

Tasting Notes June 2020 Pick-up Old Favorites



Welcome to your June 2020 Smart Wine Club pickup. The theme this quarter is “Old Favorites” and I hope you enjoy revisiting these wines.

I want to say a heartfelt “Thank You!!” to all of you. You stuck with our little club despite unexpected delays over the last month and the eventual resolution that I wouldn’t really be able to taste new wines, hence our current theme. This has certainly been an anxious time for all of us, as we adjust to changes the world keeps throwing at us. I don’t really have any words of wisdom to offer. I just hope you and yours are safe and healthy. Be kind to one another and especially to yourselves. I hope sharing a glass of wine can help you relax and take a moment for yourself.

So, some of you opted for the usual assortment of six wines, while some of you chose whites/rosé only or reds only. Either way, these tasting notes are the same and talk about all six.

Please note that I am basically using the tasting notes from the last time we enjoyed these wines. One of the bottles is the same vintage as before, but the wine will likely have changed during the interim. Most are newer vintages. So, forgive me if you notice an obvious difference between my notes and what you’re tasting. Shoot me an email and let me know what you think, if so! I’ll be tasting them over the next couple weeks as well. It’s always interesting to try multiple vintages of the same wine or to experience wine as it changes over time.

- **2018 Domaine des Aubuisieres, Cuvée de Silex, Vouvray, France** – (Notes are for the 2016 vintage.) It would not be an exaggeration to say this was my favorite white wine I tasted on my trip to France. I ordered a glass of it one night in Dinan, Brittany and would have ordered another except the restaurant had run out! Wow was I happy to discover it was available here in Oregon. Bernard Fouquet, the winemaker, is known as one of the very best at capturing the essence of this grape and turning it into something spectacularly delicious. You’ll experience the classic minerality of the stone-filled Vouvray-region terroir, combined with the mouthwatering acidity and bold fruitiness of 100% Chenin Blanc grape. Reg retail: \$21 Smart price: \$18

Pairing: This dry Vouvray works perfectly with creamy cheeses like triple crèmes, bries and Boursin. It is also lovely with lighter white meat dishes, especially those with a fruity or sweet/sour sauce.

- **2017 Nisia Verdejo, Rueda, Spain** – OK, so this is the only wine here that isn't technically an "old favorite." I had planned to include the Martinsancho Rueda Verdejo from our August 2017 picks but it became unavailable at the last minute. This wine is very similar and just lovely. The winemaker's notes tell us the wine features aromas of passionfruit, pineapple and minerals, with a rich, balanced texture and lemon curd flavors. Yum!
Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$14

Pairing: Try this one with sheep's milk cheeses like the classic Spanish Manchego or even Feta or Pecorino. Verdejo can stand up to sharp flavors which can typically be difficult to pair, like vinaigrette or olives.

- **2019 Mas la Chevalière "Rosé de la Chevalière" Pays d'Oc, France** – (Notes are for the 2018 vintage. If you haven't imbibed the bottle from your February picks yet, you could do a side-by-side tasting of the 2018 vs 2019!) The name of this winery means "farmhouse of the knight's lady". Although the farmhouse and surrounding property is quite historic, this winery is known for their excellent modern equipment. From picking to pressing to filtration and bottling, each step is carefully designed to protect the wine and achieve maximum flavor. The rosé is 60% Grenache, 25% Syrah and 15% Cinsault, with lovely fresh ripe red fruit and berry flavors and aromas. Reg retail: \$14 Smart price: \$12

Pairing: I just discovered a new rosé perfect pairing that I really love – fish and chips! Try it, it's wonderful. I've also been loving it with Thai food recently. Rosés from this region are nice and bold, so don't be afraid to try this with stronger flavors.

- **2017 Pago Casa Gran Casa Benasal Tinto "Elegant", Valencia, Spain** – (Notes are for the 2013 vintage.) I really love this light blend of 40% Monastrel, 30% Garnacha and 30% Syrah, aptly nicknamed "Elegant." Aromas and flavors of bold, ripe red raspberries, olives and herbes de Provence. Light tannins make this wonderfully fresh and drinkable.
Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$14

Pairing: Great with a richly spiced braised dish like an Indian curry or Moroccan tagine

- **2018 Domaine du Pas St. Martin Saumur Rouge "Pierres Frites", Loire, France** – (Notes are for the 2015 vintage.) My wine rep visited this winery in 2017, so she has a soft spot in her heart for this lovely Cabernet Franc, and after tasting it, I can understand why. The grapes are organically farmed and family-owned. The classic nose of bursting ripe blueberries really comes forward, along with graphite and a rich earthiness.
Reg retail: \$21 Smart price: \$18

Pairing: I originally suggested this as a Thanksgiving dinner pairing in Nov 2017. I think it's a great summer red – delicious but not too heavy and pairs easily with many dishes.

- **2014 Ixsir Altitudes Red Blend, Lebanon** – I had never seen or heard of a wine from Lebanon before I tried this wine. Boy, was I pleasantly surprised. Made from 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Syrah, 26% Caladoc and 17% Tempranillo, it is aged in French oak. The unusual blend provides warm, mature black fruit notes with hints of herbs and a smoky complexity. Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$14

Pairing: This is calling out to me to be enjoyed with some olives. Enjoy it next time you're having folks over for some tapas-style snacks, with olives, aged cheeses, salami and bread with hummus.