

HIGHLAND FINE WINE NOVEMBER 2013 HALF CASE CLUB

Essay Chenin Blanc – Swartland, South Africa (Mixed and White Club) \$11.99

When Essay Wines first came to the US, they received an unprecedented nod of recognition from Robert Parker for their first release. In fact, the first vintage of this Essay White (Chenin Blanc with a touch of Viognier), Parker described as an “awesome value wine,” and praised its excellence value as, “incomprehensible how any wine this good could be so cheap.” His quote goes on to say that it’s a “dead ringer for a dry, tasty Loire Valley Chenin.” The un-irrigated, old, bush-vine Chenin anchors this wine making up 95% of it and giving it its intense fruit and refreshing acidity. The 5% Viognier adds floral spice notes and rounds it out with finesse adding an appealing richness to the palate. Bring it to your Thanksgiving table and sip it alongside sweet potato soufflé and honey-baked ham.

Clos des Justices Bordeaux Blanc – Bordeaux, France (Mixed & White Club) \$16.99

Clos des Justices, translated as “near Justices Road,” is a unique single vineyard on the left bank of the Garonne River. Its uniqueness is certainly translated into the wine; it’s a wine that your mind and your palate won’t forget. From 84 year old Semillon vines this wine is harvested. Refreshing on the palate with lemony citrus and herb notes, the finish is wide and silky making it perfect for a range of dishes from vegetarian to seafood to Turkey. Your Thanksgiving dinner is begging for a bottle of this for pairing perfection.

Clayhouse Sauvignon Blanc – Paso Robles, California (Mixed & White Club) \$14.99

Fine varietal character and soft tannins are just a few characteristics of Paso Robles wine, and this Sauvignon Blanc has all this with a slight restraint that avoids the high alcohols. This vintage experienced a mild, even growing season that produced wines that are well rounded with expressive fruit flavors. Only 4% of this wine was fermented in oak (neutral French to be exact) to add a viscous mouthfeel and spice complexity, and the rest was fermented in temperature-controlled stainless steel. Passion fruit, pear, and melon greet the nose, and flavors of citrus and chalky minerality follow on the palate. Enjoy with a pan roasted trout or salmon.

Folk Machine Tocai Friulano – Mendocino, California (White Club) \$14.99

This Californian rendition on a classic Northern Italian Grape, Tocai Friulano, definitely does the variety justice! After all, it’s not very common to find this little miracle in California, but the folks behind Hobo Wine Co and Banyan do not disappoint. The grapes grow from 40+ year old vines on a little three acre parcel. It’s a wonder that Chardonnay didn’t overwhelm it. The Folk Machine has a clean purity, a lovely roundness, and terrific minerality with candid lemon rind and sweet grapefruit flavors that express themselves with elegant freshness. Enjoy with pan seared skate wing or Vietnamese rice noodle with grilled prawns!

Eidosela Albariño – Rias Baixas, Spain (White Club) \$16.99

The name “Eidosela” arises from the union of Eidos and Sela toponyms, which are the names of the district and parish respectively where Bodegas Eidosela is located, along the River Miño. This Albariño is the realization of a vision between friends who, with the combined efforts of 61 growers in the Condado do Tea subregion of Rias Baixas, have a total of 45 hectares of vineyards. Albariño is a special white in its own right, but receiving a positive rating of 90 points from Stephen Tanzer brings even more acclaim to this joint effort Albariño. Green apple, lemon curd, and quince hit the nose with a strong mineral overtone while a bouquet of more fruit flavors follow on the palate. Excellent zesty acidity with a touch of white pepper lengthen a finish that closes with impressive clarity. Crab cakes, chicken meatballs, or even a tuna and potato salad make delicious pairings.

Kuentz-Bas Alsace Blanc – Alsace, France (White Club) \$13.99

This bone-dry, crisp white expresses citrusy, refreshing flavors with its exciting blend of 60% Sylvaner, 20% Muscat, and 20% Auxerrois. White wines that are blended from several varieties in Alsace are usually labeled “Edelzwicker” which translates as “Noble Blend.” From one of the more respected producers in the region, Kuentz-Bas is literally the marriage of two families whose vineyard pedigree and more than two hundred years of tradition make their wines a favorite far and wide. Speaking of nuptials, the blend of this white is a marriage in its own right. Enjoy a lively minerality complemented by everything stone-fruit and citrus. Match this wine with a turkey and dressing. It’s a wine to be thankful for!

