

Herb's Half Case Wine Club July 2010
Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250
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My non-Wine Club selections for the month are from Louis Latour, the **2006 Viré-Clessé** and the **2007 Montagny 1^{er} Cru**. Both are perfect for this weather. The Viré-Clessé, from the northern Maconnais, is smooth and elegant with ripe lemon curd, mineral, and almonds. The Montagny 1^{er} Cru, a Burgundian value, has glorious, unoaked pear flavors with a hint of almonds and a crisp, citrus infused finish. Each is simply a treat for the palate – exquisite flavor.

2007 Rosenblum Cellars Chardonnay (California)

Tasting Notes: Boy, was this one a surprise! There's a lot going on with this wine, which I didn't expect, given the generic "California" appellation. Ripe apricot aromas rise from the glass and lead to ripe tropical fruits, apples, and more apricot. This unoaked wine has a viscous texture on the mid-palate along with pineapple notes. This wine shows great balance, and the finish is slightly creamy and dry, with lovely lemon curd notes. Complexity and balance for a \$10 wine is quite a feat. Bravo!

Food Pairing: Try this as a starter wine as guests enter the house. Otherwise, since it's unoaked, pair with lighter summer dishes.

2008 Ecker Grüner Veltliner (Wagram, Austria)

Tasting Notes: Gruner Veltliner, Austria's national white, is a terrific warm weather white. I especially liked this example because it has a touch less acidity. It has a slight spritz, which is normal for the varietal, with pleasant lemon flavors. It's softer on the mid-palate with melon flavors. The finish is pleasantly dry with citrus flavors. This is a very refreshing and balanced wine.

Food Pairing: I love Gruner Veltliner in the summer. It has enough flavor and acidity to cut through the hottest days. Also, it's a great choice for spicy ethnic foods, like Thai or Indian, as well as German fare.

2007 Del Rio Vineyards Pinot Gris (Rogue Valley, Oregon)

Tasting Notes: Even though this Pinot Gris is technically from Oregon, I would classify it as a warmer weather version since the Rogue Valley is so far south. Aromas of peaches and melons fill the glass and lead to an interesting mix of flavors on the palate – juicy citrus fruit, almonds, and minerals. It has a smoother, rounder mouthfeel and deftly balances juicy fruit with good acidity. If I didn't know better I'd say this was from northern Italy.

Food Pairing: I would pair this white with poultry. It's heavy enough for chicken and maybe pork in a pinch, but nothing too heavy risingly, Rosé is a versatile food wine. It pairs well with lighter dishes, fried foods, like grilled chicken, and even lighter pork dishes. Experiment, you'll like the results.

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2006 Rosenblum Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon (California)

Tasting Notes: Here's another winner from Rosenblum. This Cabernet has lovely black cherry aromas which continue on the palate with the addition of a hint of vanilla. It's clean and easy drinking with good fruit. Here's the catch though, it has excellent structure with plenty of acidity, so it's not cloying. Add good grip, plenty of tannins, and very lengthy, fuller-flavored, stewed berry fruit. What more could you ask for a Hamilton?

Food Pairing: Here's your burger wine for the month. Straightforward wine for a straightforward meal.

2008 Planeta La Segreta Rosso (Sicily, Italy)

Tasting Notes: This red is what I call a Sicilian Bordeaux – 50% Nero D'Avola, 25% Merlot, 20% Syrah, and 5% Cabernet Franc. This blends starts with aromas of ripe, red berry fruit with hints of bell pepper. It's pleasantly juicy on the palate with red fruits – strawberry and raspberry – and "terroir" driven flavors of herbs de Provence and earth. It has very good structure, balancing copious fruit with enough acidity and tannins. The finish shows pretty, berry fruit flavors and good length.

Food Pairing: This is an interesting wine because it has plenty of fruit, structure, and "terroir". It's unusual to have all three. Therefore, you're choices are expanded to lighter meats, such as pork, and heavier meats, such as steak, lamb, or other game. Feel free to experiment.

2006 Pillitteri Estates Cabernet Franc Niagara-on-the-Lake VQA (Canada)

Tasting Notes: I'm almost certain this is a first...the first Canadian wine in the Wine Club. Aside from being quite beautiful, the Niagara Peninsula produces very good wines. Plus it's so close to Toronto, a very cosmopolitan, enjoyable, and walkable city, that I wholeheartedly recommend visiting this unsung wine region. (If you do visit, let me know, and I can give you a list of some of the better wineries.) This Cabernet Franc has a bit of a rustic aroma with dark fruit and cocoa notes. It's fairly bright on the palate with concentrated, dried, berry fruit and leather notes. The acidity is well balanced, and this wine definitely evolves with aeration, enhancing the fruit and deemphasizing some of the rustic qualities. The finish shows good length and concentrated berry flavors and cocoa notes.

Food Pairing: Given that this wine is slightly rustic, I would pair it with any meat from the grill, especially meats with a rub. The wine should hold its own against heavier bodied foods.

Cheers, Herb