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## Dear Wine Club Member,

Happy March! During this month, we celebrate Mardi Gras, International Women's Day, St. Patrick's Day... and Spain? That's right—it's high time the K&L Wine Club give Spanish wine the love it deserves, so you'll find an abundance of Spain-related selections this month. Spain ranks among the top three wine-producing countries in terms of volume, behind Italy and France, yet we don't currently have a Club Español. What's more, in all of 2021, there were only four Spanish wines featured in our clubs. So, when the opportunity to feature two this

month presented itself, I said, "¿por qué no los dos?"

Here's a riddle for you: Spain is the country with the largest area under vine, so why is it not consistently ranked number one in international production volume? The answer lies in what our Best Buy wines have in common: both are from central Spain from old vines grown at high elevation. If you guessed it's the old vines, you'd be right! And here's why: old vines are capable of producing incredibly complex fruit... just, less of it than vigorous youngins!

In our Premium Club, we are featuring two Spanish varieties that have transplanted themselves to California: Graciano in Paso Robles and Albariño in the Sierra Foothills. Graciano has not been given much opportunity to stand alone in its native country, as it's quite valued as a blending component; but it takes center stage here in this Californian bottling and shines. Albariño, on the other hand, is beloved in Spain and has an established classic style, but takes on new personalities in the New World.

¡Salud!

Jin Zhang | Wine Club Director & Head Sommelier



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## Best Buy Wine Club

### 2020 Zestos "Old Vines" Malvar Vinos de Madrid \$9.99

The Malvar grape, also known as Lairen, is considered rare in Spain, but it is the dominant white variety in Madrid, thriving at high elevations. Madrid has been producing wine for centuries, and welcomed a flood of investment in its vineyards during the '90s. This dramatically increased the quality of Madrileño wines, though they are still a bit under the radar. Zestos is a prime example of a hidden gem from Madrid.



The fruit for this wine comes from vines that were planted in 1974! The vine's age, along with dry-farming techniques and poor soil composition, yields small but concentrated berries. Wines made from Malvar have the bright acidity of Sauvignon Blanc and the body of unoaked Chardonnay. At Zestos, they ferment and age in stainless steel to fully preserve the fresh, clean stone-fruit notes of the grape. Stick your nose in the glass again, and you'll catch whiffs of kiwi and grapefruit. The wine has a lively, zesty finish. Serve chilled with your favorite white fish, shellfish, or chicken dishes.

## 2019 Vinos del Viento “Old Vine” Garnacha Calatayud \$9.99

Winemaker Michael Cooper was born in Santa Barbara, California, but has been living in Spain since he fell in love and married a Spanish woman in 2002. His passion for wine started much earlier though, growing up in Santa Barbara, but it was reignited while experiencing the vibrant Spanish wine culture. He realized his dream in 2009 by making his own wines. You can read about his wine journey on our **blog**. We are such fans of his wines that we began importing them directly as part of our portfolio in 2020.

Calatayud is about 240 miles due east of Barcelona and 150 miles northwest of Madrid, administratively under the autonomous community of Aragón. It is inland and mountainous, and the vineyards grow at a considerable elevation. In fact, more than 80% of the vineyards are situated at 2,133–2,953 feet, and about 62% of vineyard plantings are old-vine Garnacha Tinta (AKA Grenache). This Grenache came from vines anywhere between 35–100 years old. It is deep in color, mineral-driven, and concentrated. Cooper recommends pairing this with grilled vegetables and spicy or Asian dishes. The tannins in this red are soft and juicy, making it the perfect partner for full-flavored cuisine.



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## Signature Red Collection

### 2012 Byrd Estate “Reserve” Mendocino Cabernet Sauvignon \$24.99

Byrd Estate is small and remote, sitting 2,600 feet up in the Mayacamas Mountains, above the town of Cloverdale and far above the fog line. Mendocino is a relatively new area for Cabernet Sauvignon, and Bruce Byrd planted his vineyard up here in 2004. Their motto, “It’s Better Up Here,” reflects their belief in their excellent terroir. Vineyards at high altitudes mean greater exposure to sunlight during the day and provide the day-to-night temperature difference necessary for grapes to develop acid and nuance. The yield is lower than vineyards on the valley floor, but you’ll find more concentration and fuller-bodied wines. As the label suggests, the vineyard features red (iron-oxide rich), rocky, volcanic soils which lend to the structure of the wine as well as its intense yet refined fruit.



