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Dear Wine Club Member,

October may be the spookiest time of year, but we've got absolutely no tricks up our sleeves—all treats! This month's selection of wines will warm your bones during scary movie marathons, pumpkin carving parties, or while telling ghost stories around the fire pit. Though not everyone may agree on the pumpkin-spiced-everything debate, we can all certainly come together to enjoy the fall over a glass of wine.

It's a Champagne month, and Buyer Gary Westby has selected two beauties from the 2014 vintage for the Champagne Club, plus a bottle from Alexandre Le Brun for our French Club for good measure. You'll find a stand-out St-Émilion from Clos la-Gaffelière, from the ripe, delicious 2018 vintage, and an old-vine Zin from one of the best sites for the grape in all of California. No matter which Club you belong to, all of our selections are available to you at our Club discount. Happy October!



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Best Buy Wine Club

2018 Fleur Haut Gaussens Bordeaux Supérieur Club: \$9.99, Retail: \$13.99

By Clyde Beffa Jr., Bordeaux Buyer

Another great value Bordeaux from the sweet and lush 2018 vintage—probably the best under-\$10 bottle at K&L. We discovered the wine in 2018 after tasting the 2016 vintage. We put it in our Best Buy Club that year, and it sold quickly. Now we have the lush, fruit-forward 2018. I predict this one will also sell out rapidly. Here is your Tuesday night hamburger wine. Decant and enjoy. 90 points James Suckling: "Currant, blackberry-leaf, chestnut-mushroom, and gravel aromas. It's medium-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity." I score it even higher.



2020 Comte Louis de Clermont-Tonnerre (Corcia) Ventoux Vieilles Vignes Club: \$9.99, Retail: \$12.99

By Keith Mabry, Rhône Buyer

Mont Ventoux strikes an amazing pose in the Southern Rhône. Not only is it the highest peak in the south of France (and one of the stages of the Tour de France), but it is also one of the great influences in the appellation of Ventoux. Vineyards sprawl beneath its shadow; its alluvial soils spread across the valley below; and it remains one of the best value regions in all of France. Our old friend Alain Corcia consistently sources some of the best fruit from the region. He's been making this wine for years, and it always over-delivers for its humble price. All Grenache (with maybe a splash of Syrah to keep it legal in the appellation), this is old-vine fruit, and it shows in the wine's concentration. Lusty red and black fruit make for a delicious mouthful of wine, and the spice and tobacco notes lend complexity. This is fruit-forward and about as friendly a wine as you can find in the category. It has been a staff favorite for years, and it checks many a K&L's perfect weekday wine box. Whether you serve it with carnitas, grilled sausage, or some bison burgers, this is a red that will surely stand out on your table and make a weekday that much nicer.

Signature Red Collection



2018 Precedent “Kirschenmann Vineyard” Mokelumne River Lodi Zinfandel Club: \$24.99, Retail: \$29.95

By Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic Buyer

The Precedent Kirschenmann Vineyard Zin is from one of the most highly renowned plantings of Zinfandel on the planet. Situated in an oxbow of the Mokelumne River, these ancient vines planted in 1915 send their roots deep into Lodi’s sandy loam soils and even find some limestone deep beneath! Kirschenmann is owned and farmed by Tegan Passalacqua, longtime winemaker at Turley Vineyards and his own Sandlands wines. After working at Turley with the crème de la crème of old Zin vineyards across the state, Tegan knew there was something extra special about this site. But it wasn’t until a neighbor was excavating foundations nearby that Tegan saw the huge chunks of limestone bedrock being pulled from the ground! Then everything clicked: Kirschenmann fruit always has a particularly lifted, aromatic profile and red fruit character. The site always produces a fresher, more lifted style than others across Lodi.

Precedent Wines are crafted by Nathan Kandler, who largely focuses on old vines and sensitive farming practices. Nathan’s precise but relatively hands-off winemaking style helps accentuate the beauty and purity of fruit this vineyard is known for. I’m thrilled to be offering this very small-production wine to our Club members as I have loved it ever since tasting it as a barrel sample back in 2019!

