



Arlequin Wine Merchant

Six Bottle Monthly Club November 2018

NISIA OLD VINE VERDEJO RUEDA, SPAIN 2017

List Price \$18/ Arlequin Regular Price \$15/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$12

The Verdejo grape is native to the Rueda region of Spain, and shares with Sauvignon Blanc its aromatic freshness, minerality and exuberant citrus flavors. Most of Rueda's growth has been driven by bulk winegrowers churning out quick-fermented juice from high-yielding, young vines; nearly all of these bottlings are sterile filtered, which strips the wine of real character. Nisia Verdejo is a result of the opposite approach: Wine maestro Jorge Ordóñez's sources Nisia from three dry-farmed, ungrafted vineyards planted in 1886, 1942, and 1950. The wine is aged *sur lie* (on its spent yeast), and more than half the juice wild-ferments in large, mostly neutral French oak. The result is an unusually ripe, silky Verdejo redolent of stone fruit, almond shells and melon. Serve it with first course of goat cheese salad or prosciutto and cantaloupe, or citrusy shellfish dishes and flaky white fish.

REVERDY LA VILLIANDIÈRE SAUVIGNON BLANC LOIRE VALLEY, FRANCE 2017

List Price \$15/ Arlequin Regular Price \$14/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$11.5

Domaine de la Villaudière is a 37-acre estate in the Loire Valley's Sancerre region that's farmed by the Jean-Marie and Catherine Reverdy and their two sons, Guillaume and Baptiste. Passed down through the Reverdy family for several generations, its grapes are the source of most of the fruit for this citrusy Sauvignon Blanc. But because the Reverdys also source grapes from a vineyard outside the appellation, they must use the basic "I.G.P. Val de Loire" designation on this wine. That's fine by us, as it means that this cuvée offers the chalky minerality and grapefruit-driven freshness we like about Sancerre, with a decidedly non-Sancerre pricetag. It makes a great go-to white as a house aperitif, and a terrific pairing for take-out sushi and light, zesty shellfish dishes, such as *moules marinière* and Cajun-spiced shrimp.

OLIANAS ROSATO IGT SARDINIA, ITALY 2017

List Price \$18/ Arlequin Regular Price \$15/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$13

This rosé made from Cannonau, the grape that's better known as Grenache (as the French call it) and Garnacha (in Spain). But arguably, no region in the world is better suited to Grenache than Sardinia, where the variety may have originated. And perhaps no grape makes better rosés than Grenache, whose exuberantly fruity flavors translate brilliantly to crisp, ruby-hued wines of gulpable deliciousness. From an organically farmed estate in Sardinia's mountainous interior, this wine comes from hand-harvested, wild-fermented grapes. The wine ages *sur lie* for five months—mostly in tank, with a small portion matured in neutral oak to enhance its silky texture. It's dry and fruity, with fragrant aromas and flavors of strawberries, orange peel and raspberries. Our favorite pairing with Cannonau rosés is *pissaladière*, the black olive, caramelized onion and anchovy tart. If you can't find a slice of that (say at La Boulange), we suggest stocking up on Mediterranean ingredients (such as olives, lemons, garlic, oregano and thyme) and the freshest seafood you can find, and getting creative in the kitchen.

TENUTA LA PERGOLA MONFERRATO ROSSO PIEDMONT, ITALY 2017

List Price \$14/ Arlequin Regular Price \$12/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$10

This Piedmont red blend comes to us from importer Kermit Lynch, who so enjoyed a glass of humble, quaffable wine in a Piedmont trattoria that he tracked down the producer and now collaborates with them to bring this wine to market. Tenuta La Pergola is 74-acre vineyard and winery in Asti that's helmed by Alessandra Bodda, whose great-grandfather founded the estate in 1903. The exact blend of this cuvée changes a bit each year, but it's usually about half Barbera, with smaller amounts of Dolcetto, Bonarda, Croatina and Freisa. The point is to make an honest, easygoing red that's delicious, food-friendly and priced to buy by the case. Fresh and supple, with juicy berry fruit, this is a wine to crack open while waiting for your pizza to arrive, or while cooking your favorite red-sauced pasta dish. *Saluti!*

QUARTZ PINOT NOIR, CASABLANCA VALLEY, CHILE 2017

List Price \$15/ Arlequin Regular Price \$14/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$12

It's incredibly hard to find truly affordable Pinot Noir that's not also truly terrible. So we were surprised and impressed by this delicious offering from a small-ish winery in Chile's Casablanca Valley. Fronting the country's windswept Pacific Coast, Casablanca has become a terrific source of crisp white wines, particularly Sauvignon Blanc. These days, it's the Pinot Noir that's getting the buzz. Winemaker Vicente Johnson says that the Casablanca landscape reminds him of coastal Sonoma, although the soils here are rich in granite, with lots of quartz under a layer of sand and clay. This light, cherry- and herb-inflected Pinot is perfect for earthy vegetarian dishes based on lentils, mushrooms or beans, such as roasted mushrooms with herbed quinoa, white bean and kale stew or cumin-spiced lentil burgers.

FINCA LA ESTACADA OCHO Y MEDIO LA MANCHA ALTA, SPAIN 2016

List Price \$17/ Arlequin Regular Price \$15/ Wine Club Exclusive Reorder \$12

The remote, isolated Spanish region of La Mancha occupies a vast, arid plateau in the center of the country. Its undulating plains of henna-colored earth are striped with silvery-green olive orchards and grape vines stretching to the limitless horizon, and have been since Roman times. In fact, this ancient wine region grows more vines than any other single wine region in the world. Made from the rare, indigenous Velasco grape, this red comes from Finca La Estacada, a family-owned winery founded in 2001 in La Mancha Alta, a high-elevation subzone that's home to the region's best reds. It's crafted by Todd Blomberg, an American winemaker on a quest to make affordable wines as naturally as possible, from grapes grown without chemical fertilizers or pesticides. We'd never tried Velasco before, but liked this red's savory berry flavors and supple palate, which reminded us of an earthy Malbec. Pair it with barbecue, hoisin ribs, stir-fried beef or burgers