



The Wine and Cheese Cask

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March 19, 2025 – April 19, 2025

Tariffs?

Ouch. We hope it doesn't happen, but here's a European-heavy newsletter in anticipation of a potential stoppage of our purchasing power for many of our favorites.

Corsican Connection

2021 Vin de France 'Cuvée Faustine' (Comte Abbattu)

Sale Price \$24.99 – \$254.90 case of twelve



The French Island of Corsica is closer to the Italian mainland than it is to France. Which might explain how the grapes in this red, Sciaccarellu and Niellucciu, are also known as Mammolo and Sangiovese in Tuscany. One difference in Corsica is that the main terroir is granite, giving the Faustine from Abbattu a mineral intensity. It also

has the savory aromas of the feral herbal maquis of the Corsican landscape. The fruit in this 2021 is generous with plums and figs along with ripe tannins. Have this with charcuterie and our favorite Corsican cheese, Fleur du Maquis. Or, if you're an adventurous cook, make a pasta dish with ragù of wild boar.

Aligoté – Saved by the Kir

2022 Bourgogne Aligoté (Stephane Brocard)

Sale Price \$14.99 – \$152.90 case of twelve

Years ago, a trendy mix of white wine and cassis called the Kir (named after the mayor of Dijon) was a popular pre-prandial tippie. This refreshing mix contributed to the continued existence of the declining Aligoté grape variety. The crisp acidity of Aligoté accented the sweet addition of black currant liqueur to delightful effect. Today Aligoté is having a comeback, with the warmer climate helping the grape reach another level of flavor. Stephane Brocard's 2022 is bone dry, balanced with bracing minerals and a clean-as-a-whistle finish. If you're nostalgic for that first visit to France, add a few drops of cassis. Otherwise, have with haddock and new potatoes.



Solitude in the South

2022 Côtes du Rhône (La Solitude)

Sale Price \$14.99 – \$152.90 case of twelve

We've come to rely on the Lançon family's La Solitude as our best value Côtes du Rhône. This classic Grenache,

Syrah, and Mourvèdre blend is perfect for roasted vegetables and potato and cheese gratins. The 2022 delivers great value.

Barolo

2019 Barolo (Reverdito)

Sale Price \$41.99 – \$428.30 case of twelve



Within the last century Piedmont has gone from poor to incredibly rich. The wines were always splendid and the food great, but it was the faith of the family wineries that turned the region around. It helped to have the singular Nebbiolo grape and the reputation of Barolo to pull it off. Without yielding to international grape varieties, traditional wineries still

make lovely old-style wines without excess fruit or oak. The 2019 Reverdito is a near-perfect example. Its lovely rose petal aromas, along with raspberry fruit and silky tannins, make this an absolutely ready-to-drink marvel with polenta and mushrooms.

Margaux

2020 Margaux (Château Siran)

Sale Price \$47.99 – \$489.50 case of twelve

Since 1859 the Miaillhe family has owned and produced Margaux from 25 hectares in the village of Labarde. The famed classification of 1855 pre-dated them, but most critics believe the quality at Siran merits inclusion. Planted mainly with Cabernet and Merlot, they also have in reserve an unusually high percentage of Petit Verdot, which adds a spice element to the blend. The 2020 is a gorgeous Margaux with aromas of violets, irises, and bloody game. The palate has black fruits and peppery tannins. A fine, deep red for a roast lamb.

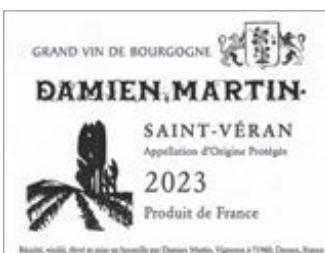


Saint-Véran

2023 Saint-Véran (Damien-Martin)

Sale Price \$24.99 – \$254.90 case of twelve

Saint-Véran is a small appellation located between the abundant

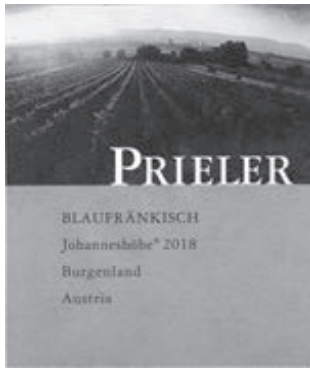


Mâcon-Villages and the lofty Pouilly-Fuissé. If the price of a Saint-Véran is closer to a Mâcon than a Pouilly then it can be a fine value. With the wonderful richness and depth of the 2023 Damien-Martin, this has proven to be true. A wonderfully complex white for shellfish.