2017 Tahbilk “Old Vines” Cabernet–Shiraz Nagambie Lakes Victoria Club: \$24.99, Retail: \$29.99

By Thomas Smith, Australia Buyer

Tahbilk is one of Australia’s most long-standing and iconic wineries. Established in the Nagambie Lakes subregion of the Goulburn Valley, it has been in continuous production for more than 160 years, with original Shiraz vines from 1860 still producing today. Tahbilk’s rich history was ushered into the modern era when purchased in the 1920s by the Purbrick family, who have been the stewards of this unique property for the last three generations. The Tahbilk “Old Vine” Cab/Shiraz is 49% Cabernet Sauvignon and 51% Shiraz, sourced entirely from old-vine plantings from Tahbilk’s estate vineyards. Cab–Shiraz blends are a signature wine for Australia, marrying the dark structure of Cabernet with spice and mid-palate roundness of Shiraz. Displaying powerful aromas of blackberry, black cassis preserves, and complex spice box notes, this is a big, bold, and ripe blend with concentration that’s off the charts—one of Australia’s best.



Premium Club

2018 Von Strasser “Rudy” North Coast Cabernet Sauvignon Club: \$14.99, Retail: \$19.95

By Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic Buyer

Sadly, this wine represents the end of an era. The legendary Rudy Von Strasser sold his property on Diamond Mountain a few years back. We were lucky enough to buy much of the winery’s library at that time, and hopefully some of you have a bottle or two of those treasures laid down in the cellar! After a storied career spanning 38 harvests, Rudy was ready to simplify his life and de-stress after some recent wildfire challenged vintages. Von Strasser’s second label, aptly named “Rudy,” has long been a staff pick here at K&L. Ever since I joined the team 11 years ago this wine has consistently been one of the very best values in California Cabernet. The 2018 will be the final release of this wine, and we secured the very last cases for our Premium Wine Club! It’s a classic Cab with lots of ripe blackcurrant, plum, leather, cigar box, and subtle vanilla oak. Medium to full bodied with fine but textural tannins and an enlivening acidity from the near-perfect, cool, 2018 growing season. What a way to go out! And, as Wine Club members you get incredible pricing that’s the cherry on top. Thanks Rudy for a lifetime of delicious wines!

2021 Château de Montfaucon Lirac Rosé Club: \$14.99, Retail: \$17.99

By Keith Mabry, Rhône Buyer

Vigneron Rudi des Pins helped redefine the appellation of Lirac, which sits across the Rhône River from Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Lirac is also right next to Tavel, a region famous for its distinctive, rich rosé wines. This wine is Rudi's homage to Tavel. The blend of 30% Grenache, 25% Cinsault, 25% Mourvèdre, 10% Carignan, and 10% Clairette produces a saturated color darker than the average Provençal pink wine but with more structure and flavor. The hue is more akin to a light red wine and should be drunk as such. This style of rosé shows its best after summer when it has had a chance to settle and pairs beautifully with fall flavors: try pumpkin bisque with poached shrimp or a roasted pork loin with curried butternut squash. Drinks well now, but these rosés are also age-worthy. A 2019 on my recent visit to Montfaucon was magnificent!

Le Club Français

Alexandre Le Brun "Tradition" Brut Champagne Club: \$29.99, Retail: \$34.99

By Gary Westby, Champagne Buyer

The Alexandre Le Brun "Tradition" Brut Champagne is a classic blend of one-third Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Meunier that spends more than three years on the lees. It comes from the tiniest grower-producer that we work with directly, winemaking talent and Giants' fan Alexandre Le Brun from the equally tiny village of Monthelon. It is in one of the very coldest microclimates in the already cold Champagne region, the Côteaux Sud d'Épernay, about 10 minutes south of the capital of Champagne. Alex has just seven acres, and, of that, he only keeps a quarter for himself, selling the rest to Bollinger. The wine is made in a 17th-century ecclesiastical cellar, which also happens to be his mom's basement, and fermented extraordinarily slowly at low temperatures to yield the most expressive results. The finished product has fresh baguette and citrus aromas, tiny bubbles, creamy texture, and a fabulously expansive, long finish. Perfect on its own as an aperitif, but also pairs with everything from smoked salmon to pâté. Supplies are very limited on this one!

