

PRWS

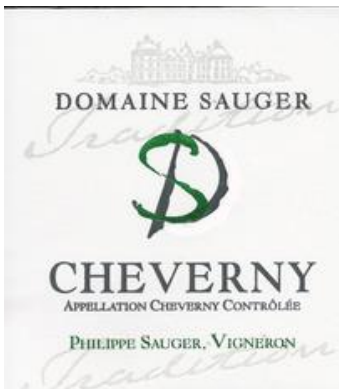
December 2020 Wine Club



Worldly

2020 has been many, many things. But probably most people would agree that this year has not broadened their horizons. First we had tariffs that increased the price (and decreased the supply) of many imported wines and spirits. Shortly after, travel as we knew it abruptly ended; now, you can't even go searching for fun new drinkables on your vacation. Consequently, our final Wine Club of 2020 features 2 Italian wines, plus 1 French, and 1 German. Because if you were only home for Christmas in your dreams, perhaps your New Year's dreams can feature Tuscany, Sicily, the Loire Valley, or the Mosel. Then raise a glass to better days in 2021! Happy New Year!

White #1) Domaine Sauger Cheverny 2018



Domaine Sauger is situated on the left bank of the Loire River Valley, bordered by the forest of La Sologne. It has a sandy clay soil and an oceanic climate, slightly tempered by the nearby forest. 5 generations of the Sauger family have maintained this domaine since its founding in 1870. The current proprietor-Philippe- took over in 1988 and decided to concentrate on his vineyards and give up the other enterprises-white asparagus and pickles- which had previously sustained the domaine.

Cheverny is a relatively recent addition to Loire valley wines, officially arriving in 1993. The sandy soils of this region tame Sauvignon Blanc's more herbaceous tendencies, while the temperate climate gives rich and ripe fruit character. Sauger's Cheverny is an 80/20 blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, with Chardonnay lending richness and Sauvignon steely and mineral flavors. The end result is a little like a dry version of lemon meringue pie. Delicious!

White #2) Kees Kieren Riesling Hochgewachs

Graacher Himmelreich Halbtrocken 2017



Ok, let's dissect that name. Kees Kieren is the producer. The Himmelreich ('Kingdom of Heaven') Vineyard, one of the greatest in Germany's Mosel Valley, is situated in Graach an der Mosel, a small municipality within the Bernkastel district. The grape, naturally, is Riesling. But then they add on Hochgewachs to let you know that it's definitely Riesling, as only 100% Riesling wines can carry that designation. Finally, they add Halbtrocken, or 'half-dry', to indicate that this wine is neither truly sweet nor bone-dry.

That's a lot of forbidding-sounding Teutonic language. I feel the wine would be a lot more popular if they described it thus: Fresh, fruit-forward riesling, juicy and rich but with some real structure, too. But then it probably wouldn't be at Wine Club prices....

Red #1) Locker Falko Rosso Toscana 2018



The Locker family has 2 wineries in Tuscany; Corte Pavone in Montalcino and Valdifalko further south in the Maremma, along the southern Tuscan coastline. Both are certified organic and biodynamic. This one cuvee, an homage to the history of falconry in southern Tuscany dating back to Etruscan times, uses grapes from both estates.

Primarily Sangiovese, with about 25% combined Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, Falko Rosso is fermented and aged in a combination of stainless steel and neutral oak. It's fresh and juicy, with red and black cherry flavors dominating, plus plum, cassis, and dried herbs. A hint of eucalyptus. If you're contemplating a mushroom risotto, this is the wine to open.

Red#2) Masseria del Feudo Nero d'Avola 2016



The Cucurullo family has farmed these vines, high on a hillside above Caltanissetta, for 4 generations. The current proprietors, Francesco and Carolina Cucurullo, produce 'wine, orchard fruits, olive oil, and zootechnics'-their words. Having no idea what zootechnics are, I am going to concentrate on the wine.

The grapes are farmed organically, and all the fertilizer used comes from their own animals. (Query: They did not mention producing animal products-is that the 'zootechnics' part?) High altitude ensure both generously ripe fruit and the retention of acidity. A long, cool

maceration with native yeasts yields a vibrant and rich wine, full of black cherry, plum, licorice, and menthol flavors. Roast something-meat if you're a carnivore, mushrooms if not-pull the cork, and dig in.