

Fall is around the corner and that means four reds and two whites! I'll be honest, it's a lot easier finding unique reds than whites. But I do have two Italian whites that fall in the unique, but very palate-pleasing, category. 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 **2015 Drouhin Saint-Veran**. We're about to change seasons, so it'll be heavier whites and reds. I wanted to suggest one last unoaked white and this Saint-Veran is beautiful. It has creamy apple fruit, that is tempered by a near-perfect level of acidity. This white has flavor and structure of wines costing twice as much. So in the waning days of summer, here's one last hurrah!

### **2015 Riva Leone Gavi DOCG (Italy)**

**Tasting Notes:** The Gavi appellation is in the Piedmont region in northwest Italy. This Gavi is comprised of 100% Cortese. I like it because of its inherent mineral component. The Riva Leone has a bright lemon/lime aroma with a solid mineral note. It has a tropical fruit flavor on the palate that evolves into bright, lemon curd. There's good acidity here and a lot of flavor. The finish is pleasantly ripe with soft lemon fruit and nice length. This is another example of the multitude of alternative whites from Italy.

**Food Pairing:** This is a great starter wine for any party or can be served with lighter dishes, say chicken or fish. You don't want anything too heavy or else you'll hide the nuanced flavors in the wine.

### **2013 Cantina Tollo Pecorino Terre di Chieti (Italy)**

**Tasting Notes:** Pecorino is an indigenous Italian varietal that was originally found in the Marche region and is a fuller-bodied alternative to Pinot Grigio. The Tollo has a ripe pear and almond aroma and a weightier mouthfeel with honeyed apple fruit on the palate. There's a lot of ripe fruit, but there's also a solidly acidic backbone that adds to balance and brightness. The finish is mellow with ripe apple fruit and good length. This is another Italian white that's a perfect substitute for Pinot Grigio.

**Food Pairing:** You can pair this with slightly heavier foods versus a normal Pinot Grigio, but don't overdo it. I wouldn't pair this with anything heavier than pork.

### **2015 Farnese Fantini Montepulciano D'Abruzzo DOC (Italy)**

**Tasting Notes:** I'm a big fan of this Montepulciano D'Abruzzo, especially as an everyday alternative to Chianti/Sangiovese. It's grown in the Abruzzo region in east central Italy. This example has an aroma of softer blue fruits and vanilla. It's easy-drinking on the palate with medium-bright, dried berry fruits and a balancing dry backbone. I like the blue fruit component here versus the dominant cherry flavors you find with most Sangioveses. The finish turns darker with dry black fruits, medium to light tannins and nice length.

**Food Pairing:** Since its fruit is more expressive and it's less dry than Chianti, I'd say it's more food friendly. Try this one with almost any everyday meal, such as pizza, burgers, pork chops, etc.

### **2013 Losado El Pajaro Rojo Mencia (Bierzo, Spain)**

**Tasting Notes:** This is a great example of the evolution of the Mencia grape. I remember when Spanish Mencia tasted like a funky, gamey, old sock. Not anymore. Mencia is grown in the Bierzo region, which is just north of Portugal. The Pajaro has a dark berry fruit aroma with a hint of earth and minerals. The gaminess of past Mencias is gone and now features pure, ripe berry fruit that alternates between blue and black fruit flavors.

There's a pleasant minerality throughout that stays in the background. There's an easy-drinking softness on the mid-palate before the medium tannins arrive on the juicy, bright black fruit flavored finish. This is a great example of a grape from Spain that's not Tempranillo or Garnacha!

**Food Pairing:** Here's another red, like the Fantini, that would be great for everyday meals. This is slightly heavier than the Fantini, so you can pair this with the same foods and medium-bodied meat dishes without overwhelming the wine.

### **2014 MAN Bosstok Pinotage (Coastal Region, South Africa)**

**Tasting Notes:** Balanced Pinotage – there's something you don't taste very often. You're never going to eliminate the funkier flavors associated with this varietal, but it's nice to find them more in the background, like with this MAN. It has a nice aroma of cherry/berry fruit, hints of earth and light asphalt notes. It's surprisingly lush on the palate with dried cherry fruit, cassis and light Pinotage flavors of earth and asphalt. There's even some vanilla on the mid-palate. The finish shows tart berry fruit, mineral notes, medium tannins and nice length.

**Food Pairing:** This has the structure and flavor profile to embrace heavier foods. Try this with a juicy steak or lamb chop.

### **2012 Luis Pato Colheita Seleccionada (Bairrada, Portugal)**

**Tasting Notes:** Here's another Portuguese red for the Wine Club. This Luis Pato is a superb red blend. It's a mix of a local varietal, Baga (60%), and Touriga Nacional (40%), the main variety used in Port. It has a rich aroma of cherry and dark berry fruit that's just slightly baked. There are earth and spice components as well. It's nicely bright on the palate with dark berry fruit, small mineral, tobacco notes and good acidity. This red has nice complexity and freshness, and given that it's a 2012, this was a pleasant surprise. The finish has good concentration, dark fruit and balanced tannins.

**Food Pairing:** This is a heavier red, so pair accordingly. Try the Luis Pato with heavier beef, game or pork dishes.