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Dear Wine Club Member,

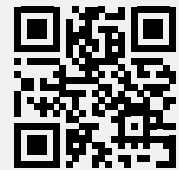


For many of us, September symbolizes back to school and a time of beginning again. Though California is not famous for our crisp, leafy autumns like the East Coast and the Midwest, perspective still seems to shift at this time of year. We're turning the corner toward the holidays and the colder months. For food and wine lovers, that means we start to think about our upcoming feasts! And we are here for it!

For many wine regions, it's also harvest season, where vigneronns are busily preparing to gather their fruit to make their wines. After months of meticulously minding the vines, it's the season when the alchemy of yeast, oxygen, and time work together to make magic.

Luckily, we don't have to say goodbye to summer just yet, as California Septembers are often still sunny and sweltering, so we've included a rosé of Cabernet Franc from Bourgueil that will cool you off as well as accompany whatever's in your picnic basket. Also in our Best Buy Club, we're featuring a Beaujolais that will help bridge the seasons: put a chill on it for warm-weather sipping or serve with roast duck tacos to relax into comfort food. Burgundy lovers: this month is for you! We are featuring four divine selections from DI faves Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot and Château Vitallis.

To thank you for being part of our Wine Club, we invite members to shop from any of these selections at the Club discount, no matter which Club you belong to. We hope you enjoy them!



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Best Buy Wine Club

2020 Domaine Jean-Michel Dupré "Vignes de 1940" Beaujolais-Villages Retail \$12.99 / Club \$9.99

by Alex Pross, Burgundy Buyer

The Beaujolais region is, in my opinion, the epicenter of great value from France. Its beautiful rolling hills produce wonderful, easy-drinking, affordable reds from the Gamay grape. Though a decree in 1395 by Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, famously had Gamay ripped out from the Côte d'Or, his bias against the grape is being proven wrong in 2022! The dedicated vigneronns in Beaujolais are crafting Gamay wines that can easily compete qualitatively with anything from Burgundy in the commensurate price range.

Jean-Michel Dupré fashions some of my favorite Beaujolais values. With a farm and two hectares of vines, he has slowly and intelligently been crafting flat-out delicious wines. The Vignes 1940 comes from sustainably farmed vines planted in the 1940s. The wine sees a short maceration of whole clusters and six months in concrete tank. The resulting wine is fresh, bright, and fruity with excellent concentration and structure. There is ample red and black fruit with simple spice and subtle mineral notes, plus good acidity and soft, supple tannins. This is an ideal food wine. The versatility of Beaujolais is on full display here and served slightly chilled, this red can pair with virtually any cuisine including spicy Mexican, Indian, or BBQ.

2021 Domaine les Pins “L’Instant” Bourgueil Rosé Retail \$12.99 / Club \$9.99

by Keith Mabry, Loire Buyer



Domaine les Pins is a fifth-generation operation producing grapes and wines since the 1930s in Loire Valley’s Bourgueil region. Though not as famous as nearby Chinon, Bourgueil produces terrific Cabernet Franc equally well. Most of the soils are alluvial consisting of sand, clay, and gravel, which Cab Franc really enjoys. Now overseen by Philippe Pitault, Les Pins makes delicious and age-worthy wine for a bargain. We are big fans of this delightful rosé. There is something distinctly different between rosés from the Loire Valley and those of Provence. There is more fruit intensity but also a light note of crushed herbs. Les Pins’ rosé sings with lovely notes of cherry, tarragon, and a whisper of peppery spice. Not just a warm-weather sipper, this will pair well into the fall season. It can go with anything off the grill, but would be especially good with smoked salmon or herb-roasted chicken and loads of roasted potatoes.

Signature Red Collection

2017 Domaine de Fontbonau Côtes-du-Rhône Retail \$27.99 / Club \$24.99

by Keith Mabry, Rhône Buyer

Fontbonau’s story begins as a joint venture between two old friends and wine industry vets: Frédéric Engerer, managing director of Château Latour, and Jérôme Malet of Sarda-Malet in the Rousillon. When the pair came across the old vines at Fontbonau, both were so smitten they decided to make this a personal project, not just a business one. Thanks to their connections, most of the oak barrels are from Latour’s own barrel program, and they have access to Stockinger casks, some of the most desirable large-format barrels in the industry with a years-long wait list. But, it’s what happens in the vineyards that is most important. There are exceptionally old vines of Grenache planted over the calcareous, sandy loam and decomposed sandstone soils in an ideal microclimate. They are organic certified and committed to biodiversity, including fields of lavender, an apiary, truffle oaks, olive and other fruit-yielding trees, including some of the most memorable cherries I have ever tasted.



