

WINE News

Whether you're looking for the perfect gift for your favorite wine geek, something to serve with Christmas dinner or at a Holiday or New Year's fête, K&L has something for you.



DECEMBER 2, 2013 FEATURES

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| 1 Top 10 | 5 Italy |
| 2 Bordeaux | 6 Champagne |
| 3 Domestic | 7 Rhône Valley |
| 4 Spirits | 8 Global Picks |

Top 10 Holiday Wine Buys

#10 2011 Fromm "La Strada" Pinot Noir Marlborough New Zealand (\$21.99) From a certified organic winery that is one of the top producers in Marlborough, if not all of New Zealand. Bright and lifted, with raspberry, cherry, white pepper, clove, dried tangerine peel and subtly integrated oak. On the palate ripe plum notes add great purity of fruit supported by good acidity, fine-grained tannins and a long finish. Drinkable now.

#9 2011 Domaine des Niales Rhedon-Marin Mâcon-Villages Vieilles Vignes* (\$12.99) A charming Chardonnay from Lionel Rhedon-Marin, a small grower in the Mâcon. All of his young vine fruit is sold to one of the better négociants, but his old vine fruit, all more than 45 years of age, is kept for a domaine wine that is charming and elegant. Focused and bright, with nice spice and lovely acidity, as well as some pretty pear notes. This is a balanced, well-made, wonderfully crisp and mineral-driven, affordable Chardonnay, terrific for your holiday parties.

#8 2012 Domaine des Côtes Blanches Sancerre* (\$19.99) This Sancerre has a pale yellow color with hints of flashing green. Aromatically, it possesses notes of crispy white

peaches, melon, yellow plums and the typical Sancerre terroir notes of flinty minerals. On the palate, it has nice richness and persistence, which is well-balanced by fruit, texture, minerals and acidity.

#7 2010 Dominus Estate "Napanook" Napa Valley Bordeaux Blend (\$49.99) 92 points RP: "The 2010 Napanook reveals a pungent, spicy, earthy, slightly herbal nose and an exuberant mouthfeel with lots of plum, licorice, red and black currants and a hint of sweet cherries. The wine is slightly more in-your-face and aggressive than most Napanooks, but I enjoyed its exuberant style. Drink this beautiful 2010 over the next 12-15 years."

#6 2011 Le Vieux Donjon Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$39.99) 91-93 points ST: "A wild, complex bouquet displays candied cherry, lavender, smoked meat and licorice. Sappy and penetrating...In an old-school style and quite a bit more feral than recent vintages for this property, which will please long-time fans."

#5 Bruno Michel "Blanche" Brut* (\$34.99) Half and half Chardonnay and Meunier from Michel's organic estate just south of Epernay. It is a precise, refreshing style with enough richness to make it a balanced drink. This is

effortless Champagne and one that you will be proud to serve your guests. Also available in **magnum at \$79.99.**

#4 Malescot-St-Exupéry: The 2009 Malescot St-Exupéry, Margaux (\$129.99) is Clyde's top wine (price/quality) from the fabulous 2009 vintage. 96 points RP. The **2010 (\$109.99)** is another star from a great vintage. Cellar it for 10+ years. 95 points JS and RP.

#3 Rusty Blade Gin (\$67.99) Like Christmas in a bottle, with a hearty smack in the face.

#2 1989 Guasti Barolo Riserva (\$39.99) The 1989 vintage is one of Barolo's greatest, and this comes straight from Guasti's cellars. Talk about perfect provenance. A classic Barolo drinking superbly at an unbelievable price!

#1 1999 Bodegas Puelles Gran Reserva Rioja* (\$19.99) Wow—this is spectacular Gran Reserva! Made in a traditional style with earthy red fruit aromas, and in this relatively cooler, damper vintage, a slightly Burgundian profile. The wine features good acidity, minerality and some classic aged Rioja savory woody character. If you're looking for a perfectly mature red wine to drink now, this is very tough to beat for the price.

Some Old and Some New, All Great Prices for You

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

A pair of vintages from a value château? How about a pair of second wines or classified growths? These Bordeaux make very good Christmas or Hanukkah gifts. All of us at K&L wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

Values : \$50 and Under

2009 Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc (\$18.99) This property, which is very close to Pauillac, is one to watch in the future. Well-made value-driven wines with good depth and length. Try the **2004 (\$15.99)**, as well.

2010 Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) 91 points WS: "Rock solid, with a gutsy frame of roasted apple wood and a full-bodied core of plum, boysenberry and black currant fruit. Dense and chewy, displaying spice-studded grip on the finish that courses along vivaciously."

2009 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$21.99) Lanessan was our biggest selling Bordeaux property in 2013. Why? Because the wines taste very good and the prices are very low. The old school style of 1998 and 2004 contrast with the more modern style of the 2009 and 2010. Both styles have their admirers.

2010 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) 91-92 points JS.

