**SUMMER 2021 WINE CLUB RELEASE**

***Wines of the Mediterranean***

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Agios Georgios, Keykyra, Greece. Photo courtesy of Allyse Ingalls.

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Often when we “audition” wines to be included in our Wine Club programs, we stumble across a specific producer or region that captures our imagination. In recent releases we’ve celebrated sunny Spain and the reds of Ribera del Duero; we’ve sipped the lean Alpine wines from Savoie and Jura; and we’ve explored Biodynamic wines from around the world. Each wine club bag includes at least one “theme bottle,” which provides an opportunity for our Blanc & Rouge community to have a shared wine education experience from the comfort of our dinner tables.

This summer, we found it difficult to select just one place to showcase. When the first heat wave swept through the Puget Sound, we hunkered down next to the air conditioner to brainstorm, but all we could think about was swimming in warm water. Around this time, our distribution partners were rolling through the shop doors with wines from the coastlines of Italy, Spain, France, and Greece. Some were new vintages of familiar favorites, such as Benanti’s Etna Rosso, and others had never-before been available for our shelves, such as two stunning Greek whites from Avantis and Galavas estates.

The heritage of Mediterranean winegrowing regions extends back before the time of Odysseus. The wines of “the Med” tell a rich history of empires that have conquered and fallen and the agrarian communities that have endured across generations. This summer, we celebrate the Mediterranean, and while international travel is still difficult, a glass or two of Sicilian rosé will help to tide us over. We are grateful to travel with you this summer via these selections.

Every quarter, our wine club presents a carefully-curated collection of bottles that are unique, sustainably-produced, and food-friendly. We thank you for supporting Blanc & Rouge and exploring the world of wine with us! The tasting notes below represent the core wine selections for the August 2021 club release. We may have included a special selection in your bag, so please contact Ally at wineclub@blancandrougewine.com if you would like any additional information about your club wines. Cheers!

**TIER I**

**REDS**

**Barinas Monastrell Tinto (Jumilla, Spain)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

Monastrell (Mourvedre) may be best known as a blending grape in some of our favorite Rhone red blends, but Mediterranean areas such as France’s Bandol and, in this case, Spain’s Jumilla, bottle this spicy, thick-skinned grape as a single varietal. The Barinas Monastrell Tinto is a hefty wine with notes of baked berries, oak, and jerky. Pair with BBQ chicken or tapas. The artwork for this label is a custom piece done by Bellingham artist, RR Clark.

**Pinyolet Garnacha (Monsant, Catalonia, Spain)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

The Priorat DOCa may be the darling of Catalonia, but the mountainous region of Monsant produces powerful examples of Garnacha and Carignan at a price point we can enjoy any day of the week. Named for the “holy mountains,” vines in this region are chilled by both mountain air and winds whipping up off the sea, which allows the grapes to retain bright acidity and a touch of minerality. Pinyolet Garnacha is easy-drinking with pops of raspberry and strawberry followed by notes of licorice spice and crushed rock. Pair this wine with simple paninis, burgers, burritos, or other casual fare.

**Santadi Carignano “Grotta Rossa” (Carignano del Sulcis, Sardinia, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

As we delved into the wines of the Mediterranean, we found ourselves sipping several varietal bottlings of the grape Carignan, including this stunner from Santadi Winery. Their 1235-acre property on the isle of Sardinia rolls through lush hillsides right up to the sea. This wine is an intense shade of crimson with fruity aromas and zip of licorice on the finish. Produced entirely from bush-grown vines in the Carignano del Sulcis DOC (appellation), which is dedicated to the cultivation of world-class Carignan. It’s difficult to find wines that offer this much elegance and structure for the price point. Pair with grilled chicken souvlaki or a hearty flatbread.

**Cesari Justo (Veneto, Italy)**

From the hills around fair Verona grow some of the most underrated and exciting wines in Italy. Blanc & Rouge has been a big fan of Cesari since we first sipped their showstopper Amarone. Justo is a new wine in their lineup, made in the iconic appassimento style, but available at a quarter of the price. This wine is both deep and bright with bold structure. Notes of ripe cherry and its velvety texture make it a perfect pairing with aged cheeses and grilled meats. If you’re looking for an easy-drinking, crowd-pleasing wine to take to a backyard BBQ, this is the wine.