2018 Clos la-Gaffelière, St-Émilion Club: \$29.99, Retail: \$34.99

by Clyde Beffa Jr., Bordeaux Buyer

This wine is stunning and one-third the price of the first wine, Château La Gaffelière. Since 2017, the property has been making probably the best value red wine in St-Émilion. They were frosted in 2017 on their lower vineyards, so they only used the fruit above the winery, toward Canon and Ausone. Wow what a great wine the 2017 was—and what a revelation. Since 2017 the winemaker has tightened up their vineyard sources and is only using the best vines they have. The 2018 Clos is a sweet, silky, sexy wine—so smooth you will drink the whole bottle at one seating. Perfect with a stuffed quail. It will cellar well for several more years. Keep your eye on this property: they are now making wines that rival their outstanding wines from the 50s and 60s.

Il Club Italiano

by Greg St. Clair, Italian Buyer

2020 Blason Cabernet Franc Isonzo del Friuli Club: \$11.99, Retail \$13.99

By Greg St. Clair, Italian Buyer

Cabernet Franc is an interesting variety—it shows dramatic changes in every terroir it is planted in. But leave it to Italy to make it more difficult! In Friuli, for a long time, Carménère has also been called Cabernet Franc... sorry about that! Giovanni Blason's Cabernet Franc is a blend of both, and, as such, it has a very different flavor character. The Isonzo River runs down the eastern border of Friuli alongside Slovenia in a long, glaciated plain. Friuli has not been known as the red wine capital of Italy, but for whites it's among the top—enter global warming and that has now changed. The nose of this wine is complex: waves of herbaceous intrigue followed by a subtle richness and a tiny bit of grip in the finish. I love this wine's versatility. It should be served cellar temperature, and I love it with roast chicken, but a platter of antipasti works just as well!

**2010 Santoleri “Croгнаleto” Montepulciano d’Abruzzo Club: \$27.99,
Retail: \$36.99**

It’s a rare occurrence to get a 12-year-old wine direct from the winery, and I love that we can offer something that is perfectly aged in addition to new releases. This kind of opportunity doesn’t come along often!



Montepulciano as a grape has never been fully appreciated in America. Firstly, there’s confusion with the DOC Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, and, secondly, the post-WWII history of wine from Abruzzo had been sketchy at best until the last two decades, when a crop of producers finally began to set their sites on quality wine instead of the bargain-basement jug wine the region had been known for.

Santoleri’s “Croгнаleto” was made from a vineyard planted in 1970—so with 40-year-old vines, a great vintage, and 12 years of age, you’re going to get the best of this wine. It was aged in 20–25hl Slavonian oak for 20 months. It is savory, deep, and brooding—not jammy at all—super smooth and approachable, with tannins fully integrated. Enjoy!

Champagne Club

by Gary Westby, Champagne Buyer

Double 14s in October

I have been telling anyone who will listen that 2014 is the vintage to buy for Champagne lovers. This cool, even millésime reminds me very much of the great 1988 when it was young. It is also a style that is endangered, as, during my career, this style has only been available three times: 1988, 2004, and now 2014. Hot vintages will be a dime a dozen in the future. We already have 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2020 all in the pipeline, but old-fashioned northern weather years are getting rarer and rarer. For this month, Champagne Club members will be treated to two from this fabulous harvest.



2014 A.D. Coutelas Brut Champagne Club: \$34.99, Retail: \$49.99

This comes from Angelique and Damien Coutelas in Dizy, just north of Épernay. It is composed of equal parts Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, from the 1er Cru of Dizy where they are located, and entirely vinified in stainless steel. I love this wine for the aperitif, as it has a golden color, a full, brioche-filled vintage Champagne nose, and a great creamy texture with tiny bubbles from more than six years of ageing on the lees. I find notes of stone fruit on the palate, as well as fantastic 1er Cru chalk on the lively, vivacious finish. I am looking forward to pairing it with crab cakes as soon as the Dungeness season opens!

2014 Lété-Vautrain Brut Champagne Club: \$34.99, Retail: \$49.99

From the opposite side of the Marne Valley, all the way to the western edge, we have the 2014 Lété-Vautrain. This grower-producer is in Château Thierry in the Aisne department, the closest part of Champagne to Paris. It is composed of 40% Meunier, 40% Chardonnay, and 20% Pinot Noir, and like the Coutelas is made entirely in stainless steel. The wine has a white gold color and a compact ribbon of bubbles as well as a fabulous bouquet of white flowers. The combination of those generous flower notes from the Chardonnay and the spice of the Meunier gives this wine the kind of intrigue that makes it ask to be smelled again and again. In the mouth, the texture is poised and silky, but the back end is loaded with the electricity of the high acid 2014 vintage. Try this with your favorite pâté!