2001 Potensac, Haut-Médoc (\$34.99) Richer than their mind-blowing 1997. Enjoy with a prime rib dinner.

2009 Corbin, St-Emilion (\$34.99) I love the purity of this property's wines. Watch them now and in the future. 92 points JS.

2010 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$42.99) I'm a 95 here. I love it, and I think it will be perfect for 30 years or more. 94 points RP and JS.

2005 Barde-Haut, St-Emilion (\$44.99) Always a great value. 93 points RP. Also try their **2009 (\$49.99)** and **2010 (\$39.99)**.

2009 La Tour Carnet, Haut-Médoc (\$44.99) 92 points RP. This wine is stunningly delicious now and will be great for 20 years.

2010 La Tour Carnet, Haut-Médoc (\$39.99) 93 points RP: "Probably La Tour Carnet's best since their 2001...It is medium to full-bodied, with attractive sweetness of tannin, good acidity, excellent delineation to its component parts, and a full-bodied, impressively long finish."

2009 De Fieuzal Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$39.99) 94 points JS. 95 points from me.

2010 De Fieuzal Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$49.99) Fabulous richness and a long, lingering finish.

\$50-\$100

2009 Clos du Marquis, St-Julien (\$64.99) 93 points RP and WS. Jean-Hubert Delon has done wonders with this brand. It comes from a parcel of vines attached to the famed Léoville-Las Cases. Try it.

2010 Clos du Marquis, St-Julien (\$64.99) 95 points WE.

2009 La Lagune, Haut-Médoc (\$69.99) One of the greatest values in Bordeaux from any vintage. 95 points RP.

2009 Alter Ego de Palmer, Margaux (\$84.99) A case of this is in my cellar. This is a stunning wine, so elegant. 91-93 points WE.

2010 Alter Ego de Palmer, Margaux (\$84.99) Even better than 2009? Try it in 10 years. 93 points JS and WE.

2009 Lascombes, Margaux (\$99.99) 94 points JS and RP. This property makes more modern, new wave wines. These two vintages are much better balanced than some of the wines from the early 2000s.

2010 Lascombes, Margaux (\$99.99) 96 points RP.

The Best of the Best: \$100+

2009 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (\$129.99) This wine will be spectacular for many years. Power, sweetness and balance. 98 points and #3 on WE's Top 100 Cellar Selections of 2012. 96 points JS.

1988 Papé Clement, Pessac-Léognan (\$169.99) 94 points WS.

1995 D'Yquem, Sauternes (375ml \$179.99) Mandarin flavors fill the mouth, and the finish is much longer than typical of Yquem.

2003 La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$245.00) 94 points each WS and JS.

1989 Léoville-Las Cases, St-Julien (\$249.99) 96 points WS.

2010 Pichon-Baron, Pauillac (\$269.99) 97 points RP. Administrator Christian Seeley thinks the 2010 is the greatest Pichon-Baron he has ever made, equaling some of the estate's colossal wines from vintages such as 1989 and 1990.

2004 Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac (\$399.00) A bargain in First Growths. 93 points WS.

2003 Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$449.99) 95 points RP.

1995 Latour, Pauillac (\$699.99) Quite lovely right now and for 15 more years. 96 points RP.

2010 La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$899.99) 100 points JS and 98 points RP.

2009 D'Yquem, Sauternes (375ml \$449.99) Other-worldly. This is like liquid gold.

2009 Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac (\$1,099.00) 99 points RP.

2010 Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$1,199.00) 100 points RP.



Coravin (\$279.00-\$299.00) is the most amazing wine preservation system! It allows you to pour from *any* bottle, even old wines, without opening it or allowing oxygen to enter. We have enjoyed wines poured over the course of months, and simply couldn't tell the difference between the Coravin wine and a newly-opened bottle. A must have for any serious wine fan!

TREY'S PICKS *Top Wines for the Holidays*



2010 Clos du Val Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$24.99) This is my go-to California Cab these days. Reasonably priced and not overdone, it shows bright red fruits, red currants, lots of spice and a soft, pleasant finish. I love the freshness and balance between earth and fruit here; this wine pairs well with food without overpowering it!

2011 Melville "Estate" Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (\$29.99) A definite staff favorite, Melville's Estate Pinot is a pure expression of fruit, untouched by any new oak. (Only neutral barrels are used at Melville.) The cool climate of the Sta. Rita Hills really comes through in this wine. The flavors are dark, deep and rich. Hints of spice, sweet herbs, tea and black cherries dominate the senses while the finish is smooth and lingering. 91 points RP.

2012 Failla Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$34.99) Here is another Pinot from a winery that is focused on growing good quality, healthy fruit and allowing it to be the leading force in the wine. Only 20% new oak is used in this Pinot and minimal winemaking intervention. Upfront bright red cherries, sage and cinnamon jump from the glass. Silky, spicy finish.

2011 Chateau Montelena Napa Valley Chardonnay (\$41.99) A great example of how the cooler 2011 vintage helped keep the acidity high in the white wines. Tons of mineral, citrus and melon. The wine shows a nice richness in the middle and a long, fresh finish. "Rich but not heavy" is the key to great Chardonnay!

