



Arlequin Wine Merchant
Three Bottle Monthly Club: January 2018
\$69.00 (tax & shipping not included)

BISSON BIANCHETTA GENOVESE Û PASTINE, PORTOFINO D.O.C., LIGURIA, ITALY 2016

List Price \$26/ Arlequin Regular Price \$23/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$21

A sunny white from the Italian Riviera seems just the right thing to brighten up these winter days. We selected this offering from Bisson, a pioneering winery located in the seaside village of Chiavari, overlooking the Golfo Paradiso. Bisson was founded in 1978 by a debonair artist-turned-wine-merchant, Pierluigi (“Piero”) Lugano, who has gone on to become one of the great advocates for Liguria’s indigenous grapes. Working today with his daughter Marta, Lugano draws on estate-grown and purchased grapes from ancient vineyards stacked high on the region’s stony, seaside slopes. The wine is made from Bianchetta Genovese, a white grape championed by the Luganos that—depending on which authority you consult—may or may not be the same as Albarola, another Ligurian variety. Fruit comes from an old, once-derelict vineyard on the hill above the town of Portofino that the Luganos painstakingly rehabilitated—hence its name, “Û Pastine” which means “a specially crafted gift” in the local dialect. It’s a fresh, mouthfilling, medium-bodied wine redolent of white peaches and citrus. Made without oak, the wine has a salty tinge inflecting its ripe fruit that evokes the sea. It’s terrific pairing for seafood. Serve with baked or sautéed fish or seafood pastas, or a vegetarian meal of stuffed vegetables and soft cheeses.

YVES LECCIA “YL” ILE DE BEAUTÉ I.G.P., CORSICA, FRANCE 2016

List Price \$28/ Arlequin Regular Price \$25/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$23

Corsican wines have become fashionable among the sommelier set recently, and for good reason. With their fragrant, wild-herb flavors and robust fruit, the reds evoke the island’s scrub-covered mountains and Mediterranean sun, and taste like wines from nowhere else. That’s remarkable, because most are made from grape varieties planted widely outside the island, including Niellucciu, the Corsican clone of Italy’s pervasive Sangiovese. This example comes from Yves Leccia, who fashions acclaimed wines from the slopes of Patrimonio, a slice of fog-trailed, wind-scrubbed foothills that rises from the turquoise waters of the Gulf of St. Florent. Promoted to A.O.C. in 1968, the Niellucciu-based wines of Patrimonio established Corsica’s reputation for quality on the world stage. The “YL” bottling is Leccia’s intro-level I.G.P. cuvée (a more humble category of wine that replaced France’s *Vin de Pays* a few years ago.) Sourced entirely from Leccia’s Partineleone vineyard, it reverses the proportions of Patrimonio reds by starring Grenache, and letting tannic Niellucciu play a supporting role, at 20 percent of the blend. Like all of Leccia’s wines, it’s made without oak. Harvested by hand from 40-year-old, organically farmed vines, it delivers lively, exuberant black plum and herb flavors. Its chewy tannins provide a touch of rusticity that makes this red an ideal match for steaks, chops and roasts, but it takes well to a slight chill and is fantastically quaffable, even as a pre-dinner sip with hard cheeses and charcuterie.

PICCOLO BACCO DEI QUARONI ‘VIGNETO CÀ PADRONI’ BUTTAFUOCO D.O.C., LOMBARDY, ITALY

List Price \$26 / Arlequin Regular Price \$23/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$21

In considering Italy’s northern wine regions, it’s easy to overlook Lombardy, sandwiched as it is between Piedmont—known for its glorious Barolos and Barbarescos—and the Veneto, famous for Amarone and Prosecco. But that would be a mistake. In addition to producing Franciacorta, arguably the finest sparkling wine outside Champagne, Lombardy is also home to gems such as Buttafuoco, a D.O.C. in the hills of Pavia from which this red comes. With just 200 acres of grapes, Buttafuoco wines are rarely found outside of Italy. For centuries, locals have harvested and vinified the region’s principal varieties together, combining Barbera, Croatina, Uva Rara and Vespolina—a tradition codified in the rules of the D.O.C., established in 2010. This example comes from a small winery managed with much passion by Laura Brazzoli, her husband, Mario Cavalli, and their adult children, Giulia and Tommaso. Both agronomists with a deep love of wine, Laura and Mario fulfilled a dream by purchasing the historic Piccolo Bacco (“Little Bacchus”) estate from the Quaroni family in 2001. Mario and Tommaso handle winemaking, and Laura manages the 24 acres of vineyards, which she farms organically. We loved how unmistakably Italian this red tastes to us. Wild-fermented in tanks and aged in old oak barrels for 18 months, it’s bright and juicy, with a deep, violet-edged color, and a tangy edge that remind us of Dolcetto. Loaded with red and black fruit and nearly full-bodied, it’s a versatile red for the table that can take on rich, tomato-based stews and sauces (think osso bucco and bolognese), cheesy pastas and braised meats with ease.