

Herb's Half Case Wine Club September 2016
Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250
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How can I tell fall is just around the corner? The Oktoberfest and pumpkin beers are starting to arrive. A bit early? Yes, but it's a nice break from the Summer of Gose! That's enough about beer. It's a solid mix of styles and regions, reflecting the seasonal change. Enjoy!

Cheers, Herb

Save the date – 2016 Decatur Wine Festival, Sat. November 5, 12:30-4:30. Tickets will be on sale later this month at Ticket Alternative and Decatur Package Store. Details will follow.

P.S. - My non-Wine Club selection for the month is the **2014 Wolftrap White**. I chose this wine to spotlight the improvement of South African whites. Today, they're clean and vibrant wines. This example, a blend of Viognier, Chenin and Grenache Blanc, has soft melon fruit, light citrus, good acid and a nice texture. It's perfect for the end of summer and a nice change from the earthier style that wasn't so enjoyable.

2015 Pewsey Vale Dry Riesling (Eden Valley, Australia)

Tasting Notes: I've always been a big fan of this wine. Australia makes fantastic dry Rieslings, a very underrated style in my humble opinion. The 2015 has an aroma filled with bright fruit and perfect acidity. On the palate, this white is bright and juicy with balanced tropical fruits that lean towards the melon side. There's a pleasant hint of mineral, too. The acidity is near perfect and cuts the fruit just right. The finish tastes like a bowl of fresh fruit cocktail with an emphasis on peach. Riesling get a bad rap as tasting too sweet, but this dry alternative style is a flavorful treat for the palate.

Food Pairing: Dry Riesling is a versatile food wine. It has great acidity and great fruit. Try this with cold meats, especially pork or fried chicken. Also pair this wine with spicy Thai or Indian dishes.

2014 Jack's House Chardonnay (California)

Tasting Notes: I'm always on the lookout for decent California Chardonnay. Take out the excessive oak and you can find some great wines. This example fits the bill. It has soft, tropical fruit aromas of tangerine and mango. On the palate, it's clean with balanced brightness and nice tropical fruits and peaches. I like this wine because the acidity perfectly structures the fruit. The finish has good flavor with nectarine/peach fruit that's not too ripe and nice length. Also per their website, 10% of all sales of Jack's House wines goes to the Nicolas Children's Healthcare Foundation.

Food Pairing: This is a nice 'tweener white in that it can pair with light poultry dishes as well as something a bit heavier, like pork. The acidity allows for this expansion of choices.

2014 Villa Pozzi Nero D'Avola (Sicily, Italy)

Tasting Notes: Finding value priced, Sicilian Nero D'Avola is becoming harder and harder. It's really about finding balance with this varietal, and the Villa Pozzi has that in abundance. It's nicely expressive on the palate with jammy fruits, especially bright raspberry, hints of earth and a pleasant lightness. Nero D'Avola can sometimes suffer from overripeness, so a light mouthfeel isn't bad. The finish is impressive with bright and concentrated dark raspberry fruit, nice tannins and great length.

Food Pairing: This is a solid everyday red. It can pair with a multitude of everyday meals like burgers, pizza or light meats off the grill.

2014 Graffigna Reserve Malbec (Argentina)

Tasting Notes: I like this Malbec because it's a combination of styles. It has a lovely aroma of black raspberry fruit with a nice hint of underbrush and coffee. This red is softer and a bit thicker on the palate, but not fat or flabby, with light boysenberry and pretty berry fruits. It has a richer mouthfeel, but doesn't overwhelm. The finish shows black raspberry fruit, nice tannins and good length. This is a solid version of Argentine Malbec with just enough complexity.

Food Pairing: I would be remiss, and face the wrath of the entire population of Argentina, if my first suggested pairing isn't a cow, whole or some gargantuan portion. Otherwise, try this one with other pork and beef dishes from the grill.

2013 Breca Old Vine Garnacha (Calatayud, Spain)

Tasting Notes: I like this old vine Garnacha because it's not just an over-baked fruit bomb. Yes, it's rich, but it's not overdone. It starts with an aroma of blue fruits with pleasant graphite and mineral notes. This red is thicker and richer on the palate with ripe dark raspberry fruit that reveals, with aeration, a lovely core of pretty raspberry fruit. The finish shifts back to blue fruits, ripe tannins and good length.

Food Pairing: This is a wine to pair with Spain's interior food preference - lamb and their cured ham. This red has a heavy enough body to pair with lamb, yet won't overwhelm the ham.

2013 Kenwood Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County, California)

Tasting Notes: This Sonoma Cabernet was my biggest surprise this month. My general expectation of entry level West Coast Cabernet is fairly low, based on many notebooks full of tasting notes. This Kenwood is not in that category. It starts with a multi-dimensional aroma of black cherry and brambly fruit. This Cab. has great acidity and doesn't have any candied fruit flavors. It has wonderful dark cherry and dark berry fruit flavors on the palate with a perfect amount of acidity. As this wine opens, light bell pepper notes emerge without overwhelming. The finish is nice with earthy cherry fruit, a hint of vanilla and nice length.

Food Pairing: This beauty screams steak off the grill. The fruit and acidity in the wine will handle the body and juiciness of anything you can pair it.