

Herb's Half Case Wine Club November 2016
Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250
decaturopackagestore.com

I guess we're officially into the holidays now that Halloween is behind us. I've chosen some nice selections for the Big Meal and the company that follows. They're great crowd-pleasers and will accommodate even the most discerning guests. Enjoy!

Cheers, Herb

P.S. - My non-Wine Club selections for the month are **Oregon Pinot Noir** and **Alternative Italian Whites (anything but Pinot Grigio)**. I chose these categories because, in general, they're great for Thanksgiving and future holiday entertaining. They have ripe, but not overripe, fruit, good acidity and lots of flavor. These are perfect qualities for pairing with just about any type of food. Come on in today and ask anyone in our wine department for a recommendation!

2015 Chateau de Valmer Vouvray (Loire Valley, France)

Tasting Notes: In years past, my go-to Thanksgiving white has been from Alsace, either a blend or straight Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris. I decided to throw you a curveball this year and include Vouvray instead. This 100% Chenin Blanc from the Loire Valley is a perfect choice for the big meal with its great fruit, acidity and touch of *terroir*. This example has a soft apple aroma and is off dry on the palate with clean, slightly bright, honeyed apple fruit. There's a nice hint of minerality and pineapple fruit on the mid-palate. You'll find a rounder texture as you let this wine warm a bit, which I recommend. The finish has nice length and crisp apple fruit.

Food Pairing: Thanksgiving whites are tough because you want lots of flavor, no oak and decent acidity. This Vouvray has all three and can certainly pair well with the many competing flavors and textures of the Thanksgiving meal.

2014 Mile Post Pinot Gris (Oregon)

Tasting Notes: I've tried this wine for multiple vintages and I think the 2014 is their best. It deftly balances that fine line between fruit and acidity, where neither overshadows the other. This white starts with clean melon and apple fruit and follows with near-perfect acidity. The fruit is pure and bountiful without seeming cloying. There's a hint of almonds on the mid-palate and the finish is quite complex and lengthy with mineral notes and soft melon fruit. This Oregon Pinot Gris can complete with the best from Alsace!

Food Pairing: Oregon Pinot Gris fits a perfect category - riper than Alsace and more acidic than California, which expands its pairing options. Given the flavor here, don't be afraid to increase the body of the pairing. Try this PG with a heavier pork dish instead of the usual poultry option.

2015 Lindemans Bin 80 Cabernet-Merlot (South Eastern Australia)

Tasting Notes: Finding great, but somewhat expensive wine for the Wine Club is never a problem. Finding an affordable, offsetting wine is always a challenge. Luckily, I found this oldie, but goody. This red blend has been around for years and it's still a good value. The 2015 is a 54%/46% blend with a dark cherry, berry aroma. On the palate, I found fresh, easy-drinking blueberry fruit with just a hint of vanilla. The fruit is pure and tempered with just enough acidity for balance. This is a surprisingly well-structured wine given its price point. The finish is bright with lively black fruits and medium length.

Food Pairing: Keep it simple here. This is a solid everyday red with a pleasant amount of structure, so pair with simple everyday meals, like burgers, pizza, pork chops, etc.

2014 Banfi L'Ardi Dolcetto d'Acqui (Piedmont, Italy)

Tasting Notes: In another Thanksgiving Wine Club twist, I'm replacing my usual Cru Beaujolais selection with this lovely Dolcetto. Dolcetto is the third-string grape from the Piedmont region in northwest Italy. The first two are Nebbiolo (Barolo and Barbaresco) and Barbera, so it's easy to see why Dolcetto rides the pine. For me though, it's a perfect wine for Thanksgiving. The 2014 Banfi has a beautiful aroma of fresh-picked blue fruits. It's surprisingly rich on the palate with fuller-flavored, pure black fruits. Dolcettos can be excessively acidic, but not this one. The acidity perfectly tempers the bountiful fruit. The finish is concentrated with baked blue fruits and nice length.

Food Pairing: This is a great food wine because it has lots of flavor, no oak and good acidity. You can use this as a starter wine with Thanksgiving day appetizers or with the leftovers on Friday. FYI - open and let it aerate for 30 minutes before serving.

2014 Sebastiani Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast (Sonoma Cty, California)

Tasting Notes: Pinot Noir is turkey's best friend! It wouldn't be Thanksgiving without a Pinot Noir in the Wine Club. The 2014 Sebastiani has a dark red fruit aroma. The fruit on the palate is fairly dark with a nice combination of black cherry and raspberry flavors. There's even a pleasant hint of vanilla and the acidity is very good throughout. I really like the fruit expression here - not too ripe and juicy and not too lean. The finish shows nice brightness with more dark red fruits and good length.

Food Pairing: Enjoy this red with your Thanksgiving turkey or ham. It will also be a good match with the many flavors found in the side dishes.

2013 Kenwood Vineyards Merlot (Sonoma Cty, California)

Tasting Notes: The Kenwood Merlot is in the Wine Club this month for two reasons – it's good and a great alternative to \$10 California Cabernet. It has better structure than California Cabernet and better (read: more natural) fruit. The 2013 has a dark plum aroma with a hint of spice. It has nice weight on the palate with elegant black fruits, dark plum and a splash of vanilla. The acidity is great and provides beneficial structure for the pure fruit. The finish has medium tannins, dried dark berry fruit and nice length. Viva Merlot!

Food Pairing: This is a heavy, but not too heavy red, that can pair with fuller bodied foods up to a point. It can pair with a steak, but I'd skip the lamb and game.