

Tasting Notes
Nov 2021 Pick-up
Festive Holiday Wines



Welcome to your November 2021 Smart Wine Club pickup. This is the five-year anniversary of our holiday wines assortment! Thanks to those of you who have been with us from the start, and a happy welcome to a couple of our new members!

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 with your holiday meals, or just as a much-needed time to sit back, sip, and rest your mind. I've also included an optional dessert wine that some of you may have added.

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.

- **Les Alliés Pétillant Naturel Rosé (NV), France** – Have you tried a “pét-nat” sparkling wine yet? They are very trendy right now but actually it's an ancient style. Pét-nat wine is made in a very natural way with minimal intervention. The method is called “méthode ancestral” and means the wine is bottled (often with a metal beer-style cap) before the first fermentation is complete, creating a natural effervescence. In contrast, with champagne-style wines, additional yeasts and sugar are added just before bottling to spur a secondary fermentation. So, the result is Pét-nat – a wild, rustic, low-sugar sparkler! This particular wine has a vibrant color and is well-balanced. It has bright raspberry and citrus aromas and refreshing, fruity flavors. I hope you have fun with this one! It is made from a blend of 98% Sémillon and 2% Carignan grapes. Reg retail: \$13 Smart price: \$11

Pairing: With its light, spritzy character, and slight yeastiness, Pét-nat pairs perfectly with pretty much any salty cocktail snacks. It's refreshing fruitiness also works well with spicy foods like Thai.

- **2020 Alois Lageder, Vigneti delle Dolomiti Pinot Bianco “Terra Alpina”, Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy** – This wine is representative of the Dolomite region, where the cool Alpine climate and the warmer Mediterranean influences meet. This region is also famous for its limestone soils, which are expressed in the minerality of the wine. You'll also enjoy aromas of apple, peach, and citrus with good acidity. If you're used to drinking Pinot Bianco or Pinot Blanc, this one is on the lighter, more refreshing side. Reg retail: \$17 Smart price: \$15

Pairing: This one goes well with lighter chicken or seafood dishes; pasta/gnocchi/risotto with a creamy sauce; and soft, delicate cheese.

- **2020 Vignobles Bulliat, Beaujolais Villages “Bibine”, Beaujolais, France** – This 100% Gamay has a label that will make you giggle – it’s a “wine-drinking hat”. Beaujolais is a classic choice for your Thanksgiving or other holiday meal with a diverse assortment of dishes. It is light, pretty, and easy to enjoy, yet well-structured. Red fruit aromas of strawberry and red cherry give way to flavors of plum, currant, and hints of earth and leather. Reg retail: \$18 Smart price: \$16

Pairing: Perfect for Thanksgiving or a dinner where you need a lighter red that will pair with many dishes. Also classic with brie-style cheeses and French-style charcuterie, such as paté, rillettes, and dry-cured sausage.

- **2019 Domaine de Font Sainte, Corbières Rouge, Languedoc-Roussillon, France** – This one is a 60% Carignan, 30% Grenache Noir and 10% Syrah blend from the French region of Languedoc-Roussillon. In contrast with the fruitiness of the Beaujolais and the Bordeaux in this shipment, this Corbières immediately brings to mind aromas of the herbs and spices of Southern France, followed by rich and succulent notes of black cherries and olives. Reg retail: \$18 Smart price: \$16

Pairing: The rich flavors of Corbières pair well with bold, full-flavored stews and slow-cooked winter dishes. Also try spiced grilled meats; and dishes with heavy, béchamel and/or cheese-laden dishes like moussaka or raclette.

- **2019 Chateau Bordieu, Bordeaux Rouge, Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux, France** – This wine received 97 points from Decanter Magazine and is really a great value! This is a Right Bank Bordeaux, meaning the vineyard is located on the side of the Gironde River where the focus is more on Merlot and less on Cabernet Sauvignon. Accordingly, this one is a beautiful ruby-red with exuberant fruit aromas of cherry and currant, followed by a well-rounded structure and mellow tannins. Reg retail: \$17 Smart price: \$15

Pairing: Classic holiday pairings for a Right Bank Bordeaux include filet mignon and duck breast. Pulled pork is another great “modern” pairing for this type of wine.

- **2018 Soos Creek “King Cab” Cabernet Sauvignon, Horse Heaven Hills AVA, WA** – This Washington red really over-delivers for the price, and is friendly and approachable but very well-made. The winemaker David Larsen has an interesting story – he worked in finance at Boeing but always loved food and wine. Decades ago, he started making homemade fruit wines from his parents’ overgrown blackberries, and eventually progressed to opening his winery in 1989. He is known for “unassuming excellence.” This Cab blended with 10% Merlot has delicate aromas of coffee and dark chocolate followed by a bold, rich palate of blackberry, black cherry and spice. Reg retail: \$19 Smart price: \$17

Pairing: This bold Cab can stand up nicely to a rich, fatty cut of meat or steak. If your family serves prime rib for the holidays, this is the one to choose. If you’re looking for a cheese, this wine pairs best with aged hard cheeses like a fine Cheddar or aged Gouda.