

**Tasting Notes**  
**Nov 2020 Pick-up**  
**Festive Holiday Wines**



Welcome to your November 2020 Smart Wine Club pickup. This is our fourth annual holiday mixed case, if you can believe it! Thanks to those of you who have been with us from the start, and a happy welcome to our new members as well.

You may remember that the November tote doesn't focus on a specific region, but rather wines that are suited for the holiday season. My choices include one sparkling, one white, and four reds that I think will work well at a small gathering, with your holiday meals, or just as a much-needed break.

If you do end up loving one of these and want to make it your "house wine" this season, just call or email me – I'd be happy to help with a special order or six or more bottles.

I hope you are finding ways to celebrate new and old traditions during these unusual times. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas from me, and best wishes for whichever festivities you and your family enjoy. I hope you will love sharing these wines with your nearest and dearest, and I hope that they will add to the happiness of each occasion.

- **Maurice Bonnamy Crémant de Loire Brut Rosé (NV), Loire, France** – As always, I've included a sparkling dry rosé in the holiday wine club picks! A crémant is a good-quality sparkling French wine made in the style of Champagne but from a different region. The word "crémant" means creamy and refers to the pleasant texture of the bubbles. This wine is a vibrant coral pink with a persistent, fine bead of bubbles. It has fresh aromas of red berries and cherries with a well-balanced, subtle aftertaste. It is made from 100% Cabernet Franc grapes. Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$14

Pairing: Just perfect with pretty much any salty snacks or cocktail nibbles. Great with oysters and other shellfish. If you want to get crazy, try it with takeout (or homemade!) fried chicken – it's perfect!

- **2019 La Valentina Pecorino Colline Pescaresi IGT, Abruzzo, Italy** – You've probably heard of Pecorino cheese, but what about Pecorino wine? This white grape is trendy right now and I have a feeling you'll be seeing more of it on wine lists. So, you can impress the white wine drinker in your life with this varietal that is super-tasty and might be new to them. The high acidity means it's great with food but it's also easy to drink by itself as an aperitif. Aromas of tropical fruits, lime, honey and floral hints with a grounding minerality. Very refreshing. Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$14

Pairing: Tastes great with a rich pork roast as well as cured salamis and other charcuterie. It also goes very nicely with Pecorino cheese from the same region!

- **2019 Bodegas Ego “Goru Verde” Monastrell, Jumilla, Spain** – This 100% Monastrell is grown in a certified organic vineyard. The vineyard is located just a couple miles outside of the historic city of Jumilla, and Monastrell is a native grape to the area. (This grape is also grown in France where you may know it by the name Mourvèdre.) The wine is deep purple in color with a fragrant bouquet of violets, blueberries and spice. The mouthfeel is smooth and soft with round, well-balanced tannins. The striking label (you’ll see…) will be a hit with whomever you share it with. Reg retail: \$13 Smart price: \$11

Pairing: Monastrell pairs well with classic cold-weather foods like rich, slow-cooked stews or braises of beef or game meats. Earthy flavors like thyme, rosemary and mushrooms will go perfectly.

- **2016 Ronchi di Pietro Schioppettino, Colli Orientale del Friuli, Italy** – Yet another 100% of a single varietal – that seems to be a theme with this tote. Schioppettino is an uber-local red grape that originated and is largely grown only in a tiny area of Friuli on the border of Italy and Slovenia. The lovely ruby red wine has clear aromas of white pepper, currants, blackberries and earthy forest floor. The taste is well-balanced between fruit and stone with structured tannins. A versatile medium-bodied red. Reg retail: \$19 Smart price: \$17

Pairing: Schioppettino pairs well with roasted poultry and lighter sauces. Also try it with a classic pizza margherita.

- **2019 Sass Gamay Noir, Willamette Valley, OR** – This wine from our own backyard is grown and bottled at the Sass Winery just south of Salem. It is a very pure expression of the Gamay grape – light-bodied, easy to drink, good acidity. You may actually already be familiar with this grape, as it is the grape used to create French Beaujolais. I’m not alone in thinking Gamay is one of the very best choices for pairing with the varied flavors of a holiday meal. Reg retail: \$19 Smart price: \$17

Pairing: Try it with roasted salmon, soft cheeses, sushi, or duck. As mentioned, it will be great with any big holiday meal.

- **2018 Andrew Rich Wines “Little Table Red” GSM, Columbia Valley, WA** – Here we have a second local(ish) wine that will be great with your holiday meals. GSM is a traditional Rhône blend, in this case 33% Grenache, 39% Syrah and 28% Mourvèdre. Andrew Rich is a very well-known and respected winemaker and here’s what he has to say about his wine: “Consider this: at Thanksgiving, everyone loves the cranberry sauce. Why? Because it brings tartness and sweetness to the party – contrasting nicely with gravy, butter and meat. Well, this lovely GSM will play the same part at your holiday table. This wine leads with spice and pepper and brings in tart cherries and rich red berries to balance your meal.” I hope you love it. Reg retail: \$19 Smart price: \$17

Pairing: Another great choice for Thanksgiving or other big holiday meal with lots of contrasting dishes. Also try it with sharp cheeses like good Cheddar or Manchego.