This wine won double gold medals at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition in 2016. With ten years of aging, it is arriving at its peak, so open now; though it’ll last another 5–10 years in a cool cellar. The flavors are intense and well-integrated. The nose shows black cherries and blackberry pie fresh out of the oven. On the palate, dark chocolate flavors take center stage and flow beautifully with the fruit. The tannins are silky yet powerful, crescendoing to a mouthwateringly long finish. This wine deserves slow sipping and requires rumination. Nora Jones’s *Don’t Know Why* comes to mind, especially the lyric “My heart is drenched in wine.”



### 2018 Carmel Road Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir \$24.99

Carmel Road’s winemaker Kris Kato grew up in Portland, Oregon. He earned a Fermentation Sciences degree then trained at various Central Coast wineries, including alongside actress Drew Barrymore on her line of wines! He’s now settled in at Carmel Road, located in Santa Lucia Highlands, just inland from Monterey’s rugged coastline. Once thought to be too cold to grow grapes, it’s actually a stellar place for Pinot Noir: cold fog rolls in from the Monterey Bay in the early mornings and at night. Along with a long growing season, these are ideal climatic conditions to preserve the grapes’ natural acidity and to encourage full flavor development.

Carmel Road Winery was one of the pioneers of the region, releasing their first vintage in 1999 just as Santa Lucia Highlands was gaining more recognition. Today they are committed to sustainability, certified by both SIP (Sustainability in Practice) and CCSW (Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing).

On the palate, you’ll find dark cherry, cola, and black tea notes. The acidity is beautifully balanced, accompanied by silky tannins that lend to the long finish. This wine was aged in 28% new French oak barrels, providing well-integrated aromas of baking spices. Smoked sausages or brisket would be a great pairing.



## Premium Club

### 2020 Groundwork (Sans Liege) Paso Robles Graciano \$14.99

Graciano is a richly perfumed grape, most commonly known as a minor blending partner to Tempranillo and Garnacha in Rioja. If this is the first time you've heard of it, you are not alone. You might be asking yourself, why and how did this wine get made with this obscure grape? The story traces back to Andrew Jones, the owner of Field Recordings winery. (Check out

his 2019 Field Recordings "Wonderwall" Edna Valley Pinot Noir). About 10 years ago, Jones sold a significant amount of "Mourvèdre" rootstock all over Paso Robles, which ended up being Graciano after DNA testing. As a result, many of the well-known GSM (Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre) blends of Paso turned out to actually be Grenache-Syrah-Graciano blends. And this is not the first time it's happened! Throughout history in both Spain and Italy, Monastrell (Mourvèdre) and Graciano have frequently been mistaken for each other. Luckily for Jones, many Paso vintners decided to just roll with the mix-up, because it makes delicious wine!

This wine is not shy on the nose, opening with mouth-watering juicy ripe Bing cherries, strawberry jam, and tart hawthorn berries. On the palate, it is deliciously fruity and fresh without being sweet. Give this a slight chill in the fridge and sip on it while catching up with a friend.

### 2017 Wilson Foreigner "Rorick Vineyard" Sierra Foothills Albariño \$14.99

Albariño is a white grape native to the cool northern Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal. In contrast, the Sierra Foothills is hot. At night, however, the temperature drops dramatically to help preserve the natural acidity of the variety. This Albariño comes from the Rorick Vineyard in Calaveras County, farmed by Matthew Rorick and his family. The vineyard experiences intense sunshine moderated by cool

Alpine-like nights through the growing season. The fruit is pressed whole cluster, and the juice is fermented by ambient yeasts in stainless-steel tank, then settled in neutral Hungarian and French oak barrels. Malolactic fermentation is allowed to continue, adding texture to the wine. The wine is not fined or filtered prior to bottling.



On the nose, the wine shows aromas of citrus blossoms and zest. On the palate, you can expect some weight, creamy texture, and lots of minerality. Don't worry, this is all still counterbalanced by the bright acidity of the grape so it doesn't feel heavy. If you're looking for a break from California Chardonnays and want to get a head start on imagining that warm summer vacation, try this refreshing, zippy sipper.

