

Herb's Half Case Wine Club May 2017
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As we head into the warmer weather, I've included both coming and going wines. The coming wines are the whites, which will provide cool relief to the coming heat and the going wines are two heavier reds I've included as a reminder of these cool nights which will be going away. Enjoy!

Note – Herb's Half Case Wine Club or a Wine Club Gift Certificate makes an excellent Mother's Day present
Cheers, Herb

P.S. - My non-Wine Club selection for the month is the **2014 Domaine Fussiacus Pouilly-Fuisse Vers Cras**. Single vineyard Pouilly-Fuisse for about the same price as a high end West Coast Chardonnay is a no-brainer. This white Burgundy has just enough oak to add complexity without overwhelming the elegant fruit. This is how Chardonnay should taste.

2016 Moulin de Gassac Guilhem Rosé (France)

Tasting Notes: The 2016 Rosés are here and this one from Gassac is a winner. It has a 50/50 blend of Syrah and Carignan, which is somewhat unusual, given French Rosés are mostly Grenache, and has a crisp aroma of delicate strawberry fruit with a nice floral note. It's bright and flavorful on the palate with concentrated cherry and strawberry fruit and balanced acidity. This Rosé has a full-flavored finish with dried red fruits and nice length. Well done!

Food Pairing: What I love about Rosé is its versatility with or without food. It has enough flavor to enjoy on the porch and it has enough body and acidity to serve with food. I would pair this with any fried foods or low to medium-bodied poultry or meat dishes.

2015 Bonterra Sauvignon Blanc Organic Grapes (Mendocino & Lake County)

Tasting Notes: Bonterra is a winery producing wines made from organically grown grapes. In fact, they were one of the first major producers in the US to use organically grown grapes. When I first opened this Sauvignon Blanc, I found the typical grapefruit and grassy aromas. As it opened though, it turned towards papaya notes. It was the same on the palate with citrus and light grass notes that evolve into passionfruit flavors on the mid-palate. This white has good acid and good ripeness. The finish is juicy with peach and some citrus flavors and nice length.

Food Pairing: This choice also has enough flavor to serve solo. Otherwise, I'd try it with lighter dishes or salads.

2014 R. Stuart Love, Oregon White Sky (Oregon)

Tasting Notes: This six grape blend (Viognier, Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Blanc & Gewurztraminer) is mostly Pinot Gris (81%). I want to focus on the five blending grapes and how they turn a typical Oregon Pinot Gris into something more interesting. Aromatics – the five grapes add a lift to the aroma with tropical and passionfruit flavors. Think of a single flower versus a bouquet of flowers. Flavor – I found fresh tropical fruit flavors with a pleasant floral note. The mid-plate has ripe-ish mango and tangerine fruits. The finish shows juicy, fruit cocktail flavors and a hint of honeysuckle. The five grapes add depth and complexity, so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Food Pairing: This is a very versatile food wine because it has a lot of fruit/flavor and acidity. This would also be a good choice for a big family-style meal with lots of competing flavors and weights.

2015 Lindeman's Bin 99 Pinot Noir (South Eastern Australia)

Tasting Notes: I love finding surprises like this one. Volume producer (Lindeman's) and difficult grape (Pinot Noir) do not produce great wine. Except in this case, because this Pinot Noir is excellent. It starts with a spicy, dried cherry aroma. It's an easy drinker on the palate with pleasantly ripe (but not overripe) dark raspberry fruit, slightly creamy texture and moderate acidity. Balanced ripeness and good structure make good Pinot Noir. The finish is surprisingly delicate with pretty red fruits, light tannins and medium length. Well done!

Food Pairing: I'm a sucker for Pinot Noir and salmon. Otherwise, try with lighter to medium-bodied dishes

2013 The Federalist Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel (Sonoma County, California)

Tasting Notes: This is my type of Zinfandel. One that can appeal to all red-wine drinkers instead of just the smaller group of Zin-ophiles. This red has a big, dense and juicy aroma of dark berry fruits. It has nice concentration on the palate with mixed berry fruit flavors and a just a small hint of caramel. It has great acidity and structure (read: red-wine drinker friendly!), which is very refreshing to see and it's not overripe either. The finish has jammy, dark berry fruit with solid tannins and nice length. Great example of the positive evolution of this varietal!

Food Pairing: This is a big red with bigger tannins, so pair accordingly. I'd pair this with any beef, lamb or game. It has enough body to stand up to these heavier foods.

2012 Halter Ranch Estate Côtes de Paso (Paso Robles, California)

Tasting Notes: This is an interesting blend that's comprised of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre & Tannat. It's a nice cross between Rhone and California, with its structure and flavor profile leaning towards Rhone. It has a big, brambly fruit aroma with a pleasant dose of spice. The fruit on the palate is the star here with fresh, dark red berry fruits, a tiny hint of vanilla and plenty of balancing acidity. This red has good body (some oomph) with expressive, juicy fruit. The mid-palate shows a slight boysenberry note, too. The finish is bright and juicy with red and black fruits and nice length.

Food Pairing: Here's another fuller-bodied red that you can pair with just about any heavier dish. Try this red with heavier meats or stews and sweeter BBQ dishes.