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Dear Wine Club Member,



While kids are going back to school and vintners are preparing for harvest, we are preparing for our first Champagne Tent Event since 2019! This beloved event brings producers from all over Champagne to our doorstep, from big houses to grower-producers to direct import winemakers we've been working with for decades. It was waylaid by the pandemic the last few years, but we couldn't be more thrilled to have it back. Tickets and more information are available at the Local Events tab on our website, but be sure to save the dates: October 21st in Hollywood and October 22nd in San Francisco. It will undoubtedly be an epic return to form!

We'll also continue to host our monthly Wine Club Pick Up and Tastings on the first Thursday of each month. Bring your friends! Tickets for you and your guests are complimentary. For September, we'll meet on Thursday, October 7, in all three locations from 4-6 PM.

Check out our Italian Club this month, with two lighter-bodied reds well deserving of a quick chill in your fridge. These are wonderful reds to bridge the gap between summer and fall, and, as always, they're available to all Club members at the discount! We look forward to seeing you (hopefully in our stores!) and hearing about all your vinous adventures!



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Best Buy Wine Club

2015 Jean Loron "Chateau Bellevue" Morgon Retail \$12.99 / Club \$9.99

by Trey Beffa, Head Buyer

Jean Loron wines are a remarkable testament to the rich history and tradition of winemaking in Beaujolais and southern Burgundy. Founded in 1711, Maison Jean Loron is one of the oldest and most respected wineries in the region, with eight generations of the Loron family at its helm. They craft their wines with great care and precision, and they are dedicated to sustainable winemaking practices. In 2009, Maison Jean Loron purchased Château Bellevue near the village of Villié-Morgon. The Morgon appellation, in the heart of Beaujolais, is renowned for producing some of the most robust and full-bodied wines in the region. Covering around 1,120 hectares of vineyards, it's the second largest Cru of Beaujolais, located on the slopes of the Beaujolais hills. The terroir here is distinctive, characterized by rich, decomposed schist and manganese-rich soils, providing an ideal environment for the Gamay grape. The resulting wines possess a deeper color, more complexity, and a greater potential for aging compared to those from other areas of Beaujolais.

With a few extra years in the bottle, this 2015 offering of Morgon is wonderfully approachable and fruity; yet, for a Beaujolais, it shows quite a bit of structure, depth, and richness. This is an excellent pick for a summertime red to pair with grilled chicken or pork.

2022 Nicolas Idiart Sauvignon Blanc Val de Loire Retail \$11.99 / Club \$9.99

by Keith Mabry, Loire Buyer

Nicolas “Nico” Idiart entered the wine business at the age of 19 and studied winemaking in France, Australia, and New Zealand. After working in wine sales for years, he went back to making wine. He sources only high-quality, organically farmed fruit, but from less-famous areas so that he can offer tremendous value wines. This Sauvignon Blanc is filled with aromas of grapefruit and lemon plus the other classic notes of stone fruit, fresh-cut grass, and white flowers. The nice crisp finish keeps this lifted and dynamic on the palate. Try this gem with goat cheese and a fresh herb salad—or just on its own!



Signature Red Collection

2021 Ordaz Family Wines “Vintage Red” Moon Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon Retail \$39.95 / Club \$34.95

by Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic Buyer

I’m so excited to include the Ordaz Family Moon Mountain Vintage Red Blend in our Signature Red Club this month. First and foremost the wine is absolutely delicious! It’s 93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. The fruit is sourced from some of the most incredible vineyards in all of Sonoma and perhaps one of the finest plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon in the entire state of California. I’m talking about the historic Montecillo Vineyard. This vineyard was planted to Cabernet Sauvignon in 1963 and is the source for some of the finest, and most age-worthy wines of the entire region. Producers such as Turley, Bedrock, Arnot-Roberts, DuMOL and Carlisle all buy fruit from Montecillo. It is a world-class site.

This blend also includes fruit from two neighboring vineyards, Lupin Ridge Vineyard and Maus (aka Deering) Vineyard. These vineyards have several things in common—they are perched on the side of Moon Mountain in the Mayacamas Range; they have rocky, red, volcanic soils; and they are organically farmed by the Ordaz Family (Palo Alto Vineyard Management) under the watchful eye of Jesus “Chuy” Ordaz. Chuy is a true legend in these parts. He has been growing grapes on this mountain for over 50 years. His depth of knowledge, meticulous farming, and attention to detail is known throughout the wine business. Chuy Jr., his son, is now (VERY) slowly taking the reins of the vineyard management side while another son, Eppie, makes the wines for the small family label utilizing their unrivaled access to some of the finest fruit Sonoma has to offer. Just 120 cases of this captivating wine were made and we took almost all of it! A stunning wine from great vineyards farmed and crafted by one of the nicest families you could ever meet. Enjoy!