2010 Dunn Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$79.99) The 2010 Napa Cabernet is already approachable given that most of the grapes come from Howell Mountain. It is loaded with black currant fruit and laced with aromas of graphite, spice, cedar and mineral. The tannins are integrated and quite soft for a wine from Dunn. One of the best 2010 Cabs we have tasted!

2011 Lewis Cellars Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$79.99) Loaded with toasty vanilla oak on its nose, rich, chewy fruit, and a lush mid-palate followed by well-integrated tannins. This wine shows surprisingly well with some air.

2011 Caymus "Special Selection" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$119.99) In hot years wineries like Caymus and Joseph Phelps make wines that are a bit over-the-top for my tastes, but I tend to love their wines in cooler vintages. This is an excellent effort from difficult growing season. It is a bit tight right now, but will open up with some decanting. Lots of depth and pure, concentrated Cabernet fruit, this wine shows hints of cocoa powder, black and red currants, a spicy lush texture and firm but ripe tannins. The cooler year gives this wine a bit more balance and freshness. 95 points RP.



—Clyde "Trey" Beffa III

BRICK'S PICKS *For Parties & Gifts*



2012 Ancient Peaks "K&L Wine Merchants" Paso Robles Zinfandel (\$19.99) Made from one block of Estate Zinfandel that was aged in 25% new oak, and 5% Syrah. This has wonderful clarity, briary fruit, white pepper, wild berry and a touch of baking spice with the new oak adding pitch and a spicier confectionary note. I am so impressed with how this wine is already completely integrated in bottle and ready to drink right away. The staff here couldn't be happier with this wine, and I hope you will find it to be just as delicious.

1999 York Creek Spring Mountain District Meritage (\$24.99) We've gone back to our friends at

York Creek and found another gem at a completely ridiculous price. I feel like this wine is at its apex right now, and it is a wonderful example of an older wine with plenty of freshness and life. Sure there are some secondary notes of tobacco, sandalwood and mint in the nose, and of course the tannins here are polished to a fine patina, but this is insanely drinkable and full of fresh red fruits and a deep-set forest-driven spice that only Spring Mountain can deliver. For a wine that is almost 15 years old, this may be the bargain of the year.

—Bryan Brick

MIKE JORDAN *Thinks Ahead*

Domestic production was down in the 2010 and 2011 vintages, but fortunately we're now seeing the plentiful 2012 vintage Pinot Noirs starting to hit the shelf. We have several lovely wines ready to drink this holiday season, including these two.



2012 La Fenêtre "À Côté" Central Coast Pinot Noir (\$18.99) This has ripe, fresh red fruits and spice with a lovely undertone of earth and cedar. The ripeness is balanced, with nice structure and acidity. This is a beautiful drinking Pinot Noir for the holidays.

2012 Banshee Sonoma County Pinot Noir (\$22.99) A longtime favorite at K&L. This is a well-balanced, easy-drinking Pinot Noir with red and blue fruits, hints of forest floor, rhubarb and spice. The wine is a blend from some of the Sonoma Coast's great vineyards, including Coastlands, Emmaline, Jack Hill, Rice-Spivak, Tina Marie, Hellenthal, Hurst, Bohemian and Sullivan Vineyards.

—Michael Jordan

THE SPIRIT of Holiday Gratitude

The holidays, for me, are all about reflection—a time to sit down and really think about how lucky I am. I'm lucky because I have an incredible family and supportive friends. I'm lucky because I've been able to turn my passion into a career. I'm lucky because the whole world seems to have taken interest in spirits.

Today, the majority of people who walk through our doors are as passionate about the products I sell as I am. I regularly have compelling discussions about spirits with customers, and I learn new things all the time from them. The thirst for knowledge in this category is endless. While I can never repay all that you, our wonderful customers, have given me, I hope I can make your holidays brighter with some great new spirits and cocktails to enjoy.

Dumb Love

Adapted from the wildly popular “Dumb Luck” served at Honeycut, a wonderful new bar in Downtown L.A. Get there!

1.5 oz *Russell's Reserve Single Barrel Kentucky Bourbon* (\$53.99)

.5 oz *Bigallet Viriana China China Amer* (\$37.99)

.25 oz *Guillaumette L'Authentique G n pi* (\$25.99)

.25 oz *Valedespino “Tio Diego” Amontillado Jerez* (\$24.99)

1 dash *Miracle Mile Bitters Co. “Castilian” Bitters* (\$17.99)

Add the ingredients to cocktail shaker filled with *Neve Luxury “Shaking” Ice* (5lbs \$6.99). Stir vigorously, strain and serve in a coupe.

Angelico's Martinez

This spicy variation on the classic Martinez, a contemporary of the Manhattan, is sure to wet your whistle. It's not a big twist, but a significant one.

