

Happy Birthday USA! We'll be open July 4th from 10-6, so you're all set if you need any last-minute party supplies. Interesting whites - a Sicilian Catarratto (!!!) and an Alsatian Pinot Blanc - and a few easier drinking reds (after all, it's 90+ degrees on the reg now) should make for positively quaffable choices this month. Enjoy!

Cheers, Herb

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P.S. - My non-Wine Club selection for the month is the **2016 Veritas Vineyards & Winery Viognier** from the Monticello AVA in Virginia. Viognier is a specialty of Veritas and it's a perfect wine for the warmer months. Fresh stone fruit with notes of honeysuckle are balanced with just the right amount of acidity. This is a very enjoyable and very refreshing summer white!

### **2016 La Mura Bio Bianco Terre Siciliane IGT (Sicily, Italy)**

**Tasting Notes:** Drum roll please...introducing Catarratto in its first Wine Club appearance! Catarratto is indigenous to Sicily and a great alternative white for the summer. The La Mura, which is made with organically grown grapes (bonus), has an expressive aroma of peach skin and orchard fruits. It has good body on the palate with stone fruits – especially heavy peach notes – and nectarine. This white has good acidity, and the finish is bright with fresh tropical fruits.

**Food Pairing:** This wine has a lot of flavor, so serving it by itself is an option. Otherwise, I'd pair it with lighter summer dishes like chicken, fish or salads.

### **2016 Domaine Michel Fonne Pinot Blanc (Alsace, France)**

**Tasting Notes:** I'm a big fan of Alsatian whites, especially their white blends and Pinot Blancs. They offer great fruit, great acidity, great flavor and, typically, great pricing. This example from Domaine Fonne, has a lovely aroma of lightly honeyed, ripe apples. It's vibrant on the palate with fresh, ripe apple fruit and a hint of mineral. What I really like here is the pure-fruit component that tastes like fresh-picked apples. The finish is lightly honeyed with orchard fruit and nice length.

**Food Pairing:** This is a versatile food wine because it has flavor and a decent amount of acidity. This white pairs well with light pork and chicken dishes, as well as sausages. I'd even try this with spicy foods.

### **2016 Harken Barrel Fermented Chardonnay (California)**

**Tasting Notes:** This is a great example of the typical California style of Chardonnay. It has a big aroma of baking spices, ripe pineapple and tropical fruits. This white is round on the palate with tropical fruit, mango, papaya and wood spice. This is a bigger and richer style of Chardonnay that has just enough balance. The finish pivots to stone fruit and tangerine flavors with nice length.

**Food Pairing:** This is a bigger white with a touch of acidity. It would be a nice choice as a white for everyday meals, like burgers and pizza, but nothing too rich.

### **2014 Vignerons Catalans Cotes Catalanes (France)**

**Tasting Notes:** This red from the Languedoc-Roussillon region in southwest France is a blend of 60% Carignan and 40% Grenache. I like that it is Carignan dominant and not Grenache dominant, which is so prevalent. It has an aroma of lightly baked, ripe red fruits. This red has decent acidity on the palate with nicely bright, red berry fruit. It's clean with a solid, pure-fruit flavor. The finish is light with softer red fruits and medium length. With the rising temperature, I would suggest throwing this in the fridge for 20-30 minutes before serving to give it a slight chill.

**Food Pairing:** This is a great everyday red - flavor and just enough acidity. I'd pair it with light to medium-bodied everyday meals. Just be careful and don't pair it with anything too heavy.

### **2015 Kenwood Yalupa Pinot Noir (California)**

**Tasting Notes:** I've always liked Kenwood's Pinot Noir. This example is no different. It has a pleasant aroma of darker red fruits and light spice notes. This Pinot Noir is medium-ripe on the palate with cherry/strawberry fruit, light

vanilla and just enough acidity. It has a good dose of tannins on the back palate, which gives it nice structure. The finish has ripe strawberry and raspberry fruit and good length. This is a solid Pinot Noir that's varietally correct with enjoyable flavor.

**Food Pairing:** I really like the food versatility of Pinot Noir. It can pair with everything from heavier fish dishes, like salmon, to lighter beef dishes, like flank steak.

### **2016 Château Charron Bordeaux Rouge (Bordeaux, France)**

**Tasting Notes:** I'm always on the lookout for everyday drinking Bordeaux rouge. With warmer vintages, Bordeaux can be a great alternative to West Coast reds. The Charron is a blend of Merlot (57%), Cabernet Sauvignon (39%) and a splash of Cabernet Franc (4%). It has a soft and inviting aroma with clean berry fruits. This red is clean on the palate, no bell pepper or barnyard notes, with dark berry/cherry fruit and a pleasantly dry backbone. The advantage here is fruit and structure, which provides a better drinking experience. The finish shows black-ish fruits and bigger, integrated tannins. Well done!

**Food Pairing:** This red has enough body and tannic structure to pair with heavier meats, especially anything off the grill