**Manousakis Nostos MRS. Red (Crete, Greece)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

It’s hard to get more Mediterranean than the large island of Crete to the south of mainland Greece. Europe’s southernmost winegrowing region is a hub for Greece’s fun indigenous grape varieties. This blend of Romeiko and Syrah (no, not a Greek grape, but included in great Greek blends) offers aromas of blackberry and cranberry coupled with a delicate nuttiness. Pair this wine with traditional Greek kleftiko (slow-roasted lamb) or a simple cheese board.

**Domaine du Couron Marselan (Ardèche, Rhône, France)**

The Marselan grape is a delicious offspring of Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache. Importer and dear friend of the shop, William Woodruff, represents this family-run estate, and we were fortunate to bring in this limited bottling before it quickly went out-of-stock. With elegant notes of wild herbs, black currants, and tobacco leaf, this wine drinks more like a $30 bottle than a $15 bottle. Pair this wine with a lightly spiced lentil stew or fresh pesto pasta.

**WHITES**

**Avantis Estate Dry White (Evia, Greece)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

Greece is home to over 300 indigenous grape varietals, which make up 90% of its total vineyard plantings. The few international grapes they have planted-- Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, and, in this case, Viognier-- are blended with Greek varietals to produce wines with sweeping international appeal. This blend of Viognier with Greek’s hallmark white grape, Assyrtiko, is refreshing and mineral-driven, with notes of pear, melon, and white stone fruit. Enjoy this wine on a sunny day with a light Greek salad and some peak-of-season watermelon wedges.

**Planeta Winery Rosé (Sicilia, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

This rosé of Nero d’Avola and Syrah is fresh and fruity, and you can basically taste seaspray on the finish. The Mediterranean is home to world-renowned rosés-- Provence, Bandol, etc.-- but some of the most exciting rosés we’ve enjoyed this year are from Italian properties near the sea. Pair this wine with simple salads, tapas, or sashimi.

**Poderi Dal Nespoli Famoso (Emilia-Romagna, Italy)**

Famoso, also known as Uva Rambela, is an indigenous variety from the Romagna region that was only rediscovered in the last decade. Producers like Nespoli have “re-launched” the grape from near extinction. This aromatic varietal offers floral notes of jasmine and orange blossom. On the palate the wine is intense and rich, with bright acidity and freshness on the finish. Pair with herby risotto, fish tacos, or fresh cheeses.

**Santadi Vermentino di Sardegna “Villa Solais” (Sardinia, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

This wine is the definition of “Island Wine.” Green-gold in color with a citrusy nose, this wine is an attractive presentation of mineral, floral, and fruity notes. Santadi’s 1235-acre property on the isle of Sardinia rolls through lush hillsides right up to the sea. Pair this wine with pesto pasta, light seafood dishes, or steamed artichokes.

**Cantina di Mogoro “Ajo” (Sardinia, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

This is a rare bottling of the Sardinian white varietal, Nuragus. With notes of green apple, melon, pear, and hazelnut, this wine is immensely food-friendly. Pair with grilled sardines or a hearty salad. Sardinian, is a language as well as a place. While it may be on UNESCO’s list of endangered languages, there are some expressions and terms that are still commonly used on the island. “Ajó,” or “let’s go,” invites you to enjoy the fruits of the isle of Sardinia through this bottle of wine.

**La Vidaubanaise VDP du Var Rosé "La Plage" (Provence, France)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

We can’t have a Mediterranean-themed club release without a classic Provence rosé. This wine is both traditional and fun. “La Plage,” meaning “the beach” in French, is a tribute to the easy-drinking, summery spirit of this wine. Established in Vidauban in 1922, the Mâitres Vignerons de la Vidaubanaise today control 600 hectares of vines in the heart of the Appellation Côtes de Provence. Located in the limestone foothills of the historic Maures massif in the southern Var, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Alps, the terroir benefits from the Mediterranean climate, which is beneficial for traditional southern varietals such as Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Carignan and Rolle. Enjoy chilled on a sunny day.