The Côtes-du-Rhône is always held a few years before being released. Grenache-dominant with about 10% Syrah, the wine is fermented with native yeasts and no sulfites are added until bottling. What you have is one of the purest expressions of Grenache. It is farther north than Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and this has a cooling effect that gives the wine a more perfumed and elegant profile. Harmonious and thoughtful, the flavors range from strawberry and raspberry to bay leaf and anise with notes of grilled meat. There is a lovely minerality and a fine, dry finish. On my recent visit to the Rhône, I had the privilege to revisit the domaine. We had a simple lunch prepared by Jerome, and we drank this with some white asparagus, poached eggs, a fabulous vegetable salad, and a risotto Jérôme prepared à la minute!

2020 Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot Savigny-les-Beaune Retail \$29.99 / Club \$24.99

by Alex Pross, Burgundy Buyer

Giboulot’s Savigny-les-Beaune provides great insight into the greatness of the 2020 Burgundy vintage. The wines from this domaine are always very good, but his set of 2020s looks to be the best he has ever produced. Focusing mainly on the appellation of Savigny-les-Beaune, Jean Michel crafts distinctive and terroir-driven wines that showcase the immense quality that can be found in this underrated appellation. Just north of the town of Beaune, it is known for producing wines of size and structure with a rustic streak in them. Savigny-les-Beaune has become a wonderful source of value from vigneronns whose acumen allows them to tame this challenging appellation. This wine is sourced from multiple vineyards and displays all the hallmarks of the glorious 2020 Burgundy vintage. Gorgeous notes of cranberry, black cherry, and hibiscus spring from the glass while the palate is a delightful blend of pure, pretty berry notes, subtle hints of spice, and a touch of oak and minerality. The balance and harmony here between fruit and tannin make this such a supple and fruit-driven offering with immense structure. A great wine for plank-cooked salmon fillets, artisan pizza, or grilled red meats. A great intro to the wonderful world of values from Savigny-les-Beaune!

Premium Club

2020 Château Vitallis Mâcon-Fuissé Retail \$16.99 / Club \$14.99

by Alex Pross, Burgundy Buyer

Located at the foot of the small village of Solutre in the Mâcon, Château Vitallis can trace its origins back to the 13th century when Lord Fuissé made the château his home. It is now one of the oldest buildings in Burgundy. By the 19th century the property was owned and run by Monsieur Ange Henry Vitallis, which is where the name of the property is derived. Today it is run by the dynamic father-son team of Denis and Maxime Dutron. Denis and Maxime tend to the vines themselves and keep intervention to a minimum while adapting organic growing techniques uniquely to each specific terroir. The 2020 Château Vitallis Mâcon-Fuissé is made from vines with an average of 25 years grown in primarily clay-limestone soil and vinified using traditional methods for six months on its lees in stainless steel vats. The resulting wine is a beautiful take on 2020 with orchard fruits, subtle spice, and wonderful acidity. The wine displays all the hallmarks of 2020: energy, finesse, and precision all punctuated by the perfect balance of delicious fruit, tannin, and acidity. The 2020 Mâcon-Fuissé will be a great foil for a summer salad, richer seafoods, or a cheese plate.



2019 Brander "F/Red" Santa Ynez Valley Bordeaux Blend Retail \$19.95 / Club \$14.99

by Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic Buyer

Brander is one of my absolute favorite wineries in Santa Barbara County. Despite their long history and the incredibly high quality of wines, they have stayed somewhat under the radar of many consumers. Founded in 1975 by Fred Brander with a singular goal: to make world-class Sauvignon Blanc in the Santa Ynez Valley. For many years the only wine they produced was Sauvignon Blanc, which quickly gained international acclaim. As the years went by, they expanded their estate plantings in the recently minted Los Olivos AVA to include other varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Malbec. I still firmly believe that first and foremost Brander hang their hat on producing absolutely fantastic Sauvignon Blanc, and I implore you to try them. However, they have really hit their stride with red Bordeaux-inspired wines, too! The estate now produces several single-varietal wines and some excellent blends like the 2019 Brander "F/Red" Los Olivos District Bordeaux Blend. The wine, named in honor of Fred Brander, is designed as an easy-drinking, soft, fruit-forward Cab Sauv blend that is a perfect daily drinker. What I love about this wine is that it delivers on that promise without being overly jammy, or simple and fruity. It still has lovely varietal typicity, great texture, refined tannins, bright acidity, and wonderful balance throughout. It's a wine that really over-delivers for the price point, and I'm delighted to be sharing it with you!