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## Le Club Français

### 2019 Domaine Pascal & Mireille Renaud Pouilly-Fuissé Vieilles Vignes \$24.99

Domaine Renaud is a small and modern operation. Pascal and Mireille Renaud are the husband-and-wife team that runs the domaine, with Pascal coming from an old established family of winegrowers in Pouilly. In recent years, their children Guillaume and Amandine have joined the winemaking team. The Pouilly-Fuissé appellation, where they grow this wine, is the flagship AOC of the Mâconnais in southern Burgundy. Here, you'll find limestone hills and alkaline clay in the soil that allows Chardonnay to thrive. It is also a place where you can enjoy a stellarly made white Burgundy without digging too deeply into your pocketbook.

The fruit for this wine comes 100% from vines that are 50–80 years old. The juice is aged in a combination of stainless steel and large German foudres in order to preserve the bright, fresh purity of the fruit and the most authentic expression of the terroir. Other than the vanilla on the nose, your palate will be woken up by citrus and stone fruit notes, zippy acidity, and an elegant minerality that is complemented by a warm medium-bodied finish.

## 2017 Jean Foillard Morgon Côte du Py \$34.99

We are so excited to have a bottle by Jean Foillard in our wine club! He's a pioneer in biodynamic and natural winemaking in the Beaujolais region, and his wines are exquisite examples of the depths of quality that this region can produce in the right hands. Beaujolais itself has a fascinating history, often associated with the young and fresh Beaujolais Nouveau style of wines, though the ten Crus are serious AOCs producing serious and age-worthy wines.



In 1395, the Duke of Burgundy outlawed the Gamay grape from Burgundy and exiled it to Beaujolais, just to the south. But, when phylloxera decimated Burgundy vineyards in the 19th century, Beaujolais stepped up to earn a loyal cadre of drinkers. Lyon, often called the food capital of France, is located just at its southern edge. Due to heavy taxes levied on non-local products such as wines from Rhône and Burgundy, Lyon restaurants began sourcing their wines from Beaujolais. Thanks to Lyon's high concentration of restaurants, a large and steady demand for Beaujolais wine was born.

This demand is now also true of American drinkers, who have been turning to Cru Beaujolais for food-friendly, complex wines of distinctive character. Côte du Py is one of six special climats (terroir-specific areas) within the Cru of Morgon. In your glass, you will find the characteristic *sous bois*, or forest-floor, earthiness as well as tart cherries and raspberry notes. If you dig just a little deeper, there's a quite pronounced spicy, cured-meat element that makes my mouth water for a charcuterie board!

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## Il Club Italiano

by Greg St. Clair, Italian Buyer



## 2019 Argiano Rosso di Montalcino \$23.99

The 2019 vintage was another stellar, five-star year in Montalcino—where global warming is actually improving conditions for dependably ripening grapes! For my money Argiano has been one of the most reliable wineries in Montalcino, their 290-acre estate lies in the southwestern corner of Montalcino. Here at 1000 feet, they are at a high enough altitude to provide the grapes with a bit of freshness while still taking in all of the southwestern-facing

afternoon sun. This 100% Sangiovese wine shows all the richness of its superb vintage: a nose of ebullient fruit like ripe plum mixed with wild cherry, moving to a palate that shows a richness but still holds a tightrope of tension—it isn't sloppy rich, it is muscular. A long finish portends a 10+-year aging ability for this beauty, though it is still very drinkable now. I'd decant for an hour and try it with some *pinci al Cinghiale*!

## 2016 Viotti "Ca Nova" Barbera d'Asti \$15.99

When reading about many Tuscan wineries, it's not uncommon to find ones that can trace their ancestry back 500–1000 years. In Piedmont, however, the history is much different. Case in point: the Viotti winery started making wine in 2000. They're a father-daughter team with Guido Viotti and, the driving force in sales, Bianca. I met them at Vinitaly several years ago. I finally had a chance to retaste their wine here in the U.S., and, when I did, I immediately said, "Yes, we'll take that!" I thought this 2016 Barbera would be the perfect introduction to their lineup. Barbera from Asti is never thought of in the same breath as its more famous cousins from the Langhe, but this bottle proves the naysayers wrong. From such a spectacular vintage, it shows the depth of flavor and a slightly riper version of Barbera than you see in the Langhe. The perfect pizza wine as far as I am concerned, try it with your favorite!