**TIER II**

**REDS**

**Cantine Menhir “Pietra” Susumaniello (Salento, Puglia, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

If Italy is shaped like a boot, then the Salento peninsula (part of the Apulia or “Puglia” region) is the bootheel. Known for its fortresses and sun-kissed beaches, this area is also a burgeoning wine community. Italy has hundreds of indigenous grapes, and when we come across a 100% varietal-bottling of an unfamiliar grape, we immediately take interest. This wine is produced with a grape called Susumaniello from an organic producer who is committed to showcasing Puglia’s regional grapes. This velvety wine is elegantly spicy with notes of red currant and sage. Pair this wine with savory dishes such as orecchiette with tomato sauce or porcini mushroom risotto.

**Ocellum Durrii Límite Natural (Arribes, Spain)**

This may be one of the most exclusive, under-the-radar bottles that we have ever brought into the shop. Ocellum Durii is a tiny bodega in the Arribes region of Spain, on the border of Spain and Portugal, an area which is primarily known for its large national park. There is not much information available about this producer, save for the fact that the winemaker single-handedly produces small batches of this red blend out of his hand-dug, 18th-Century cellar. This wine is a blend of five regional grapes- Juan Garcia (50%), Tempranillo (25%), Brunal (10%), Rufete (10%), and Mencia (5%). It clearly expresses the granite and slate-filled soils in which these grapes are grown, with intense mineral notes that are balanced by notes of black fruits, eucalyptus, and licorice spice. Pair with a plate of hard Spanish cheeses and cured meats or with grilled pork ribs. We were introduced to this wine by a small importer based in Bellingham, and we were one of only a handful of retailers in the country to get our hands on these bottles before they sold out.

**Benanti Etna Rosso (Etna, Sicily, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

This wine is a longstanding favorite wine that deserves more attention. The Benanti family has been producing stunning reds on the slopes of Mt. Etna, since the 1800s. We lovingly refer to the winemakers of this region as “heroes of the wine world”. Making wine on an island, in the foothills of an active volcano, is not for the faint of heart, and Etnean winemakers have developed international renown for the use of their indigenous grapes to produce elegant, structured wines that clearly express their volcanic *terroir.* This wine is ethereal with intense red fruit notes. Dry and mineral-driven with harmonious acidity and salinity, this wine is extremely versatile when paired with food. Pair with grilled fish, lean red meats, or hearty squash dishes.

**Famille de Boel “La gras c’est la vie!” Rouge (Méditerranée, Rhône, France)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

*Le gras c’est la vie* is a showstopper of a wine, with freshness and vivacity, as well as extraordinary value. Coming from a young plot of vines in the southern side of the Rhone Valley, this is a hand-harvested blend of Carignan, Grenache, and Caladoc (a cross between Malbec and Grenache). A delicate touch and a natural fermentation in stainless steel are the key factors that play into this wine’s bright approach, so that even after only a few months' time in the tank, the finished wine is ready for the bottle and immediate consumption. A bright and brambly nose leads to a palate that is exuberant with red and black fruits, full of spicy texture, and has just the right amount of meaty grip to play well with foods of many kinds or to simply invite the next sip.

**Palama “Nini” Rosso (Salento, Puglia, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

You might be scratching your head thinking, “Two wines from the Salento region in the same club bag?” (See tasting notes on Cantine Menhir Susumaniello.) Yes, the wines of this region deserve the attention. Nini, the first solo project for winemaker Michele Palama, weaves equal parts Negroamaro and Primitivo together in a wine that pays homage both to the soft, dark fruit of the Salento, and to Michele’s father's simultaneous quest for freshness and balanced acidity. A large Mediterranean ensemble - from anise and eucalyptus on the nose to violet and myrtle on the palate - help to harmonize this complex and lingering blend. Southern Italian cuisine is rich with bright tomato and vegetable-based dishes. This wine would pair beautifully with anything fresh from the Farmers Market.

