



**Tasting Notes**  
**November 2016 Pick-up**

- **Alma Negra Sparkling Rosé Brut Nature (NV)** - A gorgeous pink-hued bone-dry bubbly, produced in the traditional methode champenoise, of Pinot Noir and, surprisingly, Malbec grapes. Crisp and elegant with notes of strawberries and cranberries. Reg retail: \$21 Smart price: \$18
- **2015 Zolo Torrontés** - It's likely you've never tried Torrontés, but it is one of the top white grapes grown in Argentina. If you enjoy muscat or viognier, you may fall in love with this aromatic grape. It combines dry, high acidity with notes of honeysuckle and lychee, and pairs especially well with spicy Asian flavors.  
Reg retail: \$11 Smart price: \$10
- **2011 Lamadrid Bonarda** - Bonarda is another grape unique to Argentina. It makes a medium-bodied red, great for when you're looking for something bigger than a pinot but quieter than a full-blown cab. Smells like walking through the English countryside - brambles, berries, mulch, violets. An elegant wine.  
Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$14
- **2015 Tilia Malbec-Syrah** - Here is a fun blend of Argentina's most famous grape - malbec, with something a little unexpected - syrah. This wine is juicy and lush but with a nice refreshing acidity. Expect black currant, licorice and spice. Easy to drink. Reg retail: \$11 Smart price: \$9
- **2014 Argento Malbec** - A delectable malbec at a delectable price! Deep velvety purple with notes of dark stonefruits and blackberries with floral hints and a dash of vanilla and chocolate. Ripe tannins provide a lingering finish. This malbec is a great value, more enjoyable than others at a higher price, in my opinion.  
Reg retail: \$12 Smart price: \$10
- **2011 El Enemigo Cabernet Franc** - Yummm! I really love this one. Cab Franc is often used to blend French wines, but less often seen alone. You'll enjoy tastes of ripe berries, cherries, plums and cassis with hints of something earthy and almost meaty. Reg retail: \$28 Smart price: \$24

## **Suggested Food Pairings**

Flavorful salty, savory appetizers are always the perfect pairing for a dry sparkling wine, in my opinion. Oysters on the half shell are a lovely option, if you're into that. Serve the Alma Negra at the start of a little get-together and watch your guests' eyes light up when they taste it!

The floral notes of the Torrontés help it pair perfectly with Asian flavors. I'm pairing this particular wine with one of the appetizers from my upcoming Holiday Appetizers class. It's a puff pastry bite filled with sautéed bacon, chopped kimchi, and a jot of blue cheese. Strong flavors, but this crisp white will stand up to that. Or, just bring home some Chinese take-out and enjoy it!

I would suggest the Bonarda with something simple and elegant, along the lines of a nice crisp-skinned roast chicken. That is often my meal of choice when we have a truly excellent, cellared Oregon pinot noir to open. You can make something more fancy, but not much tastes better than a great roast chicken and a nice glass of red.

The full, rich flavors of Malbec pair perfectly with red meats. To stick with the Argentine theme, how about a grilled or pan-seared steak, cooked to a perfect medium-rare, rested, then sliced against the grain? Arrange your steak on a platter and drizzle with a delicious chimichurri sauce. If you haven't tried chimichurri, it's basically a tasty vinaigrette filled with minced green herbs. Whip up a basic vinaigrette of red wine vinegar and olive oil, season it with perhaps a bit of garlic or shallot, red pepper flake and salt. Then add in a LOT of minced parsley, oregano, basil and/or cilantro – add enough to create almost a rustic pesto. Other great additions include a dash of sherry vinegar or lemon, an anchovy, or some capers. Follow your taste buds and create a sauce that is vibrant and tangy – it will taste great with the rich fattiness of the steak.

Finally, how about some CHEESE? Cabernet Franc can pair a little easier with a variety of cheese because it's softer and mellower than some bigger reds. Try this one with a sharp aged cheddar or nutty aged gouda. It also works with creamy cheeses like rich, buttery Délice de Bourgogne (one of my favorites, available at Trader Joe's). I'd say just avoid really strong blues or really stinky cheeses with this one and you should be good!