2021 Gómez Cruzado “el Predilecto” Rioja Retail \$29.99 / Club \$24.99

by Kirk Walker, Spain Buyer

Gómez Cruzado is a historic Rioja producer. Its founding goes back to the late 19th century, along with some of the most famous Rioja producers—Lopez de Heredia, La Rioja Alta, and CVNE—all from the historic village of Haro. El Barrio de la Estación, the train station in Haro, is what made Rioja. Without an easy method of exportation, Rioja would never have seen French innovations, and it would not be what it is today. Gómez Cruzado was there almost at the beginning. Speaking of history, and this has nothing to do with anything, one of the original founders has a tenuous connection to the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II. When has that ever been brought up in connection with wine? Gomez Cruzado never took off in the U.S. market, so they appear like relative newcomers to our shelves. Their style, just like their neighbors, is traditional but they have been quicker to adopt to some of the modern changes.

El Predilecto encapsulates the bodega’s mission: a historically rooted brand with a modern expression. It reminds me of the famous Ardanza bottling from La Rioja Alta. The Predilecto is a blend of Garnacha and Tempranillo sourced from Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Alta. The Predilecto speaks to the region and its fruit. The fruit is sourced from vineyards at the extreme borders of the Ebro River: the Tempranillo from limestone clay soils and the Garnacha from iron-rich clay soil. The wine is fermented and aged in concrete for five months. This is a young and vibrant Rioja with layers of aromas and flavors ranging from fresh berries to herbs, flowers, and spices. The complexity is enticing but the power and persistence is what makes this wine shine.

Premium Club

2021 Roca Altxerri Blanco Getariako Txakolina Retail \$19.99 / Club \$14.99

by Kirk Walker, Spain Buyer

This could be the most quintessential regional Spanish wine. Thirty years ago, it could only be found in the region. Twenty years ago, it became an export curiosity. Now it is a staple in all U.S. Spanish restaurants and wine shops. Txakolina is the traditional white wine from the Spanish Basque country. The Roca Altxerri comes from the hills east of San Sebastian. This is lush, green Spain, with a cooler, wetter climate than the rest of the peninsula. Here there are gently rolling green hills covered in vines and pastureland. From these hills you can look down on the Bay of Biscay and further towards the French Riviera.

The wine is made from Hondurrabi Zuri, an unmistakably Basque grape. Light bodied with ripe and bright fruit tones and crisp acidity, it stands out from the crowd with its slight spritz and saline minerality. The spritz is from a small amount of trapped carbon dioxide—it is not sparkling in a traditional sense; the bubbles are barely present and add a little extra energy or zip to the finish. That subtle saltiness speaks to the extreme coastal conditions of the region as well as making it an incredible accompaniment to a meal. This is a wine from the region in Spain that exported pintxos to the world. It awakens flavors and refreshes. Topa!

2018 Skylark “Red Belly” Mendocino County Rhône Blend Retail \$19.99 / Club \$14.99

by Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic Buyer



You can search far and wide and likely never find someone more well versed in wine than Skylark co-owner John Lancaster. John has three decades of experience in the world of fine wine. You may know him as the longtime Wine Director at the San Francisco institution that is Boulevard. Besides curating the dynamic wine list at Boulevard since 1996, John is also a renowned wine judge, writer, consultant, and, of course, winemaker. John’s partner in Skylark is another Boulevard staffer, Sommelier Robert Perkins. Together they take their knowledge of wine combined with deep contacts in the business and quietly craft some of the most fantastic value wines around from sources in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Skylark’s “Red Belly” is based on the rich, bold blends from the south of

France—a layered blend of Syrah, Carignanne, and Grenache. Deep red and black fruits abound with dark cherry, black raspberry, earthy spices, hints of wild thyme, leather, and briary undergrowth. I like this wine’s combination of ripe forward fruit with some very Rhône-like garrigue and earthy tones. It’s an excellent value at the regular price... take another 25% off with your Club Member price and it’s an absolute steal!

