

Herb's Half Case Wine Club July 2013
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I think the choices this month fit the weather perfectly. I've selected a number of different tasting, but heat-busting whites and medium-bodied reds that won't be too heavy for July's heat. Otherwise, I hope you have a great Fourth of July holiday. Enjoy!

Cheers,
Herb

My non-Wine Club selection for the month is the **2011 Goldschmidt Boulder Bank Sauvignon Blanc**. This single vineyard, full-flavored, Sauvignon Blanc is the perfect choice as we roll into summer. Bright flavors of passion fruit and wet stone fill the palate. The acidity isn't overwhelming and the mouthfeel has a touch of roundness. The finish features tropical fruit and nice length. Crisp, flavorful, and refreshing. The perfect summer white.

2011 Domaine du Tariquet Classic (Cotes de Gascogne, France)

Tasting Notes: This is a blend of 45% Ugni Blanc, 35% Colombard, 10% Sauvignon, and 10% Gros Manseng. I've always found wines from the Cotes de Gascogne to be perfect for Atlanta's summers. They're flavorful, lively, and terrifically refreshing and a softer alternative to Sauvignon Blanc. This example has a tropical fruit and citrus aroma. It has a slight spritz and gobs of fruit – melon, tangerine, and mango. The mid-palate turns towards crisp apple flavors and the acidity keeps the expressive fruit in balance. The finish has litchi, gooseberry, tangerine, and a hint of mineral with a pleasantly long finish. Great summer sipper!

Food Pairing: This white has enough flavor to serve by itself or as a starter wine for your next party. Otherwise, I would suggest pairing with lighter foods, such as poultry or light seafood/fish dishes.

2011 Ponga Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough, New Zealand)

Tasting Notes: This is a great example of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. I particularly liked this one because it has great balance. It starts with aromas of passion fruit with herbaceous and mineral notes. This white is bright on the palate with litchi, tangerine, tropical fruit, and mineral flavors. I like that the acidity isn't too intense and the fruit is pleasantly ripe, but not overdone. The finish shows bright citrus flavors, good concentration, and nice length.

Food Pairing: A crisp New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc is the perfect cure for a hot day. Food wise, I would pair this with lighter chicken or pork dishes with a citrus glaze.

2010 La Merika Chardonnay (Central Coast, California)

Tasting Notes: I chose this Chardonnay to demonstrate the trend towards judiciously using oak. I'm finding that more vintners are using oak as an ensemble member of the cast instead of the star, and that's a good thing. This example has aromas of pineapple, tropical fruits, and light oak. It's pleasantly ripe on the palate with pear and tropical fruit flavors, and just a kiss of oak. The mid-palate is slightly creamy due to aging on the lees and the finish is lightly bright with lemon curd, ripe apple, and a creamy texture. This is a great Chardonnay with a solid fruit profile and perfect levels of oak.

Food Pairing: This is a richer style of Chardonnay with some acidity, but not a lot, so I would stay away from richer foods. While this might be a bit light for most red meats, it would definitely stand up to any pork dish.

2010 Don & Sons Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast, California)

Tasting Notes: When someone describes Pinot Noir as sexy, this is what they mean. Aromas of lightly ripe dark raspberry fruit and a hint of spice lead to pretty raspberry and strawberry flavors on the palate. As I write this, a better adjective for sexy would be integrated. The ripe fruit, acidity, and spice notes, all flow together in perfect harmony. This doesn't happen in other varietals as delicately as it does with Pinot Noir. The finish continues the harmony with ripe strawberry and cherry fruit, a hint of tannins, and nice length. Fabulous example of the varietal.

Food Pairing: I'll mention it quickly, since I sound like a broken record, but I love Pinot Noir with salmon. Alternatives would be heavier poultry dishes or medium-bodied meat dishes (burgers, pork roast, etc.).

2011 Bodegas Atalaya Laya Old Vine (Almansa, Spain)

Tasting Notes: This red from Almansa in southeast Spain is a blend of 70% Garnacha Tintorera (or Alicante Bouschet, as it's known in the US, and one of the few varieties with red flesh) and 30% Monastrell. It has aromas of blue fruits – blueberries, and black raspberries – with a hint of dust. This red has black raspberry and blackberry flavors on the palate with a smooth mouthfeel and an easy drinking character. The acidity is light, but present, and the mid-palate has a slightly darker berry flavor. The finish is ripe with roasted berry fruit, a hint of tobacco, good tannins, and nice length.

Food Pairing: This is a solid everyday-drinking red, so a good pairing would be a solid everyday meal such as, pizza, spaghetti with red sauce, pork chops, chicken, etc

2011 Montes Classic Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley, Chile)

Tasting Notes: This Cabernet is an excellent example of the Chilean style of Cabernet. I like to describe the best examples as a cross between Bordeaux and California. It has Bordeaux characteristics of structure provided by good acidity, earth and mineral flavors, and a hint of bell pepper. The California trait is the ripe cherry fruit. This Cabernet has solid berry fruit, good acidity and dryness, vanilla, small bell pepper notes, and great structure. The finish has concentrated dark berry fruit, present and integrated tannins, and a nice length. In fact, this one might be fun to throw in the cellar for a few years and re-examine in 2015 or 2016.

Food Pairing: This red is heavy enough in flavor and tannins to pair well with any beef or lamb dish out of the oven or off the grill.