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Fattoria Felsina Chanti Classico – Tuscany, Italy (Mixed & Red Club) \$19.99

Tuscan wines never fail to impress upon the palate the mysterious, magical way Italy is able to capture the mind and heart of those who drink in its masterpieces; wine is certainly one of those. This Felsina Chanti Classico releases a distinct vibrancy and fresh yet hearty appeal across all the essential senses. It's pointed and articulate with sweet notes of red berries, anise, flowers, spices and licorice, and Wine Advocate agrees with a 91 point rating and the statement: "The estate comes through with one of the very best sets of new releases that we've ever tasted.... This is a marvelous wine that deserves serious attention." So open your palate, mind, and heart to this 100% Sangiovese, and unleash its crowd appeal amongst friends and wine lovers alike. This Chianti is a winner for all Thanksgiving dishes.

Zolo Cabernet Sauvignon – Mendoza, Argentina (Mixed & Red Club) \$12.99

Fincas Patagonicas, parent winery to Zolo and Tapiz vineyards, is one of the most technologically advanced wineries in Argentina. Their vineyards are located in the Valle de Uco and Agrelo regions, both of which are in the foothills of Mt. Plata and Tupungato Volcano. This Zolo Cabernet tips his hat and greets the nose with berry, herbs, leather and smoke. On the palate, the wine shows proper structure, bold tannins and ample flavors of blackberry and cassis. Its tannins and ripe mouth appeal transition to a spice and chocolaty finish. Enjoy with a Boston Butt!

Belasco de Baquedano Llama Old Vine Malbec – Lujan de Cuyo, Argentina (Mixed & Red Club) \$15.99

This 100% Malbec is aged 6 months in French oak and 6 months in bottle, and it carries the Llama namesake proudly as the wine embodies the distinctive spirit of the Baquedano vineyards that span the foothills of the Andes. The wine is modern with an intoxicating dark cherry-red color tinted with violet hues. Powerful and intense on the nose, the aromas of cherries, plums, and blackberries are not without the fine toasty hints. In an explosion of fruit, the wine splashes on the palate with well-rounded structure and warmth that begs for a steak accompaniment.

Chateau Coutinel Fronton – Cotes de Frontonnais, France (Red Club) \$15.99

Chateau Coutinel's vineyard is situated on a slightly sloped ground in a plot of land that has a sandy/gravel soil, but bouldene (a sort of sandy-clay soil typical of the AOC Fronton) is the principal ground in which the vines grow. This blend of 60% Negrette, 20% Gamay, 10% Syrah, and 10% Malbec is certainly a fine product of the land. On the nose, there's an expressive complexity with blackberry, vanilla, and peppery spice. The concentrated palate proves the wine's solid structure, and the harmony of the blend plays out well with ripe fruit, wood, and vanilla. A lingering finish makes this a nice pairing for cheese or chocolate or a gourmet burger.

Las Hermanas Monastrell Blend - Jumilla, Spain (Mixed & Red Club) \$13.99

A blend of 70% Monastrell and 30% Syrah, this wine is full throttle and luscious. Las Hermanas are six sisters who grace the labels of the voluptuous reds from Jumilla, Spain, and this blue label Monastrell blend is a beauty, indeed. Clean and fragrant on the nose, the wine opens up on the palate smoothly and warms into a well-balanced acidity with subtle, mature tannins. Seeing no barrel aging and going through separate varietal fermentation in stainless steel tanks, the wines are then blended after fermentation and given 3 to 4 months of lees contact prior to bottling. There's an obvious sense of both the wine and the sisters' character that finishes through terrifically. Paired with roasted and stewed meats, this wine is a wonder!

Vega Tolosa Pinos Bobal Old Vines – Manchuela, Spain (Red Club) \$14.99

When Vega Tolosa wanted to produce a different offering of 11 Bobal old vines, they aimed to give the drinker something with harmony and personality that expresses the singularity of the 80 year old Bobal vines. After selecting the best grapes from the old vines which the owner's grandparents planted, the wine was aged for 3 months in French oak barrels. This 100% Bobal wine is dark ruby colored and opens with a mild oak and boysenberry bouquet. Medium-bodied and slightly acidic, there's an easygoing quality about this dry red. Gentle plum notes and oak incused red currant follow with notes of minerality. The finish is dry and dusty tannins are evident in a finish that lingers. Bring on the roast lamb, veal, or Spaghetti Bolognese for this curious wine!