Le Club Français

2017 Château Pradeaux Bandol Retail \$36.99 / Club \$34.99

by Keith Mabry, Rhône Buyer

Chateau Pradeaux has been in the Portalis family since 1752. Ranking alongside the greats of Bandol like Tempier and Pibarnon, Pradeaux is one of the benchmarks for the region. The estate sits in the village of Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer between Marseilles and Toulon. Bandol is a region famous for its Mourvèdre, a grape known for its savory flavors and chewy tannins. The Mediterranean is that the grape is happiest when it has a view of the water, and Pradeaux has a great one. Up in the hills overlooking the sea, the vineyards are planted over clay-limestone soils, the most desirable in the region. The 2017, like all other vintages of the this wine, is 95% Mourvèdre with 5% Grenache. The vines range in age, with many over 100 years old giving the density and weight we love from this grape.

The 2017 Pradeaux is filled with notes of roasted plum, Turkish coffee, grilled meat, and crushed herbs. It is rich but not heavy and has a full-bodied mouthfeel. Youthful but approachable, I recommend an hour or more in the decanter. This beauty is both savory and meant to be savored. Serve this with some grilled ribeyes, beautifully charred and rare-medium rare.

2020 de la Solitude Blanc, Pessac-Léognan Retail \$29.99 / Club \$24.99

by Clyde Beffa Jr, Bordeaux Buyer

Pessac-Léognan's Domaine de la Solitude neighbors Domaine de Chevalier, one of the rare Bordeaux producers equally renowned for its white Bordeaux as its red. Along with terroir, they share the same owner and winemaker, Olivier Bernard, who crafts Domaine de la Solitude's Blanc with the same artistry and inspiration. It's a winning formula, and the de la Solitude Blanc delivers the luscious, gorgeous style of Domaine de Chev at a fraction of the cost. A blend of 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Sémillon, it is aged nine to ten months with regular stirring of the fine sediment to create a succulent body and texture. It offers a captivating balance of depth and freshness. On the nose, you'll find notes of white flowers, citrus fruits, and a subtle undertone of well-integrated oak. Lively acidity and rich flavors of lemon peel, ripe pear, and a hint of brioche dance on the palate. This wine is well-structured with a generous mouthfeel and a long, satisfying finish. Perfectly suited for a variety of dishes, particularly shellfish.

Il Club Italiano

by Greg St. Clair, Italy Buyer

2020 Tenuta I Fauri Baldovino Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Retail \$24.99 / Club \$19.99

I do love Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, although it rarely gets the recognition the grape (Montepulciano) really deserves. That's mostly because the region was typically large cooperatives who produced low-cost bulk red wine that filled supermarket shelves back in the 1970s and 80s. The grape is really fantastic when it isn't overcropped, but there's been a slower growth curve among producers on that side of the Apennines. Producers still hear the call of inexpensive large production, which makes it hard to do high quality—fortunately for us, there are a few producers who really do this grape justice. This Baldovino Montepulciano is delicious, fermented and aged in stainless steel. It emphasizes the fruit character of the grape, showing a nose full of blackberry, sage, and a woody undertone. On the palate the wine has a bit of tension and crunch, but the tannins are very well balanced, they're there just to give the wine a framework. A lovely finish that shows energy and drive and re-emphasizes the freshness. I'd have this with a roasted chicken!



2020 Zorzettig Refosco del Peduncolo Rosso Colli Orientali Retail \$24.99 / Club \$19.99

Friuli, one of Italy's best and least known regions, is set against the Slovenian border. It is a glacial plain that runs from the Julian Alps to the Adriatic Sea and is predominantly known for white wines. They do make a lot of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, plus two indigenous red varieties, Schioppettino and the absurdly long-named Refosco del Peduncolo Rosso Colli Orientali. This month we are going to try a Refosco (for brevity's sake, we'll shorten it), a grape mired in ancestral ambiguity. It was once thought

to be Mondeuse due to morphological comparisons, but DNA analysis shows it to be a direct descendant of Marzemino and another unknown parent grape. It has been stuck in a corner, not well known and sometimes just not very interesting. Victor Hazan, Marcella's husband and an authority on Italian wine, wrote in his fabulous 1982 book *Italian Wine*: "There must be better things to wait around for than Refosco." Well, you might wonder why I'm giving this wine a write-up that isn't too stimulating—well it wasn't, up to now! I really like Zorzettig's version—no bitter tannins or harsh acidity like so many other versions of this variety; it is lively, fresh and has a whole lot of flavors. Serve slightly chilled and pair it with wild mushroom pasta with a cream or beef reduction sauce—not tomato sauce!