1 dash *Miracle Mile Bitters Co. “Forbidden” Bitters* (\$17.99) (Other bitters like *Peychaud's*, *Angostura* or *Orange Bitters* work fine, too.)

1 oz *Tanqueray Malacca Gin* (\$32.99) (Not technically an Old Tom, but this has been making the best Martinez for me lately.)

1.5 oz *Carpano Antica Sweet Vermouth* (\$26.99)

.5 oz *Tempus Fugit Fernet Angelico* (\$54.99) (This digestivo should be a staple in everyone's bar.)

1 tsp *Luxardo Maraschino Liqueur* (\$28.99)

Place the ingredients with *Neve Luxury “Shaking” Ice* (\$6.99) and stir vigorously and strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with a lemon peel, expressing the oils before dropping it in the glass.



—David Othenin-Girard

TOP FIVE Holiday Picks for Brown Booze

It's that time of the year already, is it? The time when we all publish our lists of “top” this, or “best” that, lists that function as quick reference points for those looking for ideas? I love these types of lists, personally, but there's nothing more frustrating than reading about the “best whiskies of the year” only to find that you can't find any of the products on that list. It happens more regularly than not, mainly because we're all shopping from the same reference point and there are often not enough of these bottles to go around. That's why I'm writing a Top-Five-Bottles-You-Can-Actually-Find-List for people who value substance over style. None of these five selections are flashy or name-recognizable, and you'll probably have to explain their significance to any giftee, but the quality inside the glass will eventually speak for itself. So without further ado, these are my slam-dunk, can't-miss brown booze selections from off the beaten path, in no particular order:

Darroze Les Grand Assemblages “20 Year Old” Bas-Armagnac (\$99.99) Absolutely stunning Armagnac with incredible richness, spice and balance. Big wood, lots of spice and vanilla, a rustic fruit character with seamless execution. This is my new favorite brandy for the moment.

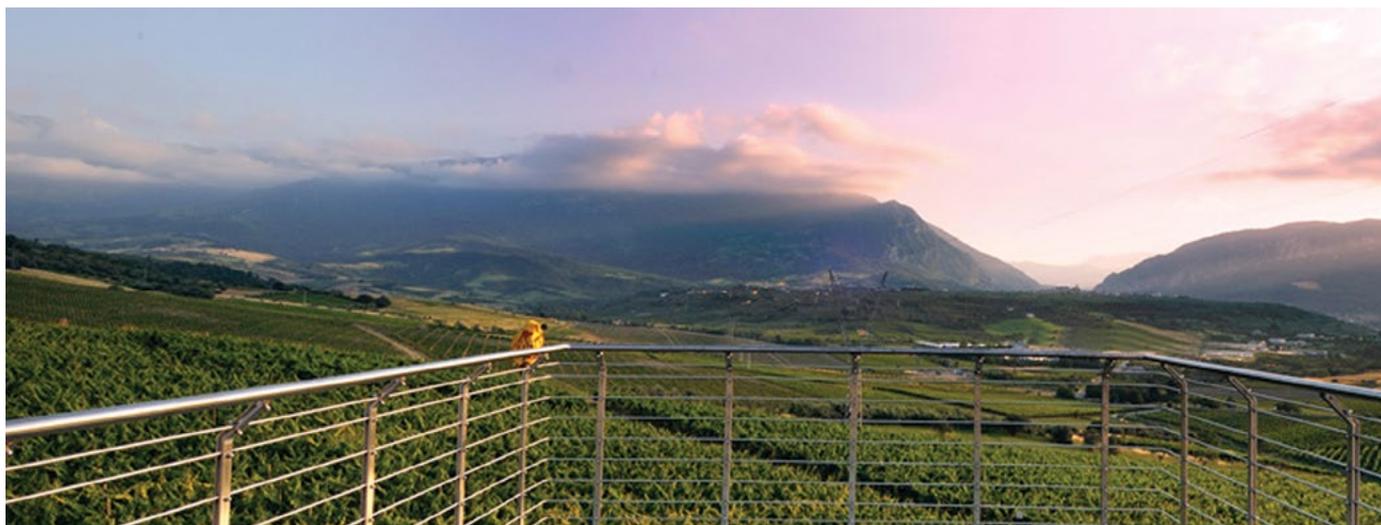
Cadenhead's 20 Year Old “Creations” Batch #1 Blended Scotch Whisky (\$99.99) A 20-year-old, Sherry-aged marriage of Bruichladdich and Mortlach single malts with the grain whiskies of Cameronbridge and Invergordon. The rich malty notes come instantly in the nose and burnt sugar and Sherry spices are decadent on the first sip. YUM!

1994 Benriach 19 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Peated Single Bourbon Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$149.99) A Bourbon cask-aged peated whisky from the most underrated distillery in Scotland. Rich and spicy with lots of smoke. Soooooo good.

Wild Turkey “Rare Breed” Small Batch Barrel Proof Bourbon (\$39.99) We went to Wild Turkey distillery this past October and were blown away. The Russells are making some of the best whiskey in Kentucky. Try the small batch Rare Breed and be amazed: big cinnamon spices and cloves on the finish.

