

HIGHLAND FINE WINE DECEMBER 2013 HALF CASE CLUB - WHITE

Casa de Fra Prosecco – Veneto, Italy (Mixed and White Club) \$10.99

There's something easy and light about the Casa Defra Prosecco from Veneto. It's approachable in a beautiful way; less dry than Champagne and Cava but lacking nothing in its glamour and effervescent appeal. Cielo e Terra is a joint feature between the Cielo family, who have been making wine in Veneto for over a century, and the Cantina Sociale Colli Berici. The two are able to produce wines of fantastic value without sacrificing an ounce of delicious grace of its wine. The bubbles in this 100% Prosecco are finer and softer and the delicate bouquet of clean fresh notes of pear and apple finishes light and fruity. Perfect for a morning mimosa or an evening aperitif.

Ad Lib Unoaked Chardonnay “Treehugger” – Margaret River, Australia (Mixed & White Club) \$15.99

For the wine drinker looking for a fresh, easy white for all seasons, this wine speaks for itself with spritely energy. Yes, even wine has energy! From Western Australia, Ad Lib makes fine varietal wines and aims to transfer their excitement in producing to an excitable wine that pleases the palate. With aromas of lemon and grapefruit followed by hints of melon and cashew, this unoaked Chardonnay is soft, integrated, with a crisp finish. This wine performs with such a clean expression and lends itself well to salty food. Pour this to accompany plainly prepared fish or shellfish; firm cheeses also marry well!

Domaine de la Ferrandiere Viognier – Vin de Pays d'Oc, France (Mixed & White Club) \$12.99

La Ferrandiere is situated on the site of a maritime lagoon between Corbieres and Minevois areas. The Mediterranean Sea isn't far, so the salty soils are different from the surrounding terroirs and require particular methods of culture. The excessive salt content can be damaging to vegetation, so winemakers flood the vineyards once a year. Luckily, the flooding saved the vineyards from the Phylloxera disease that plagued many of the French vineyards as the Pyslloxera aphid didn't survive regular flooding. Another benefit? The thermal protection provided by the presence of quantities of water reduces the damage of spring frosts. For 40 days per year during the spring, vines are flooded. Straw yellow color with an intense, complex nose of pineapple, lichees, peaches and apricots transfers to a full-bodied, flavorful wine on the palate. Let this wine breathe a bit before pairing with exotic food or let it stand alone as a cocktail wine!

Sula Chenin Blanc – Nashik, India (White Club) \$11.99

Just northeast of Mumbai is India's largest grape-growing region. Until recently, it had never been used to grow wine grapes. All that changed when Rajeev Samat, an enterprising, Stanford-trained engineer, quit his hi-tech Silicon Valley job in 1993 to try a new venture. Partnering with a reputed Sonoma County winemaker, the two started a winery on Rajeev's 30 acre family estate. Not long after, the first Sula wines were released after Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc varietals successfully ripened on the Indian vines. In 2002, Wine Spectator did a five page feature on Sula, a first for an Indian winery. Another first for India? Producing a Chenin Blanc! This semi-dry, refreshing light wine bursts with tropical fruits like pineapple, pear, and green apple. Enjoy with Southeast Asian foods or Gujarati dishes! Toast to India!

Lanzos Blanco - Castilla y Leon, Spain (White Club) \$14.99

The historic vine variety known as Macabeu and Maccabéo in Roussillon in Sothern France, called Macabeo in much of its homeland of Spain, and recognized as Viura in Rioja has the unusual virtue of being capable of making dry, white wines and blends beautifully with real nerve and character! With Sauvignon Blanc at its side, these interlopers perform with zesty aromatics and effortlessly transfer its happy blend to the palate making for a thought-provoking performance. You'll get notes of fresh citrus that finish with plump fruit flavors. Pair with grilled chicken or a Thai eggplant dish.

Pfister Pinot Blanc – Alsace, France (White Club) \$21.99

Domaine Pfister has existed since 1780. While that seems like a long time ago, records of wine production in their small village of Dahlenheim date back as far as the year 884. Pfister's house style is elegant with precision of fruit and always very reasonably priced. Pinot Blanc and Auxerrois, each type of vine respectively, brings promptness and smoothness for at first, and then exhibits matter and roundness for the second. This light white wine enhances citrus, melon, pear, apricot flavors and mineral undertones combined with characteristic high acidity. The impeccable balance lends it to a variety of food like light seafood pastas or shrimp cocktail.