**Acustic Celler Ritme Negre (Priorat, Spain)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

Like many Catalan wineries, Acustic Celler is a modest project, founded by a passionate young winemaker who has the region’s wines running in his blood. In 2003 Albert Jané started his own winery in a 200-year-old cellar in the tiny town of Marçà, and began to piece together vineyard plots across the renowned Montsant and Priorat wine regions. Today he works with a variety of 35 to 105-year-old vines which are all farmed organically and harvested by hand to produce the best wines possible from this harsh land. Ritme is Albert’s youngest red Priorat wine which is made with 70% Garnacha and 30% Carinena grapes, sourced from vines which are up to 80 years old. These old vines give incredible intensity and richness to the wine along with a distinctive minerality from the slate soils which are so typical of the Priorat region. As soon as you open and serve this wine you will notice the seductive juicy red fruit aromas and hints of toast and sweet spices from the 10 months of aging in oak. On the palate the wine is incredibly smooth with gentle tannins and concentrated fruit flavours which make it an excellent partner for cured meats, hard cheeses or hearty stews.

**Les Vignerons de Tautavel Vingrau Rocher des Buis (Maury Sec, Roussillon, France)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

75% Grenache, 25% Syrah blend from Les Vignerons de Tautavel Vingrau (VTV), a cutting‐edge producer of Roussillon wines. Formed in 2009 by the merger of cooperatives in Tautavel and Vingrau, the focus on quality has attracted growers from seven villages. Vineyards are in the high, cool, northern interior of Roussillon, with 20% of the acreage in the new appellation, Maury Sec, whose reputation has soared since it was established in 2011. This wine is named “Rocher des Buis,” or “Boxwood Rock,” after the site of the Cathar fortress, Queribus, which overlooks the famed vineyards of Maury. This blend offers layers of ripe raspberry, strawberry and black cherry fruit, with hints of baking spice and light garrigue notes. Soft, supple and expansive on the palate, with fine grained tannins and long, persistent finish. Pair this wine with garlic and herb‐rubbed lamb chops, pepper-crusted steak, and other boldly‐flavored red meat preparations.

**WHITES**

**Tetramythos Roditis Natur (Patras, Greece)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

Founded in 1999 by the brothers Aristides and Eustatius Stathios, this winery offers a splendid range of impeccably-made wines from both indigenous and international grape varietals. This certified-organic, native yeast-fermented wine is made of the Greek grape Roditis and hails from the appellation of Patras. Lean, racy and super energetic, this bottling shows notes of crushed sea salt, the yeasty quality of a lager beer, wet stone minerality and fresh fruits such meyer lemon and pomelo. Pair this wine with a Greek salad with a big block of feta or grilled fish.

**La Valle de Sole Rosato (Marche, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

100% Montepulciano. This certified- organic estate is located on Italy’s Adriatic coastline, wedged between the Sibilli and Laga mountains and the sea. Don’t let the dark color fool you; this wine is dry and nuanced with robust notes of strawberry and cherry candy (but without the residual sugar). This wine offers ripping acidity backed by subtle notes of rose. Pair this wine with simple pasta dishes or a bowl of shellfish risotto.

**Sol Stone Viognier (Columbia Valley, Washington, USA)**

We are incredibly picky when it comes to Viognier. As Washington has embraced Rhone Valley varietals (Syrah, Grenache, etc), we have had an uptick in Rhone-style whites roll through our doors. Viognier is a wildly aromatic wine with bold notes of white flowers and stone fruits. It also happens to be lower in acidity than most popular white grapes, so many New World winemakers struggle with this varietal, expecting it to drink with the citrusy quality of a Chardonnay. It’s rare we find a Washington bottling of Viognier that properly pays homage to its Old World inspiration while also demonstrating the potential of Washington terroir. The Sol Stone Viognier offers notes of apricot and honeysuckle, with a delicate nuttiness on the finish. It pairs perfectly with Middle Eastern cuisine.

**Pietradolce Etna Bianco (Etna, Sicily, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

This is hands-down one of our favorite white wines from this club release. We lovingly refer to the winemakers of the Etna DOC as “heroes of the wine world”. Making wine on an island, in the foothills of an active volcano, is not for the faint of heart, and Etnean winemakers have developed international renown for the use of their indigenous grapes to produce elegant, structured wines that clearly express their volcanic terroir. The Carricante vines that create this wine sit almost 3000 feet above sea level, and the vineyards are whipped by Mediterranean winds. The freshness and overwhelming (in a good way) minerality make this wine immensely food-friendly. It offers notes of sliced lemon, crisp green apple, lime, oyster shell, and stone, with a pretty creaminess on the finish. Pair this with soft goat cheese, light seafood dishes, or grilled vegetables.