Austrian Empire Reds

2018 Johanneshöhe Blaufränkisch (Weingut Prieler)

Sale Price \$19.99 – \$203.90 case of twelve



While Austrian wine has risen to international awareness thanks mainly to the amazing white grape Grüner Veltliner, the red wines are increasingly worthy of attention. Blaufränkisch is the second-most planted red grape in Austria but considered the highest quality. Its best terroir is in Burgenland, a warm area which borders Hungary. We met current winemaker Georg

Prieler a few years back and he talked at length about his father's personal wine cellar, mostly full of Burgundy. The influence on Prieler's wines is unmistakable. This organic red is concentrated with high acidity and velvety tannins. The dark berry fruit, savory herbs, spices, and cool minerality make it a great pairing for a pork schnitzel.

2021 Pinot Noir (Johanneshof Reinisch)

Sale Price \$19.99 – \$203.90 case of twelve

Between Burgenland and Vienna lies the lesser known Thermenregion, where the Reinisch family are undisputed leaders. Three brothers of the fourth generation now run the organic estate. Unlike Burgenland, where Blaufränkisch and Zweigelt are most important, the dominant red grapes here are Pinot Noir and Sankt Laurent. Reinisch's Pinot Noir is compact, sleek, and silky; it's also quite savory, with flavors of dark cherry compote, mushrooms, and baking spice. A great red for a roast chicken.



2023 Schiava (Alois Lageder)

Sale Price \$17.99 – \$183.50 case of twelve

Ok, this last one actually comes from Italy's northernmost region of Alto Adige, not Austria, but the region also known as Südtirol spent enough time as part of the Austrian (and later Austro-Hungarian) Empire to be a spiritual fit with this lineup.



In addition to beautiful aromatic white wines, the region produces a small amount of red, mainly Pinot Noir and native varieties Lagrein and Schiava. Lageder's organic Schiava is fermented and matured in concrete and stainless

steel tanks to preserve freshness and has a cool 11.5% alcohol. The 2023 is juicy and delicate with pomegranate fruit, soft tannins, and a peppery finish. Serve with a slight chill and you get a crisp red which will be a fantastic pairing for a platter of assorted cheeses and speck.

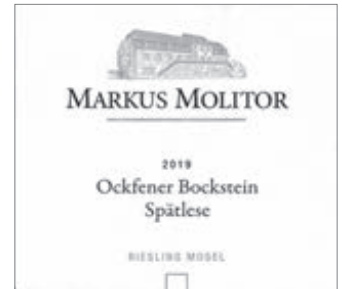
Dry Spätlese

2019 Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Spätlese

(Markus Molitor)

Sale Price \$29.99 – \$305.90 case of twelve

Last month we featured a medium-dry Kabinett Riesling from the Saar's Ockfener Bockstein vineyard; this month we are inverting and subverting expectations with a dry Spätlese Riesling from the same vineyard. Markus Molitor's 2019 Spätlese is a revelation. The fully-ripe grapes are given a few hours of skin contact before undergoing a long, slow fermentation, after which the wine rests for an extended time on the lees in large neutral oak. This gives a dry Riesling that is powerful and structured, with even a hint of tannin, yet only 11% alcohol. We were also impressed by the aromatics, a heady mélange of ginger, herbs, red apple, citrus, & slate. A great choice for Thai basil beef.



Assyrtiko

2023 Laconia Assyrtiko (Monemvasia Winery)

Sale Price \$14.99 – \$152.90 case of twelve

Assyrtiko, Greece's greatest white grape, has become synonymous with the island of Santorini. However, the island's harsh conditions of drought and high winds keep yields there extremely low. Add in increasing demand and prices have risen accordingly. So, we turn to the mainland for much better value. Our new favorite comes from Monemvasia Winery, on the southern tip of the Peloponnese. Their organic Assyrtiko is fresh, intense, and mineral. A perfect pairing for a fried fish platter.



Pink Txakoli

2024 Getariako Txakolina Rosé (Txomin Etxaniz)

Sale Price \$19.99 – \$203.90 case of twelve

The cult popularity of Spain's iconic Basque wine, Txakoli, shows no signs of abating. It perfectly suits the zeitgeist of the modern wine world: fresh, fun, low in alcohol, and decidedly unpretentious. While we love the white version, the rosés are a solid and slightly more interesting alternative. Txomin Etxaniz' 2024 lives up to expectations.



It is zippy and fresh, with tart strawberry, lime, and green pepper flavors. The slight effervescence and crisp, salty finish make this incredibly refreshing, and a fantastic pairing for a pot of mussels in tomato sauce.