Daniel Bouju “K&L Exclusive” Cognac Fines Saveurs (\$39.99) A lighter style of brandy with no coloring or caramel added. Fruity rather than smooth, bright and floral rather than creamy. This is great for mixing or for sipping, if you like.

—David Driscoll



The view from Cantina Zaccagnini.

The Art of Wine

By Greg St. Clair

On a recent trip to Italy (purely for vacation reasons), I was coerced into visiting some wineries with my cousin, his buddy and my in-laws...not that much arm twisting was necessary. We spent our time on the Adriatic side of the peninsula near Ascoli Piceno in the southern portion of the Marche, and then some days in the microscopic village of Anversa degli Abruzzi in Abruzzo. One person in our group made an appointment at Cantina Zaccagnini in nearby Bolognano, in the Province of Pescara, in the northern part of Abruzzo. Although I had tasted Zaccagnini's wines before, they are primarily a Montepulciano d'Abruzzo producer, I didn't know much about their history. We met with Concezio Marulli, the chief enologist for the winery, who then proceeded to give us an unbelievable tour. Now as you might imagine I've seen a lot of wineries, barrels, tanks, labeling machines, hoses, bottling lines and ancient caves, but I was truly unprepared for the level, amount and intensity of "Art" at this stunning winery.

Cantina Zaccagnini is a young winery by Italian standards, having been founded in 1978. Their first years of production are too small even to mention, but now they make 100,000 cases of wine a year. The watermark year for the winery was 1984, when owner Marcello Zaccagnini joined with German artist Joseph Beuys to present his exhibition "Difesa della Natura" or "Defense of Nature." I can't do Beuys' artwork justice in this small article, if you're unfamiliar with it you should Google him. The exhibition spurred Signore Zaccagnini into an active role in the arts, and today his winery combines the two, with exhibitions, art in the vineyards and even the winery as a work of art, making it seem as if you are part of the art when you are there.

It took a bit to refocus, amid all the larger than life artworks, and listen to Concezio explain how special his particular viticultural zone is. Predominantly west-facing, his vineyards are nestled into a natural amphitheater. This gentle bowl is constantly ventilated,

keeping the vines healthy and mold free, while the 25 miles to the coast keep the vineyards cooler and lead to a later harvest. (In Italy, unlike California, the coastal areas are the warmest, and the vineyards' distance from the coast allows them to escape the hailstorms that plague wineries closer to the coast.) We tasted through a bundle of wines, and although I found lots of interesting things in each wine, there was one that stood out for me: the **2008 Zaccagnini "Chronicon" Montepulciano d'Abruzzo (\$19.99)**. Already with five years of age on it, this wine is so supple on the palate it is incredible. The fruit just rolls across your tongue, lush and full. The wine is aged for a year in second- and third-year barriques, but I don't find any toasty sweetness flavorwise, just a polished, long finish. This wine is very versatile and can go with grilled meats or roasts. The wine is named Chronicon because there is a local church dedicated to Saint Jerome, who was an early translator of the Bible and various historical texts.

On our front page we featured the **1989 Guasti Barolo Riserva (\$39.99)** as one of the Top 10 gifts to give this season. I didn't have space to elaborate there, so I will here. What a find! You don't come across this kind of quality in aged Barolo and never at this price point. When I was first approached about this wine I didn't have a lot of hope that it was really going to pan out, I just couldn't believe it. Guasti is a producer in Nizza Monferrato, but they own vineyards in Barolo and Serralunga. For some reason (I haven't been able to figure out exactly why) they decided to age this wine, and it was only when the importer stumbled across it in the cellar and asked, "What's this?" did he gasp and buy! And that's just what you should do. The 1989 vintage was fabulous in Barolo: full, ripe and complex. This wine is great, aged perfectly now, but it still has another 10-20 years on it. Try it with risotto with porcini, or brasato al Barolo. A really wonderful wine to drink!

STAFF FAVES *Champagne Aspasie* | **I DO!** *Champagne Collard-Picard*



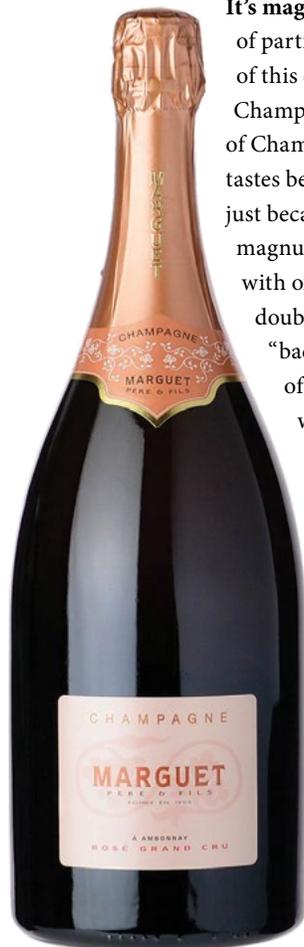
We have had a long and successful working relationship with the Ariston family of Brouillet. Our staff loves their Champagnes and most of our customers do, too. One of the best ways to brighten your holidays is to try their fantastic **Ariston Aspasie Brut Rosé*** (\$32.99). For those of you who love classic, bright raspberry/strawberry brut rosé with great depth, a long finish and zippy minerality, this is it! It's also at a very, very affordable price. Another of my favorites from them is the **Ariston Aspasie "Cepages d'Antan" Brut*** (\$99.00). This unusual bubbly is composed of the "ancient" varietals of Pinot Blanc, Meslier and Arbanne. It has a creamy, toasty nose with stone fruits and pine nuts on the palate. Super clean, long on the finish, with ample minerality.