Le Club Français



2020 Château Vitallis Pouilly-Fuissé 1er Cru "Les Perrieres" Retail \$34.99 / Club \$29.99

by Alex Pross, Burgundy Buyer

It took longer than anticipated, but there has finally been an elevation of 22 vineyards in Pouilly-Fuissé to 1er Cru status. The vineyards had to meet the following criteria: a history of making stand-alone cuvées from the single vineyards; excellent quality vineyards; Jurassic clay-limestone soil; maximum altitude at 400m above sea level; no

Northern exposures since they are more prone to heat issues in warmer vintages; no herbicides; low yields. The 2020 Château Vitallis Pouilly-Fuissé 1er Cru "Les Perrieres" is one such bottling that made the cut. Les Perrieres is one of the most renowned vineyards in Pouilly-Fuissé. The name "Les Perrieres" refers to the stoniness of the soil here. The wine is a wonderful showcase for why this vineyard was elevated to 1er Cru status with intense orchard fruit notes along with almond, brioche, and white flower aromas. The palate provides a rush of apple and pear flavors accented by oak and iodine notes that seamlessly mesh with the good acidity and tannin notes. This should pair well with roast chicken or richer seafood like scallops.

2020 Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er Cru "Aux Fournaux" Retail \$34.99 / Club \$29.99
by Alex Pross, Burgundy Buyer

There are a few select areas left where you can still find very good 1er Cru-quality red Burgundy values that won't break the bank, and one of those areas happens to be Savigny-les-Beaune. A perennial favorite producer from this under-the-radar region is Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot. Run by third-generation vigneron and namesake, the domaine is traditional, allowing both the growing and the winemaking to proceed with as little intervention as possible. In a great vintage like 2020 the result is a stunning wine and value! The name Fournaux loosely translated means "at the ovens," which hints both at this being a hot site and the former location of charcoal burners. The true mastery of Jean-Michel Giboulot unfolds with the 2020 Domaine Jean Michel Giboulot Savigny-les-Beaune 1er Cru "Fournaux." It pushes towards the blacker spectrum of fruits with dark cherry and blueberry flavors accented by spice and molten rock notes. Super fine tannins, good acidity, and impressive complexity make this a great expression of not only the Fournaux vineyard but the heights Savigny-les-Beaune can reach. Pair this marvel with pork, lamb, or any hearty fare that is in need of a great red wine.

Il Club Italiano

by Greg St. Clair, Italian Buyer



2019 Contucci Rosso di Montepulciano Retail \$19.99 / Club \$17.99

The town of Montepulciano is cursed with a name that is forever linked to another wine, named after the grape Montepulciano: Montepulciano d'Abruzzo. The battle for ultimate name recognition between place and grape probably won't ever be resolved, so many *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* producers are just calling their wine *Nobile*, to signify their noble lineage (no doubt in their mind who wins the battle), and appropriately so. For those who visit Montepulciano, Contucci is one of the highlights. The tour through their three-story underground cellars is unbelievable, and, on a hot summer day, there is no better place to be! Contucci has been making wine since the Renaissance, and today their style could still be considered "old school." The 50 acres of vineyards, planted between 900 and 1500 feet, represent just a portion of the 410 acres of the estate. The 2019 Contucci Rosso di

Montepulciano is a blend of 80% Prugnolo Gentile (AKA Sangiovese in Montepulciano) with 10% Cannaiolo Nero and 10% Colorino. It has a particular rustic charm, a bit of grip and earth coupled with a bit of spice, perfect for something off of your BBQ grill! Aged in large 20hl barrels for two years, the wine shows a truly classic representation of Rosso di Montepulciano and 2019 is a great vintage to boot!

2019 Massolino Langhe Nebbiolo Retail \$29.99 / Club \$21.99

It's rare-to-impossible to find a Barolo that fits into the Club price point, so I'm always on the lookout for wines that are representative of the region and give you a chance to drink the younger-vine versions at a friendly cost. Think of it as Trickle Up Economics—you get a chance to taste Massolino Nebbiolo that will make you want to buy the Barolo! The Massolino winery is in Serralunga d'Alba, the Barolo commune usually considered to produce the most structured wines. I am not a fan of overly tannic wines, and I find the wines from Massolino to be well structured while being exceptionally well balanced. Their approach has always been a vineyard-first concept, producing the best grapes possible from some of the best vineyards in Serralunga d'Alba. Their wines just sing! Nebbiolo is a finicky grape to grow. It's very sensitive to soil, exposure, and, even more, winemaking. The 2019 vintage is scintillating; it has great fruit while showing great lift and drive through the finish, layers of complex earth, spice, and that classic Langhe character of tar and Rrses just lays on your tongue! The Massolinos suggest having it with egg noodle pasta and your favorite meat or vegetable sauce.