Best in Classico

2022 Chianti Classico (Ormanni)

Sale Price \$17.99 – \$183.50 case of twelve



When the tariffs were proposed we immediately thought of some of our staple wines which would be difficult to replace. Ormanni, our current best value in Tuscan Sangiovese, immediately jumped to mind. The 2022 is solidly juicy with cherry fruit and measured tannins. This organic red is always a fine match with red sauced pasta, but also lovely with a rosemary pork roast.

Romo Renaissance

2020 Cour-Cheverny 'Renaissance' (Le Petit Chambord)

Sale Price \$24.99 – \$254.90 case of twelve

When asked for his vintage report for 2020, François Cazin gave it 20/20; top marks in the French grading system. The conditions allowed Cazin to make 'Renaissance,' his exceptional late-harvest Romorantin.

This Moelleux is a true Loire Valley rarity. Its complex aromas of floral nectar, ripe pear fruit, fresh hay, and zesty minerals make it a show-stopper with a *tarte tatin*, but also wonderful with blue-veined cheeses.



Specialty Foods

Formaggi e Dolci

With spring around the corner but many uncertainties ahead, we find ourselves yearning for brightness, joy, and simple pleasures that won't break the bank. How about an easy cheese course after your next big dinner? We are turning to the northern Italian regions of Piedmont and Lombardy for inspiration, loving the diversity and deliciousness on offer.

Guffanti Baked Lemon Ricotta – \$7 per 7 oz piece

Arona, Italy

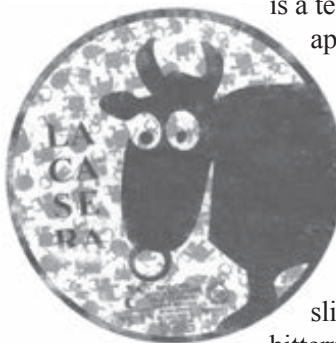
This delightful and cute ricotta "cake" is ready to eat and makes a perfect spring dessert. A mixture of cow and buffalo milk with added sugar, starch, and lemon, it has a firm custardy texture reminiscent of cheesecake (sans crust, making it gluten free). Thankfully, it is only slightly sweet, and has plenty of lift from the lemon, so you can enjoy it as is for a simple, elegant dessert. If you have more of a sweet tooth, amp it up with a little raspberry jam or chocolate ganache with whipped cream, and serve on a salty/sweet cracker such as Effie's Oatcakes.



La Casera Bergamino di Bufala – \$32 per lb

Verbania, Italy

This soft cheese from Eros Buratti's La Casera has been a staple here for years, having survived through multiple food buyers and continuous overhauls of our cheese selection. This is a testament to its consistent quality, approachability, niche status, and just plain deliciousness. Made from 100% water buffalo milk, the soft-ripened format enhances the richness and intense flavors of the milk (buffalo milk is much higher in fat and protein than cow's milk). It is silky, creamy, slightly sweet, and with a hint of bitterness on the finish. While great on its own, it also makes a wonderful canvas for a sweet accompaniment such as jam or honey.





Balconi Tiramisu – \$7 per 14 oz piece

Milan, Italy

If the after-dinner cheese course is not your thing, we have you covered. Sure, you can make tiramisu at home, but we said we were emphasizing easy and affordable, and this treat is hard to beat at its price. Simple and classic: delicately thin layers of coffee-soaked sponge cake with mascarpone cream and cocoa powder. We think they nailed the ratios; it's not overly sweet and is perfectly moist while retaining a light and fluffy texture.



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Wines of the Month – March 19, 2025 through April 19, 2025

2022 Rioja Tempranillo (Faustino)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$107.89 case of twelve

Faustino's 2022 Rioja is a plush, plummy Tempranillo that will stand up to a spicy bean and chorizo stew.

2024 Pays d'Hérault Rosé (Moulin de Gassac)

Sale Price \$8.99 – \$97.09 case of twelve

Lively aromas of strawberry and mint jumpstart this delicious dry rosé from the Languedoc. Great as an apéritif with crudités and sardines.

2021 Monterey Pinot Noir (Castle Rock)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$107.89 case of twelve

Castle Rock's 2021 Monterey County Pinot Noir is a flavorful rendition of West Coast Pinot. Its bright cherry fruit and fresh dry finish are impressive. Have with seared salmon and poached asparagus.

2023 Bordeaux Blanc (Tutiac)

Sale Price \$8.99 – \$97.09 case of twelve

This crisp Sauvignon Blanc is loaded with citrus fruit and a clean, dry finish. Great for seafood and salads.