**Mas de Valeriole “Ve” Rosé (Méditerranée, Rhône, France)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

“Vé”—a local Provençal expression meaning “Look at that!”—is a blend of 70% Caladoc (a crossing of Grenache and Malbec), 15% Merlot, and 15% Marselan (a crossing of Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon) from soils of sand and loam. Harvested at night to ensure that the bunches are cool upon entry to the winery, “Vé” is pressed directly and given a brief passage in stainless steel before bottling. Clocking in at a modest 13% alcohol, it offers bright, salt-tinged flavors of raspberry and ripe citrus fruits, with a sneakily long finish. Pair with sunshine and many laughs with your favorite dinner guests.

**TIER III**

**REDS**

**Famille de Boel “Les Voraces” Syrah (Collines Rhodaniennes, Rhône, France)**

Famille De Boel France is a small family estate owned and run by an enthusiastic and inspired husband and wife team in the high elevations of Saint Joseph. This is a project born from passion, not born from inheriting vineyards or a cellar. Nelly France is from Brittany (France), Arnaud De Boel is from Belgium, and they met in 2009 in New Zealand where their love for food and wine brought them together and quickly found a love for one another. With their two young children Augustin and Margot, the family chooses biodynamic farming and winemaking, and owns vineyards in the Northern Rhone where they live (in Saint Joseph and Cornas), and some land in the Southern Rhone close to the villages of Suze-la-Rousse and Sainte-Cécile-les-Vignes. They are completely dedicated to the celebration of how food and wine come together in so many magical occasions, and strive to make wine that is meant for the

table, meant to enjoy with friends and family. ‘Les Voraces’ is a pure expression of Syrah from the northern Rhone in the Collines Rhodaniennes IGP, where only stainless steel is used for fermentation, and a short aging to give as much varietal characteristic as possible. This young vineyard is hand-harvested when the fruit has reached a perfect balance between pH and sugar development, and brought in for a natural fermentation. With notes of peppery spice, blackberry, boysenberry, and a touch of cured meat, on the palate the wine is fresh, but has deep complexity, showing dark berry fruit, spice, licorice, and great minerality. Pair with barbecue, boeuf bourguignon, lamb kebabs, and charred vegetables.

**Kiona Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain, Washington, USA)**

96% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Merlot, 1% Malbec

Kiona is a hallmark estate in the Washington wine industry. Their grapes are purchased and fermented by some of the most notable Northwest wineries, with many bottlings of their fruit commanding $60+. Yet, like a small handful of the Washington Wine OG, Kiona has maintained incredible pricing on their estate wines. If you are looking for a supreme value to share with friends who are visiting from out of town, this is *the* Cab. This authoritative wine shows why Red Mountain has a reputation as one of the world’s preeminent regions for Cabernet Sauvignon. Fine-grained tannin, great fruit, and dark color abound. Red Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon tends to have a very nicely-integrated pyrazine aspect to complement the rich red and blue fruit profile. Pair this wine with high-quality burgers.

**Villa Leone Montepulciano d’Abruzzo (Abruzzo, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

We are excited to partner with a new importer/distributor Be’s Vinum, to bring you this stunning bottle of Montepulciano. Many people commonly confuse the wines of Montepulciano (Sangiovese-based wines from this namesake Tuscan village) with the wines from further South that are produced with the red grape, Montepulciano. This wine is much denser than your everyday Montepulciano. Notes of black pepper and balsamic fill the glass, while flavors of tobacco, cocoa, and Italian herbs coat the palate. Pair this wine with lamb ragu over rotini or Filipino beef adobo. If you end up enjoying this wine in the cold winter months, pair this wine with winter farro and roasted root vegetables.

**l’Edre Carrément Rouge (Côtes du Roussillon Villages, France)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

50% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 15% Carignan, 5% Mourvèdre.

Jacques Castany and Pascal Dieunidou are two wine fanatics, farming inherited vines part-time in the village of Vingrau (Roussillon region). With limited acreage, average yields of just 1.05 tons/acre, and consistently stellar press, the wines are naturally in short supply, though there are plans to slowly increase production to meet demand. This wine is incredibly intense and layered, with dark fruit aromas of plums, cassis and black cherry on the nose, and light spiciness and undertones of herbs and minerals. It’s juicy, yet firm and well-structured on the palate. Pair with good cuts of lamb or beef.