HIGHLAND FINE WINE DECEMBER 2013 HALF CASE CLUB - RED

Mazzei Badiola Super Tuscan – Tuscany, Italy (Mixed & Red Club) \$15.99

This super value of a super Tuscan is the little brother of Castello di Fonterutoli's Chianti Classico bottling, but with a blending of 30% Merlot to complement the Sangiovese. The grapes are sourced from vineyards planted in rocky soil of decomposed limestone. The wine is fermented and briefly aged in stainless steel before being transferred to small oak barrels for an additional nine months. Boasting a gorgeous delineation in its fruit to match a harmonious personality, the Sangiovese and Merlot blend bring on the black cherry and currant flavors accented by violet notes and structured masculinity. Grip and density are not lacking in a spice-and-mineral accented finish that begs for a prime rib or honeyed ham.

Vinum Petit Sirah – Clarksburg, California (Mixed & Red Club) \$14.99

Concentration and extraction make for a blockbuster Petit Sirah. The grapes are selected from premium coastal and cool climate growing areas. Made by hand in small batches, these wines exhibit the varietal character of each wine to express itself fully. Aromas are ripe with wild huckleberry and blueberry notes backed with Italian panaforte-like spices. Dense with bittersweet chocolate and a core of sweet, supple cassis, boysenberry and wild raspberry flavors on the palate, this wine folds into a juicy plum ore. Decant this bold wine and it will stand up to any barbequed meat. Lasagna and mushroom dishes are great pairings. It also is a nice match with a chocolate dessert!

Rickshaw Pinot Noir – North Coast, California (Mixed & Red Club) \$16.99

Rickshaw has a mind of its own. It's a man-on-a-mission. The synthesis of two powerful ideals (anyone should be able to have a great bottle of California wine at a reasonable price, and those fortunate enough to enjoy the wine should help out fellow humans) makes for a great, approachable wine and a "right place" priority with the commitment of donating 5% of the gross profit from each bottle to food-related charities in every state where the wine is sold. This Pinot Noir relishes in its mission and promises to please wine lovers. Using used and French Oak barrels and a small percentage of stainless steel tanks to promote freshness, this pure Pinot flavor is one with exquisite balance and compelling notes of raspberry, pomegranate and cherry notes. Pretty amazing!

Pico Maccario Barbera – Piedmont, Italy (Red Club) \$11.99

The "la" Barbera grape, written with the feminine article is the most important red variety in the region in terms of vineyard acreage; it covers some 35% of the regional vineyard surface. It's a productive and hardy variety whose bunches are medium in size, cylindrical-shaped and rich in sugars. Barbera loves the clay-rich soils of Piedmont's Tertiary basis. This wine is ruby in color with strong floral and fruity aromas. There's an undeniable lively acidity. It's a romancing wine with a clever ability to bring the terroir to the table over which it is poured. Enjoy this one with meat sauce, roasts, and salami.

El Circulo Rioja – Rioja, Spain (Red Club) \$11.99

This big, bold wine is fulfilling. It's not too complex or elevated which makes it easy to drink without contemplation. This 100% Tempranillo finds the perfect balance between fruit and wood. With an intense cherry red color and hints of blue, the red fruit aromas and notes of vanilla on the nose and sweet tannins on the palate make this wine a perfect accompaniment to cheese and meat dishes.

Vina Robles Cabernet – Paso Robles, California (Red Club) \$21.99

Vina Robles aim is to continue building a stylistic bridge between the Old and New Worlds while capturing the finesse associated with European wines and celebrating the bold natural flavors of estate vineyards in Paso Robles. It's about an expression of a unique balance of European heritage and American opportunity. Fruit for this Cabernet was selected from four estate vineyards. Garnet in color with aromas of cherry and dark currants with hints of licorice and fine tobacco, the wine is medium-bodied and smooth on the palate. Lasting fruit on the finish is refreshing and warm. Pair this with a steak night dinner.