—Scott Beckerley

When Olivier Collard, grandson of Pinot Meunier master Rene Collard, married Delphine Picard of the esteemed Gonet lineage, the bar for the Champagne they would make together was set **extremely high**. Fortunately, the marriage of Pinot Meunier and mineral-driven Chardonnay leads to a match made in heaven. The **Collard-Picard "Cuvée Selection" Brut*** (\$34.99), which is 80% Pinot Meunier and 20% Chardonnay, is loaded with Meunier's signature pear character and tons of ripe, fresh apple. This cuvée illustrates how powerful and full-bodied Pinot Meunier can be in the right hands, while the introduction of Mesnil Chardonnay is highlighted on the clean, mineral-driven finish. The **Collard-Picard "Prestige" Brut*** (\$39.99) is composed of 50% Chardonnay, 25% Pinot Noir and 25% Meunier from Grand Cru and 1er Cru vineyards only. This cuvée showcases only the best first pressings. Oak aging and three years on the lees lends a toasty bouquet of red fruit and a palate that pairs perfectly with almost every holiday occasion.

—Mari Keilman

CHAMPAGNE *Let's Go Big!*



It's magnum season! The holidays are full of parties, family and friends, and with all of this company a regular-sized bottle of Champagne doesn't go very far. Most fans of Champagne know that the wine always tastes better out of magnum, and this isn't just because there is more in the bottle. A magnum has the same nickel-sized contact with oxygen as a regular bottle, but with double the volume, reducing the effects of "bad" aging. Additionally, the curvature of the bottle allows for more contact with the yeast in the bottle, giving it more of the positive effects of aging. Best of all, producers keep their magnums on the lees longer—all of the Champagne we carry has at least an extra year on the lees compared to the 750s of the same wines, and many two or three extra years. The non-vintage **Daniel Ginsburg "Cuvée Prestige Louis XVII" Brut*** (1.5L \$129.00) is one of our best examples of the great values available in magnum. It is 100% Ay Grand Cru, half Chardonnay and half Pinot Noir, half 1995 and half 1996. With a

rich flavors, this is as good as Champagne gets in the Krug/ Bollinger style. We also have the straight **1999 vintage*** (1.5L \$129.99) at the same price for those who want to trade a little toasty power for more citric snap. Many of you met Benoit Marguet at the tent events this October, and his **Marguet Pere et Fils "Cuvée Reserve" Brut*** (1.5L \$89.99) was one of the big stars of the show. This expertly made Champagne is also half and half Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and has incredible Chardonnay snap and raciness. I love the clean refreshment of his wines, and it makes an incredible apéritif. His **Marguet Pere et Fils Brut Rosé*** (1.5L \$89.99) has savory complexity that one rarely finds even in much more expensive bottles, and it shows the class of the estate-grown Ambonnay rouge that gives the wine its color. Both of these wines get four years on the lees, rather than the already-generous three years that he gives the equivalent 750s. Arriving in the middle of December is our finest deal of all in magnums, the **Baron-Fuenté "Grande Réserve" Brut*** (1.5L \$49.99). For those looking for a great bottle of baguette toast and lemon zip Champagne at a reasonable price, get on the waiting list now. We'll send you an email as soon as it arrives. Another excellent value is the **Michel Arnould Verzenay "Brut Reserve"*** (1.5L \$64.99), which is all Grand Cru, all estate and composed of 75% Pinot Noir and 25% Chardonnay from Verzenay. Patrick Arnould gives this magnum four and a half years on its lees compared to the 750's three, and the wine is full of hazelnut complexity and powerful Pinot Noir structure. This bottle will satisfy the most discerning of guests. I hope that you'll enjoy some Champagne from magnum with me this holiday season; you'll see that there is more to them than just more! A toast to you!

—Gary Westby

DECK THE HALLS *With Rhône Values*

Now that we are deep into the hustle and bustle of the holidays, I think it is an ideal time to reflect upon what and whom we appreciate. Case in point, we here at K&L Wine Merchants so appreciate being able to recommend the wines of Jean-Louis Denois. One of the true stars of the Languedoc, Jean-Louis makes a range of exciting, world class wines. His low-yielding vineyards sit in the very southwestern corner of the region, at the foot of the Pyrenees, and are farmed organically.