**Domaines Lupier “El Terroir” Garnacha (Navarra, Spain)**

The small region of Navarra, in the Basque region of northern Spain, may be best known for its cuisine and sweeping mountain vistas. In this region, live Enrique Basarte and Elisa Ucar, owners and winemakers of Domaines Lupier, who have fully embraced “mountain viticulture.” After years of working in the major wine growing regions of Spain, Enrique and Elisa purchased 27 micro-lots of gnarly, old-growth Garnacha vines in high-altitude meadows. They farm this property organically and biodynamically, with a deep respect for nature. Deep ruby in colour, this pure Garnacha has an expressive nose of ripe black cherry and plum with layers of subtle spice, toast and balsamic. It is concentrated and complex, yet extremely elegant thanks to the incredibly old Garnacha vines which date back to the early 20th century. Precise fruit and subtle spice on the palate is complemented by well-integrated, supple tannins and a long smooth finish. Pair with wild game, spicy dishes, and barbecue.

**Tabarrini Boccatone Montefalco Rosso (Umbria, Italy)**

Some of our surprise-favorite reds this summer are from producers in Tuscany’s lesser-known neighbor, Umbria. This wine is a boisterous blend of mainly Umbrian Sangiovese with seasoning dashes of Barbera and Sagrantino (the region’s hallmark red grape). Sagrantino, when bottled solo, is highly tannic and needs years to soften over decades of cellar aging. In a blend, it is more approachable when young, and provides structure and black fruit notes. This opulent red that shows raspberry compote, candied orange peel, roasted herbs and vanilla. The wine is soft and very fruity with medium acidity, round tannins and a plush finish. Pair with lamb shank and polenta or a meaty wood-fired pizza.

**Pojer e Sandri Pinot Nero (Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy)**

Trentino Alto-Adige in mountainous northern Italy is home to some of the most nuanced and ethereal wines in the nation. Pinot Nero is Italian Pinot Noir (a crossing of Italian Pinot clones and Burgundian Pinot clones.) The color is a delightful garnet color towards a light ruby. Its bouquet is persistent with hints of wild berries, raspberry and strawberry. On the palate, the fruit is generous and exciting: a light berry quality along with zesty acidity and mild tannins. Pair with smoked salmon, roasted chicken, or casserole.

**WHITES**

**Pietradolce Etna Bianco (Etna, Sicily, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

This is hands-down one of our favorite white wines from this club release. We lovingly refer to the winemakers of the Etna DOC as “heroes of the wine world”. Making wine on an island, in the foothills of an active volcano, is not for the faint of heart, and Etnean winemakers have developed international renown for the use of their indigenous grapes to produce elegant, structured wines that clearly express their volcanic terroir. The Carricante vines that create this wine sit almost 3000 feet above sea level, and the vineyards are whipped by Mediterranean winds. The freshness and overwhelming (in a good way) minerality make this wine immensely food-friendly. It offers notes of sliced lemon, crisp green apple, lime, oyster shell, and stone, with a pretty creaminess on the finish. Pair this with soft goat cheese, light seafood dishes, or grilled vegetables.

**Domaine du Bagnol Cassis Blanc (Cassis, France)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

The Bagnol Cassis Blanc comes from a property in southern France situated beneath a behemoth limestone outcropping called Cap Canaille, and it is just 200 meters from the Mediterranean. The vineyards are cooled by a trio of winds--the Tramontane, Mistral, and Gregal--plus sea breezes, and the wines, both a blanc and rosé, are reflective of all of these factors. A blend of Marsanne, Clairette, and Ugni Blanc, this dry, juicy wine tastes like white fruit and ocean spray, and it's the perfect match for bouillabaisse and other seafood dishes.

**Gavalas Santorini Assyrtiko (Santorini, Greece)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

Gavalas family winery, one of the oldest wineries in Santorini, lies in the traditional village of Megalochori. They strive to highlight the particular characteristics of Santorini’s terroir. The winemaking team is led by fourth-generation winemaker, George Gavalas and his son, Vagelis. With proper respect to the local varieties, they are focused on limited production bottlings of Assyrtiko, Greece’s hallmark white grape, as well as Aidani, Mandilaria and Mavrotragano. This is one of the most elegant Greek wines we have ever encountered. As it airs and warms, it expands in the glass and becomes more expressive, so don’t serve this wine too cold. It offers flavors and aromas of green apple, pineapple, citrus, and white flowers, and finishes with refreshing acidity. Pairs well with seafood, fish, pasta, white meat, and fresh veggies dotted with lemon juice.

