

Herb's Half Case Wine Club March 2010
Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250
decaturpackagestore.com

My non-Wine Club selection for the month is a **Big, Hearty Red – Cabernet, Malbec, Bordeaux or Rhone**. I'll let you pick. This is the last month of serving winter fare, so bring a \$20 bill (a little more if you want a terrific Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape, which is an excellent value compared to New World reds) and just look for a Herb's Choice. Hearty food with a hearty wine and the last vestiges of cold weather – now that's a match made in heaven.

P.S. Oops, can't forget that holiday on the 17th. Skip the green, sudsy, plonk and try an **Imperial Stout, Barleywine or Barrel Aged**.

2007 First Love White (South Eastern Australia)

Tasting Notes: I saw the blend on this Aussie white (62% Semillon, 25% Riesling, and 13% Arneis) and was immediately intrigued. Now the contents had to match the cover. The decision was made at the first sip – we have a winner! What a fun and funky white blend. Light petrol flavors emerge from the Riesling, with almond aromas evolving from the Arneis, a varietal typically found in Italy's Piedmont region; and slightly bright melon, lychee, floral, and stone/ mineral flavors from the Semillon. It's even a bit round on the mid-palate and has a bright, juicy, and lengthy finish. It's a perfect example of the blending expertise of Australian vintners.

Food Pairing: With all the interesting flavors in this wine it can be served by itself or as a starter wine. Otherwise, pair with poultry dishes.

2008 Acrobat Pinot Gris (Oregon)

Tasting Notes: Acrobat is the second label from King Estates, one of the largest producers of Pinot Gris in the state. This new label offers excellent value with a slightly riper style than their flagship King Estate Pinot Gris. The Acrobat offers aromas of ripe melon and almonds. On the palate you'll find crisp and dry apple flavors with hints of minerals and well-balanced acidity. The mid-palate is a bit riper with slight apricot notes and a bright and juicy mouthfeel. The finish is dry with pleasant Alsatian mineral notes and crisp apple fruit. Well done.

Food Pairing: This is my ethnic white for the month. Meaning it will work with any spicy, Asian meal. Lots of flavors combined with lots of acidity equals excellent neutralizer of the heat in these dishes.

2007 Camelot Merlot (California)

Tasting Notes: One of the benefits of being a less popular varietal is better juice. Demand for Merlot is currently far less than its supply, so less expensive wines have access to better juice. (I knew that Economics class in college would finally pay off!) This California Merlot is the tangible example of this principle. It's fresh and clean with slightly dark berry fruit that has just enough acidity for balance and structure. It's a perfect everyday red – great on the palate AND great on the wallet.

Food Pairing: Here is your meat and potato offering for the month. It's a great choice for that basic everyday meal – not too heavy yet not too light.

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2007 Piccini Chainti DOCG 1.5 liter (Tuscany)

Tasting Notes: I figured the Federal Government shouldn't be the only entity offering rebates to the populace. Drum roll please...for the month of April you will receive the equivalent of SEVEN bottles of wine instead of the normal six bottles in the Wine Club. I have hired a team of experts to design a wine bottle that has the volume of two bottles, but occupies the space of a single bottle of wine! I'm calling this innovative program BLTW – better living through wine. But seriously though, this Chianti, which I taste practically every vintage, is always a "Herb's Choice". Their consistency is quite remarkable. It has an outstanding fruit component – clean, soft cherry fruit – with just enough acidity (so you know it's an Italian red) for balance. Piccini is a perfect everyday red that over-delivers in quality and an excellent choice for the BLTW program.

Food Pairing: You could keep it simple and serve this one for Prince Spaghetti Day on Wednesday or pair with lighter bodied meat dishes.

2007 L.A. Cetto Petite Sirah (Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California)

Tasting Notes: The two most popular beverages from Mexico are tequila and Corona – and now I've found a third. This Petite Sirah from the Baja peninsula is outstanding. It has a wonderful aroma of fresh picked, dark berry fruit. It's rich and ripe on the palate with "blue" fruits – blueberry and blackberry – and hints of cocoa and violets. It has a heavier mouthfeel and very well-balanced acidity. The finish is lengthy with dark berry fruit and light spice notes. Great example of the varietal.

Food Pairing: This is a fuller bodied Petite Sirah, so pair accordingly. Heavier meats will pair nicely with this selection.

2008 Bodega Tamari Reserva Malbec (Mendoza, Argentina)

Tasting Notes: This is an excellent example of a higher quality Malbec. Dark berry fruit aromas coupled with a touch of cocoa lead to pretty boysenberry flavors on the palate. The mid-palate has rich, darker, berry fruit and nice acidity. This wine shows good complexity and will taste even better as it aerates. The finish is quite lengthy with huckleberry and cocoa flavors. Nice wine.

Food Pairing: What came first, Malbec or Argentina's zealous devotion to beef (we don't need no stinkin' vegetables!). I'm not sure, but best to stick with the Argentines on this one. You can pair this with anything you want as long as it's beef.

Cheers, Herb