Throughout the year, the Denois sparklers, reds and whites are very popular, indeed. However, during the holiday season, as the number of parties, dinners and festive gatherings ramp up, these high quality and delicious wines are especially appreciated for the tremendous price-quality ratio that they provide.

Our current selections from Jean-Louis Denois are true to form, and will carry you merrily through your holiday festivities and beyond!

Jean-Louis Denois Brut “Tradition”* (\$14.99) Denois’ Brut Tradition is composed of 50% each Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and spends 18 months on its lees before disgorgement. It is dry, elegant and long, with notes of hazelnut, red berries and toasted bread. Try with crudi-

tés, bacon-wrapped dates or duck rilette.

2009 Jean-Louis Denois Crémant de Limoux* (\$14.99) Denois’ vintage dated Crémant de Limoux is composed of Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc, and it is made utilizing the traditional *méthode Champenoise*. Final dosage is a low five grams per liter. It is elegant and long, with notes of Fuji apple, quince and biscuit. This delicate blanc de blancs will pair well with richer starters like gougères or home-made potato chips!

Jean-Louis Denois Pinot Noir Brut Rosé* (\$14.99) Denois’ Brut Rosé is made entirely from Pinot Noir and exhibits more bright red berry fruit character and subtle spice nuances. Enjoy with sashimi, jamon Serrano or salmon caviar with capers and crème fraîche.

2009 Jean-Louis Denois Grande Cuvée Limoux* (\$15.99) A blend of 50% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Malbec and 10% Syrah. Raspberry, dark chocolate and hints of damson plum make this a lovely red to enjoy on its own, or as the perfect accompaniment to roast duck, grilled salmon or even sliders! Made with 100% organically grown grapes.

—Mulan Chan-Randel

HOLIDAY MUST-BUYS *Châteauneuf-du-Papes*

Right now France’s Rhône Valley may be the most consistent source in the world for top-notch wines at affordable prices made by cream-of-the-crop producers. Châteauneuf-du-Pape, in particular, offers numerous world class wines at a fraction of the prices of their top-end counterparts from the Napa Valley, Bordeaux and Burgundy. The past three vintages—2009, 2010 and 2011—have ranged from good to great, and we still have several 2010s available in-stock and many more 2011s either in-stock or pre-arrival. Below are three producers whose wines you definitely should own.

Clos Saint Jean

Clos Saint Jean is one of the top producers in all of Châteauneuf. Brothers Pascal and Vincent Maurel, along with famed oenologist Philippe Cambie, are fashioning some of the most sought after and distinctive wines in all of the Rhône Valley. Robert Parker had this to say: “If a prize were given to the Rhône Valley estate that had improved the most in the shortest period of time, it would undoubtedly go to that of Pascal and Vincent Maurel, who took over Clos Saint Jean after their father passed away in 2002. Since then, they have made a succession of world-class wines that are out of this world.”

2011 Clos Saint Jean “Tradition” Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$34.99) 92 points WA.

2011 Clos Saint Jean “Combe des Fous” Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$119.99) 98 points WA.

2011 Clos Saint Jean “Deus Ex Machina” Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$159.99) 99 points WA.

*All wines are pre-arrival. Wines are due in March 2014.

Clos des Papes

There is not another winery in the Rhône Valley that can match the recent track record of Clos des Papes. They have an amazing string of high-90s scores that stretches back over several years, and their red CdP was even named *Wine Spectator’s* Wine of the Year in 2007. The **2011 Clos des Papes Châteauneuf-du-Pape** is currently available and in-stock for **\$99.99** and has scores of 96 points WA and 95 points WS, respectively. If you’re looking to own (or give) wine from a reference-point producer, then Clos des Papes is the one to buy.

Domaine Gerard Charvin

We were sold out of Gerard Charvin’s 2010, but luckily were able to source a bit more from one of our overseas partners. Gerard Charvin is a classic producer who is known for making elegantly styled Châteauneuf-du-Pape with clearly delineated red fruit. Their style evokes comparisons to fine red Burgundy with its laser focus red fruit, racy acidity and layered complexity that unfurls onto the palate. The **2010 Domaine Gerard Charvin Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$79.99)** is a stunning wine for an unbelievable price. 95 points WA, 95 points WS and 95 points ST.

—Alex Pross

'TIS THE SEASON *Special Wines for Special Times*

These iconic Australian wines are the ideal holiday season splurge! Many of them are produced in very limited quantities and are highly allocated—we had to fight hard just to secure a case of some of them—and all are some of the most incredible wines that I have tasted in 2013.

2010 Dalwhinnie “Moonambel” Shiraz Pyrenees Victoria* (\$49.99)

96 points JH, 94 points WA. A prestigious Direct Import. Excellent depth and refined elegance. Silky, fine tannins support succulent fruit and a touch of old school gamey character.