**TIERS IV & V**

**REDS**

**Benanti Contrada Monte Serra Etna Rosso (Etna, Sicily, Italy)**

*Mediterranean Wine*

The Benanti family has been producing stunning reds on the slopes of Mt. Etna, since the 1800s. We lovingly refer to the winemakers of this region as “heroes of the wine world”. Making wine on an island, in the foothills of an active volcano, is not for the faint of heart, and Etnean winemakers have developed international renown for the use of their indigenous grapes to produce elegant, structured wines that clearly express their volcanic terroir. 100% the indigenous red grape, Nerello Mascalese. The floral impact of this wine leaves a lasting impression, and the quality of fruit veers toward wild berries and cranberries. There is a note of plush or succulent sweetness that seems very specific to this wine. The tannins are silky, and the wine is mid-weight in texture but noticeably long in persistence.

**Kontos Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla, Washington)**

Kontos Cellars is the project between brothers Cameron and Chris Kontos who are Walla Walla natives and have a longstanding history in not only agriculture but the wine industry. Their father, Cliff Kontos, was the founder of Fort Walla Walla Cellars, and helped mentor Cameron in his own winemaking journey. In 2002 Cameron joined Forgeron Cellars, and quickly was promoted assistant winemaker under eminent Walla Walla wine pioneer, Marie-Eve Gilla. Cameron trained under Marie and worked at Forgeron for eight years before starting Kontos with his brother.This is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon from three iconic Washington vineyards-- Summit View, Les Collines, and Seven Hills. Ruby color and a classic varietal nose of blackberry, cherry and plum, with scents of crushed roses, juniper berry, tobacco and cedar. On the palate, the flavors are direct and well structured, imbued with dark berry, cocoa, and hints of leather and toasty oak.

**Montepeloso Eneo Rosso (Tuscany, Italy)**

Tucked away in the hills of Suvereto near Bolgheri on the Tuscan Coast – one of the hottest areas in Tuscany – is the 15-acre Montepeloso estate. The winemaker, Fabio Chiarelotto, admits about his wine that it’s “easy to produce concentrated wines in such a hot climate…but it’s much harder to achieve elegance and finesse.” In order to take full advantage of the terroir’s potential, he overhauled the vineyards in 1997 – retraining, pruning, and even regrafting many vines. This blend of 55% Sangiovese, 25% Montepulciano, 15% Alicante and 5% Malvasia Nera offers a beautifully saturated color with thickness, fruity richness and nicely integrated tannins. The wine is redolent of crushed red berry fruit, licorice, blood orange, star anise and rose petal. Bright and gracious, with terrific purity, the Eneo beautifully captures the understated, nuanced style of the year.

**La Gerla Birba Rosso (Tuscany, Italy)**

La Gerla was born from the passion of its founder, Sergio Rossi, a successful businessman who fell in love with his vineyards, caring for them as if they were his children. The vineyards at La Gerla lie on Tuscany’s Montalcino hill at 320 meters above sea level, right where the slope softens. A small winery since its founding in 1976, La Gerla has become a great example of this Tuscan territory, surrounded by the Orcia and Ombrone Valleys and looking out to Buonconvento and Siena from the winery door. Sergio Rossi passed away in July 2011 but left behind a deeply-respected legacy and winery. La Gerla works to manifest Rossi’s philosophy of attention to quality and detail in everything they do. Alberto Passeri now oversees winemaking and operations at La Gerla, faithfully carrying on Sergio Rossi’s founding vision and proud to boast that La Gerla is the only family owned property in Montalcino working with the original Biondi Santi (BBS) Sangiovese clones. Pronounced aromas of ripe red berries, strawberry and vanilla. The palate is dry, harmonious, round, with velvety integrated tannins. Treat this wine right and decant it before serving; you will be rewarded with a layered and complex bouquet of scent and a plush mouthfeel.