



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

VIGNETI MASSA TIMORASSO 'DERTHONA' COLLI TORTONESI, ITALY 2016

List Price \$32/ Arlequin Regular Price \$29/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$25

Timorasso is one of the planet's great, under-sung varietals - an age-worthy white grape capable of rivaling Italy's most hallowed reds in depth and complexity - and Walter Massa its undisputed maestro. In 1976, when Massa took over his family's negociant business in the relatively obscure southeastern Piedmont DOCG of Colli Tortonesi ("Tortona Hills"), the area was primarily known for Barbera and the white varietal Cortese (made famous by Gavi, but relatively undistinguished in its Piedmontese incarnation.) Timorasso, by contrast, was virtually extinct. After a few experiments and a tiny initial bottling, Walter became convinced that Timorasso was in fact the region's rightful monarch and set to arrange a restoration. The results speak to the wisdom of this faith; to meet Timorasso on its own high-maintenance, low-yield terms is to discover a delicious and distinctive wine, redolent of its specific terroir and reminiscent of little else. This 2016 bottling provides a perfect introduction: hand-harvested, fermented in stainless steel with 48-60 hours of skin contact and at least 6 months of bottle aging prior to release, it is serious and supple, boasting a floral nose and waxy, full-bodied palate highlighted by creamy apricot, almond and apple notes, undergirded by a bright acidity and latent minerality. Drink this complex wine now alongside simple, mildly flavored poultry or fish dishes such as baked halibut or roast chicken. Or stash away and savor it in a few years, to appreciate the gorgeous almond and honey notes that develop with age.

DOMAINE ELLISE VILLIERS BOURGOGNE VEZELAY ROUGE LA CLOS BURGUNDY, FRANCE 2016

List Price \$29/ Arlequin Regular Price \$27/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$25

Elise Villiers tiny domaine consists of 10 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vines on either side of the Cure River Valley, which is located in the commune of Vézelay, an obscure corner of northern Burgundy just south of Chablis. She makes the wines in the cellar of the house where she was born, in the sleepy village of Précly Le Mout, But Villiers doesn't come from a family of winemakers. Rather, she developed a passion for wine through family dinners growing up, when a wine merchant uncle would bring bottles from prestigious appellations to the holiday table. In 1989, while Villiers was in her 20s, she heard that an elderly couple, among the pioneers in the rejuvenation of Vézelay's viticulture, were putting their vines up for sale. Elise offered to purchase their vineyard on the condition that the couple guide her for the first few years—something they were delighted to do. Those parcels are on the eastern flank of the Vézelay hillside, which is depicted on Elise's label, and are located on the right hand side of that swath of vineyards. Subsequently, at age 30 she attended the viticultural school in Beaune, and then went on to earn a degree in enology from the Institute of Vine and Wine in Dijon. Villiers hires a man to do the tractor work of spraying, plowing the soil, and hedging the vines. With the help of a young woman, Elise does the pruning and training of the vines, and alone makes the wine and oversees its *élevage*. A minimalist in the cellar, she lets the grapes ferment naturally, without adding yeast, and raises her red wine in old demi-muids—600 litre barrels that impart no oak flavor to the wine. This delicate Pinot Noir is superb with earthy poultry and legume dishes, such as chicken with mushrooms, braised lentils and seared duck with herbs.

DOMAINE DE LA TERRE ROUGE SYRAH COTES DE L'OUEST SIERRA FOOTHILLS, CALIFORNIA 2013

List Price \$25/ Arlequin Regular Price \$22/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$20

Terre Rouge is a small, family label rooted in the rugged foothills of California's Sierra Nevada, in Amador County's Shenandoah Valley. It was among a wave of ambitious wineries founded in the 1980s in Sierras, as winemakers looked inland from Napa and Sonoma in search of lean, granite-laced soils and mountain climates. Founders Jane O'Riordan and winemaker Bill Easton are something of Syrah specialists, as this bottling attests. Grapes for this wine come from two vineyards, one of which sits at an elevation of 3,200 feet—about the limit of viable viticulture in their region. Grapes from the warmer, lower site yields wine with richer, fruitier flavors; while the higher vineyard yields a spicier wine with more tannic heft and high-toned, floral edged aromas. Easton ferments the lots separately, then blends them to create a poised, beautifully balanced Syrah of both richness and finesse. It's called "Cotes de l'Ouest" because the Terre Rouge vineyards sit on the western flank, or "cotes" in French, of the Sierra Nevada range. This is a concentrated, meaty red with deep black plum and blackberry flavors, laced with notes of spice and violets. Serve it with rare steaks, barbecued ribs or garlic- and herb-rubbed lamb.