

Hopefully Indian summer is gone and we can start enjoying heavier wines to match the heavier weather. It's a somewhat fuller-bodied mix this month with a couple of medium-bodied wines just in case a hot spell hits. Enjoy!

Cheers, Herb

Save the date – 2017 Decatur Wine Festival, Sat. November 4, 12:30-4:30. Tickets are on sale now at Ticket Alternative. Click here to buy now... <https://www.ticketalternative.com/event/decatur-wine-festival-nov-4-2017>

P.S. - My non-Wine Club selection for the month is the **2014 Navigator Red Napa Valley**. Napa Valley wineries are either raising prices or decreasing quality and Navigator has chosen to do neither. This winner has a spicy, dark berry fruit aroma and is lush on the palate with ripe cherry fruit, vanilla and soft spices. There's even good acidity. This is a stellar red that overdelivers!

2015 La Burla Viura (Vino del la Tierra de Castilla, Spain)

Tasting Notes: With the popularity of Verdejo, you don't see much Viura anymore. Viura offers softer citrus flavors and is a nice alternative to the more assertive Verdejo. This example from La Burla has a tropical/grapey aroma. It has flavors of passionfruit and a hint of ripe citrus. This white is medium-bodied with a slightly round texture on the mid-palate. The finish is medium-bright with soft citrus fruit. It's a lightly crisp, easy-drinker that's not too dry and not too ripe. It's a Goldilocks wine - just right!

Food Pairing: I like this white because it's versatile. It has enough flavor to serve by itself and enough body to hold up to medium-bodied main dishes. Pair this Viura with light chicken dishes or heavier salads.

2015 Layer Cake Chardonnay (Central Coast, California)

Tasting Notes: Now that the weather has cooled a bit, I can start using lightly oaked whites, like this Layer Cake Chardonnay, in the Wine Club. It starts with a pineapple aroma and a hint of oak that leads to soft pear fruit on the palate. I didn't find spice flavors, so they must use older oak, but I did find a nice roundness on the palate, which also indicated used oak. The acidity is present to provide some structure and the finish is crisper with more lemon curd flavors that are medium-bright. This is what I call a compromise Chardonnay - some oak for texture, but not enough to create a manufactured wine.

Food Pairing: I'd pair this one with food versus serving it by itself. It has enough flavor and body to pair with medium-heavy food like pork or poultry.

2014 Lindeman's Shiraz-Cabernet (South Eastern Australia)

Tasting Notes: This wine has been in the Wine Club queue forever. Just waiting to be called up to the big league. I tasted it again last week and was completely surprised (read: impressed) by the results. Anytime I find a wine at this price point with acidity and structure, I do my touchdown dance. It's a 60/40 blend and has a jammy, brambly fruit aroma. This red is clean on the palate with good acidity and fresh and lively raspberry flavors that morph into darker berry fruits as the wine opens. The finish shows darker brambly berry fruit, a hint of vanilla and surprising length.

Food Pairing: This is a lighter red, so pair accordingly. This would be a good party red that will pair well with both lighter and heavier apps.

NV Sokol Blosser Evolution Red (Oregon)

Tasting Notes: This is a multi-vintage red that's labeled by edition, not year. It's a blend of Syrah, Sangiovese, Montepulciano and a splash of their very popular Evolution White. This edition has a fresh, berry fruit aroma. It's fresh and clean on the palate with pretty berry/cherry fruit that tastes just-picked. There's enough acid to balance the freshness and ripeness of the fruit. The finish shows soft berry fruits, light tannins and medium-length. This is a lovely quaffer that's very enjoyable.

Food Pairing: This is a great everyday red that will pair nicely with any everyday meal. Try it with burgers, pizza, pork chops, etc.

2014 Cosentino Winery The Red (Lodi, California)

Tasting Notes: This one peaked my interest because of the misnomer of the name. It's labeled a red, which makes me think flabby, California red blend, but it's actually a single varietal Petite Sirah (there's a splash, 4%, of Petite Verdot). I think Petite Sirah has greatly improved and The Red shows it. It has a very dark color and pretty blue fruit aromas with underbrush and violet flavors, as well. On the nose, it's more Syrah-like than Petite Sirah. On the palate, I found fresh, darker blue fruits with concentrated blueberry, floral notes and violets. It has nice grip and balanced acidity. The finish has black raspberry and cassis fruits, nice tannins and decent length. Great example of the varietal.

Food Pairing: This red has flavor and body, so you can amp up the food pairings. Try this with heavier-bodied foods, meats and almost anything from the grill.

2015 Torres Las Mulas Cabernet Sauvignon (Central Valley, Chile)

Tasting Notes: I think Chile is finally getting it. They're now making wines that focus on the fruit with the "terroir" component (that earthy, asphalt characteristic) tucked discretely in the background. The Torres Las Mulas is a great example of this transformation. It has a fresh aroma of cherry/berry fruit, spices and a hint of bell pepper. It's well balanced on the palate with dried berry fruit, good acidity and present, but not overwhelming, Chilean earthiness. The finish is dusty with concentrated berry fruit and nice length. This is a solid Cabernet that fits stylistically somewhere between California and Bordeaux.

Food Pairing: This is a heavy Cabernet, so go with a heavier main dish like beef or lamb.