards. Located west of the Serein, it gently slopes to the southeast behind and alongside the village of Milly. The intense morning sunlight and cooler afternoon temperature help to preserve the bright and forward acidity that is the hallmark of Chablis. In addition, the vineyard is planted on the most well-known soil of Chablis, Kimmeridgian limestone. Ultimately, Côte de Léchet produces an expression of Chardonnay that is incredibly crisp, lean and full of minerality—exactly what Chablis should be.

Il Club Italiano

by Greg St. Clair, Italian Buyer

2021 Ada Nada "Serena" Langhe Nebbiolo Club: \$21.99, Retail \$24.99

I'm on a Nebbiolo kick: the quality and depth of character you get at a price that's two-to-three times less than a comparable California bottle—there's a lot to like. These wines also remind me of the homey but familial charm that I saw so much of when I started in the wine business more than 40 years ago—so many small producers passionately involved in every step of the process. Ada Nada makes just 3,750 cases of wine a year. That's hard to believe when there are so many behemoths currently in the commercial wine scene. The "Serena" Nebbiolo has only 250 cases produced. Located in Treiso, about a 15-minute, 85-curve drive south from the village of Barbaresco, the vineyards face mostly southwest at around 800 feet in elevation. Everything here is harvested by hand—with this tiny production, it would be hard to do it any other way! The wine is harvested in early October, pressed, and then fermented in stainless steel. It's then transferred to barriques for a brief three-month, period where it softens and sets the flavors and color. February is the perfect time for some Porcini Risotto; this is the perfect accompaniment!



2019 Torti Pinot Noir Pavia Club: \$17.99, Retail: \$21.99



If you've ever been to Milan you might be surprised at the dramatic views, but that's because it is in the middle of an enormous plain (that is, rice paddy) that stretches from Piedmont to the Adriatic Sea. You can see the ruggedness of the magnificent Alps in the north and the hills to the south. South of Milan is the Oltrepo' Pavese, or Pavia beyond the Po, an abrupt rise from the plain into rolling hills and then into the backbone of Italy, the Apennine mountains. Oltrepo' Pavese has been the center of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir production in Italy for more than 150 years, thanks to the thirst for Italian sparkling wines in the pre-Prosecco days. Most of these were made in Piedmont by the big Asti producers, but now, with the advent of a global desire for Pinot, the producers have pivoted to making still red Pinot.

The Torti Winery has been around for more than 100 years and has evolved as well. They still make sparkling wines but the move towards red and specifically Pinot Nero (Noir) has been Dino Torti's passion. His daughters Patrizia (pictured above with Greg) and Laura are following in their parent's footsteps and now run the winery. The wine is an easy to drink and perfect food accompaniment and, as the Torti sisters like to say, "No Torti, no party!"

Champagne Club

by Gary Westby, Champagne Buyer

The Borders of Champagne

This February, our journey through Champagne continues with stops at the western and southern edges of the appellation. The variety of wines in Champagne continues to surprise me, even after 22 years and more than 50 trips to this beautiful part of the world. We will start out in the far south of Champagne, just three miles north of Burgundy in the quaint town of Les Riceys with a vintage offering from Lamoureux and then move to the far western edge of Champagne to the town of Crouttes-Sur-Marne with Champagne Courtois.



The 2017 Jean-Jacques Lamoureux "Florine" Brut Champagne (Club: \$34.99 Retail: \$44.99) is composed of half and half Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from older vines on Vivien Lamoureux's estate in Les Riceys (Vivien and Gary are pictured above). In fact, it is a blend of two plots: the Chardonnay from "Alexandrine," an east facing plot on Kimmeridgian clay soil that is almost identical to the soil in Chablis; and the Pinot Noir from "Valigné," also on the same clay. The wine has a great light gold color and a nose of nut bread that is almost Panettone-like with its frame of dried fruit. In the mouth the wine has the focus and concentration of vintage Champagne, with a lovely clean brioche note. The finish is long and fine, and more than a little Chablis-like. I love this for charcuterie, especially saucisson sec!

The Courtois Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (Club: \$34.99 Retail: \$39.99) is also all estate grown and composed of 65% Meunier, 30% Chardonnay, and 5% Pinot Noir from the western edge of Champagne in Crouttes-sur-Marne. Here the soil is a mixture of limestone, clay, and chalk, which produce rich wines with plenty of weight. It is aged for five full years on the lees—more than double what most commercial non-vintage bruts get—and has the toasty, brioche quality that only comes with time. It has a nice dry finish at only 5.5 grams per liter of dosage. This is a great wine to serve on its own as the aperitif but will also pair spectacularly with something like truffle popcorn.

Please remember that these producers and many others from the Clubs would love to see you if your travels take you to Champagne. Courtois is very close to Château Thierry, home of the American Monument, and Lamoureux is an easy stop on the way from Champagne to Burgundy. Email me at garywestby@klwines.com if your travels take you to France—I would love to recommend places in Champagne to you!