

Herb's Half Case Wine Club November 2008
Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250
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My non-Wine Club selections for the month are choices if you want to splurge just a little for Thanksgiving. The white, **2007 Scherer Gewurztraminer**, is an elegant Alsatian wine with floral, apricot, and melon flavors tied together with a hint of spice. The red, **2006 Saintsbury Garnet Pinot Noir**, is a lovely Pinot Noir with dark berry aromas and the prettiest raspberry fruit. Both are excellent choices.

2007 Glatzer Grüner Veltliner (Carnuntum, Austria)

Tasting Notes: Gruner Veltliner, Austria's national white, is an underappreciated varietal. Good fruit, balanced acidity, and versatility with just about any food make this an excellent choice for the holidays. This example has aromas of lime and wet stone with just a slight spritz on the palate when it's first opened. Don't serve this one too cold or you'll miss the fresh and slightly bright lime and citrus flavors. The mid-palate is clean with a rounder texture and flavors of peach and melon. The finish shows slightly tart grapefruit flavors that aren't overwhelming.

Food Pairing: Gruner Veltliner is a dual purpose varietal – great by itself or with food. Good fruit, acidity, and weight allow this wine to pair with a variety of foods from appetizers to heavier poultry dishes. Try this as the starter wine for your turkey day feast.

2006 Joseph Drouhin Macon-Villages (Burgundy, France)

Tasting Notes: I am finding excellent Chardonnay from the less expensive Burgundy appellations, especially the Maconnais district. This example is simply lovely and a stunning value. It has crisp apple aromas that are followed by refreshing flavors of medium ripe apple and lemon fruit on the palate. The acidity perfectly balances the fresh fruit. This wine has a lot of flavor and shows superb balance. The finish is slightly creamy with lovely citrus flavors. It's a tremendous wine and value!

Food Pairing: I find myself feeling somewhat un-American for saying this, but French wines are great for Thanksgiving. Riper fruit, balanced acidity, and little to no oak make very food friendly wines. This example would be the perfect white for the Thanksgiving meal.

2006 Ruffino Chianti DOCG 375ml (Tuscany, Italy)

Tasting Notes: I love finding good half bottles for the Wine Club because they offer the perfect serving size when a full bottle is just too much for a weekday meal. Also they offer a great price saving, so I can boost the quality of the other five Wine Club selections. This example deftly combines “new world” fruit with “old world” flavors. Aromas of brandied cherries fill the nose and lead to smooth, dark cherry fruit on the palate. Old world flavors of tobacco and saddle leather enter on the mid-palate where the level of acidity is perfect. The finish shows roasted cherry fruit, good length, and balanced tannic structure. This is an excellent everyday drinking Chianti.

Food Pairing: After the company has left and you couldn't possibly eat another turkey sandwich you'll probably crave pasta or Italian. Serve this wine.

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2005 Vall Sanzo Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero, Spain)

Tasting Notes: It was a pleasant surprise to find a wine from the Ribera del Duero that would financially fit into the Wine Club. This Tempranillo has a luscious aroma of fresh picked black raspberries. This is a lighter styled red with gobs of fresh fruit. Juicy strawberry and raspberry flavors fill the palate. There's plenty of acidity and brightness to give a bit of structure to the ripe and concentrated fruit. This wine has a tremendous amount of flavor. The finish has more berry fruit and good length.

Food Pairing: This is a good red for any everyday meal. It is the meat and potatoes selection for the month. My only warning is don't serve this with anything too heavy or it will overwhelm the wine.

2007 Georges Duboeuf Juliéna Flower Label (Beaujolais, France)

Tasting Notes: Every fall I attend the George Duboeuf Cru Beaujolais offering to find my Thanksgiving Beaujolais for the Wine Club. My second aim at this tasting is to further my quest to show my customers that Cru Beaujolais' from individual villages can be very good. This example from the Juliéna village in the far north of the appellation shows a bit of oak in the aroma with coffee and berry flavors. This is a heavier Beaujolais with pleasantly ripe fruit that has darker berry fruit flavors and more body. It has good acidity and a surprising amount of tannins on the finish which also features black fruits. This is a good example of the quality of Cru or village Beaujolais.

Food Pairing: If your Thanksgiving crowd isn't into heavier reds then serve this. Otherwise this is a good choice for any everyday meal.

2005 Buena Vista Carneros Pinot Noir (California)

Tasting Notes: Pinot Noir and Thanksgiving is like Paul McCartney and the Beatles. Good, even great, on its own, but even better together. This example from the Carneros region in southern Sonoma and Napa has a lovely aroma of spices and dark, red berry fruit. It's medium-bodied with pleasantly dry flavors of dried cherries, cranberries, and light spice notes. The acidity is balanced as well. The finish is very lengthy with concentrated red fruit flavors. This is a Pinot Noir that needs to be opened and preferably decanted at least thirty minutes before serving to let these flavors develop and soften. It was a bit tight when I initially tried it and I'm confident that it will be fantastic with some aeration.

Food Pairing: This is a great red for the Thanksgiving meal. It's not too heavy and will pair nicely with the many flavors of the meal.

Cheers, Herb