

Herb's Half Case Wine Club October 2013
Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250
decaturpackagestore.com

Hooray for Fall! I love this season because we all switch back to eating heartier foods and consequently start drinking heavier red wines. This may sound sacrilegious, but I need a break from Rosé. Otherwise, it's a Euro-centric Wine Club this month with two interlopers from the New World and the Land Down Under. Enjoy!

Cheers, Herb

- Tickets are on sale for the 12th Annual Decatur Wine Festival (Sat. Nov. 9, 1PM-4Pm) here at the store for \$35 or at www.ticketalternative.com . For more information go to www.decaturwinefestival.org.

My non-Wine Club selection for the month is the **2010 Vinterra Howell Mountain Cabernet**. This is the perfect choice for the change of seasons. It's a monster with rich, liqueur-like, dark berry fruit aromas. On the palate, I found blackberry and boysenberry flavors that were concentrated and structured. And the best part...this Howell Mountain Cabernet is priced well below \$30!

2011 Riondo Excelsa Soave (Italy)

Tasting Notes: I've always found Soave to be an unsung Italian white. It's a great alternative to Pinot Grigio and pairs well with a variety of dishes. I think Soave will become more popular now that I'm finding more examples at everyday drinking prices like this one. It's 100% Garganega and has an aroma of soft lemon fruit with a medium-ripe palate. I found crisp apple fruit flavors and a hint of almond and mineral. The mid-palate is slightly honeyed and the finish shows more melon fruit and nice length. In a world of generic Pinot Grigio this Italian white has a bit of character.

Food Pairing: This is a versatile white that has enough flavor to serve solo or can be paired with lighter dishes such as light appetizers, chicken, or even whitefish.

2010 Flor de Campo Chardonnay (Santa Barbara County, California)

Tasting Notes: Flor de Campo is the second label of Sanford Winery and offers a great opportunity for the Wine Club with first class winemaking, but less expensive, but still high quality, grapes. This is a solid California-styled Chardonnay with very nice balance. It starts with aromas of light oak, tropical fruit, and finally pineapple. It has an elegant mouthfeel with bright tangerine and apple fruit and balanced oak. The mid-palate is slightly creamy with mango flavors. The finish has soft citrus flavors, lemon curd, nice length, and light oak. This is a great example of California Chardonnay done right where fruit and oak are in perfect harmony.

Food Pairing: This is a fuller-bodied white, so you can pair with heavier chicken or pork dishes.

2011 Riva Leone Barbera (Piedmont, Italy)

Tasting Notes: The Piedmont region in northwest Italy is producing a bevy of excellent everyday whites and reds that effectively and economically compete against Tuscan Sangiovese. This Barbera is the perfect example. Aromas of pretty, dark berry fruit are followed by rich, black fruits on the palate. There's a bit going on in this red with notes of violet and black raspberry that are expressed in a lush mouthfeel. The mid-palate does have enough acidity for balance and the finish shows bright berry fruit, balanced tannins, and good length. This is a great food wine that has lots of flavor and structure.

Food Pairing: This red is very versatile with food because it has great fruit and just enough acidity for structure. This wine has enough fruit to pair easily with any everyday meal. It also has enough acidity and tannins to pair with a lighter cut of beef.

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2010 Castillo de Jumilla Monastrell (Jumilla, Spain)

Tasting Notes: Given the high temperatures in Jumilla, it is very easy to produce overripe grapes. I really like that Castillo de Jumilla takes a more balanced approach to Monastrell. This example has baked berry aromas with a hint of dried herb. It's clean on the palate with nice brambly fruit and underbrush notes. For a hot region that produces ripe fruit, this red has great acidity and a dry backbone. The finish is full-flavored with black fruits, violet, vanilla, and big, but balanced tannins.

Food Pairing: This is a great red for cooler weather meals such as hearty soups, stews, and chili.

2008 Brujeria Red (South Eastern Australia)

Tasting Notes: With this label, how could I not put this scary red in the Halloween Wine Club? It's a unique blend of 50% Tempranillo, 28% Shiraz, 14% Grenache, and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, or as I like to say an Aussie Priorat. Regardless of classification, what's in the bottle works. Aromas of pretty black raspberries with a hint of underbrush rise from the glass. On the palate, I found pleasantly bright dark raspberry and blueberry fruit with nice acidity and good concentration. The fruit was perfectly ripe and not overdone. The finish showed concentrated black fruit, medium tannins, and nice length. This is a well made blend.

Food Pairing: This blend can be enjoyed while you hop up and answer the door every few minutes on the 31st. Otherwise, this red will, like the example above, pair well with any normal weekday meal, such as burgers, pork chops, etc.

2010 Vega Montán Mencía (Bierzo, Spain)

Tasting Notes: This is a great example of the ongoing evolution of the Mencía grape from Spain's Bierzo region. The first examples to hit US wine shelves were VERY rustic and appealed to the truly esoteric wine lovers. This example shows the version that every wine lover will enjoy. Aromas of black fruits, crushed rock, and mineral are followed by nicely concentrated, fresh picked, berry fruit on the palate. This is a juicy wine with good acidity and concentration. The fruit is the real focus here and it shines. The finish has intense blackberry fruit, good length, and big, integrated tannins.

Food Pairing: This wine would pair well with anything from the grill, especially meats with an herbed rub.