2010 Dalwhinnie “Southwest Rocks” Single Block Shiraz Pyrenees Victoria* (\$69.99)

96 points JH and 95 points WA. A highly perfumed, medium-bodied expression with macerated raspberries, ground cinnamon and clove, savory touches of garrigue and smoked meat. Fine-grained tannins and bright, lifting acidity.

2010 Langmeil “The Freedom-1843 Vines” Shiraz Barossa Valley (\$119.99)

94 points ST. Langmeil puts 110% into this wine. It is the definition of power and elegance, unfathomable purity and poise for such a concentrated wine. Special stuff!

2010 Henschke “Keyneton Estate Euphonium” Shiraz-Cabernet Barossa Valley (\$49.99)

94 points JH. One of the highlights of the whole year for me. Highly aromatic dark fruits, roasted herbs, crushed berries, sandalwood and clove. A vibrant, expressive wine showing the pedigree of the estate and exceptional winemaking.

2010 Langmeil “Fifth Wave” Grenache Barossa Valley (\$29.99)

91 points ST. One of the coolest Grenaches I have ever tasted and a bargain given the quality.

2009 Henschke “Mount Edelstone” Shiraz Eden Valley (\$129.99)

97 points WA and 96 points JH. Exceptional wine with a long life ahead of it. Black currant, cassis and blueberry compote; saturated and deep. Rich, dense fruit is complemented by savory wood spices and leather. Powerful and brooding with layer upon layer of intensity.

From New Zealand: The Te Whare Ra and Te Mata Estate wines are now back in stock. These were the hottest Direct Imports last year, and the new vintages are better than ever. Our inventory went very fast last time so don't miss out!

—Ryan Woodhouse

Around the holidays, my personal wine purchases invariably focus on magnums and Rioja, and especially on magnums of Rioja! There are few wines that work as beautifully with standing rib roasts or bone-in legs of lamb. Here are some of my favorites from Bodegas Casa Juan Señor de Lesmos.

2006 Casa Juan Señor de Lesmos Crianza Rioja* (750ml \$12.99; 1.5L \$24.99)

Beautiful aromas! Delicious. So satisfying.

2005 Bodegas Casa Juan Señor de Lesmos Reserva Rioja* (1.5L \$39.99)

Intense. Serious. Lively dark fruit, with a savage streak.

—Joe Manekin

2011 Domaine Didier Dagueneau “Silex” Pouilly-Fumé (\$109.99)

Made from vines ranging in age from 15 to 50 years old and only from vineyard plots that have an extremely high content of silex. The vines are cropped to produce much lower yields than most. The juice is then barrel fermented and aged in the famous Dagueneau cigar barrels. This needs a fair amount of time to come into its own. It is considered the domaine's top wine and is often referred to as their “Grand Cru.”

2006 Umathum “Frauenkirchen Vom Stein” St. Laurent (\$62.99)

Vom Stein is the oldest vineyard in the village of Frauenkirchen; it has light and permeable soils full of gravel and quartz. The wine is dark red, with aromas of cherries and citrus peel and hints of savory spices and woody herbs; it's got a palate full of spiced cherry, dense blackberry and clove, with a dense finish of silky tannins.

—Eric Story

The holidays are time for dinners with friends and for parties. Either way, we have you covered. For party wine, try the **2012 Domaine**

Renaud Mâcon-Charnay* (\$12.99) or the **2010 Bouchard Ainé & Fils Bourgogne Rouge* (\$13.99)**. Clean Chardonnay or Pinot Noir at a very friendly price. Or with your holiday crab, don't miss the **2011**

Domaine Gerard Tremblay Chablis “Vieilles Vignes”* (\$19.99) with minerality and drive, as well as richness. Or for that special dinner, try the **2007 Domaine René Cacheux Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru “Les Suchots” (\$54.99)**. Located next to Grand Cru Richebourg, this is high-level drinking at a modest tariff.

—Keith Wollenberg

K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061

P (650) 364-8544 **F** (650) 364-4687

HOURS M-F 10-7, Sat 9-7, Sun 10-6

LOCKERS M-S 10-6, Sun 11-5

KLWINES.COM

Toll Free (877) KLWINES (877) 559-4637

Email: Wines@KLWines.com

K&L HOLLYWOOD

1400 Vine Street, Hollywood, CA 90028

P (323) 464-WINE (9463) **F** (323) 836-0853

HOURS M-S 10-8, Sun 11-6

K&L EVENTS & TASTINGS

We host regular evening and Saturday tastings at each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to KLWines.com/Local-Events.

K&L SAN FRANCISCO

638 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

P (415) 896-1734 **F** (415) 896-1739

HOURS M-F 10-7, Sat 9-6, Sun 11-6

We accept American Express, Discover, Visa and Mastercard.

For Order Inquiries, Shipping Information, Local Events, Policies and Up-to-the-Minute Inventory, visit KLWines.com

FOLLOW OUR BLOG UNCORKED FOR THE LATEST NEWS, REVIEWS, AND UPDATES FROM K&L STAFF