



ALL RED WINE CLUB

Turley Cellars Cinsault

Lodi 2009 \$19.99

As a special treat, you charter members of the first ever Summer Wine Club are getting some more Turley. I sent this wine out in all three clubs last October to rave reviews. What little I had left for reorders went extremely fast and unfortunately there are no extra cases available from this vintage. I had to beg to get this wine to send to you folks in the summer club. As a reminder, Turley is extremely hard to secure since this wine was intended for restaurant use only. In fact, it is a very few wine shops across the country and if you want to buy Turley must be on the waiting list for years and years just to get a chance to buy it during their two release periods per year. The farther up on the list, the more wine you are allowed to order. Turley, is perhaps the biggest "cult" producer of Zinfandel and Petite Sirah in Napa Valley.

This wine was intended for restaurants only because it is intended to be a food wine since it is lighter bodied than their normal monster fruit bomb Zinfandel that they had built their reputation on. Made by my friend, Ehren Jordan, Cinsault (pronounced sanso) has been historically used as a blending grape most commonly asked in addition to Grenache and Mourvedre. Ehren found a 120-year-old vineyard in Lodi which was the source of this delicious medium to light bodied wine. It is very young and only saw four months of oak. This is a perfect summer red that pairs with many lighter foods. Aromas of strawberries and blueberries on the nose, with more strawberry, cherry, and red licorice on the palate. The finish is accentuated with delicious mineral, very light tannin and more strawberry flavors. I just had this wine with some delicious barbecued ribs and the wine was a perfect addition to the smoky and spicy barbecue sauce. For info on Turley and a Ehren, refer to Oct 09 Intense notes (and how I almost burned his ranch down in Cazadero.....)

Vino con Brio Pinotage

Lodi 2007 \$15.99

California Pinotage? Yes, Ann Matsen grows that crazy South African varietal in California now. They decided to try growing Pinotage in Lodi because the microclimate is very similar to Cape Town, South Africa (even the same exact numbers on heat summation tables!). In addition, both areas have a sandy based soil. It has done remarkably well and they now appear to be the largest grower of Pinotage outside of South Africa and the only foreign member of the Pinotage Society of South Africa. However, their Pinotage tends to be much more fruit-driven than the South African style. Some call it "Pinot Noir on Steroids."

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Pinotage was created by crossing Pinot Noir and Cinsault, one of the grapes of the "Hermitage" region of the Rhone in France. It grew remarkably well in South Africa and I think perhaps better in Lodi. This wine is medium bodied, with cocoa dusted cherries, and ripe plums on the nose.

Cherry, strawberry, currant, and blackberry pop up on the palate after the first sip. The second guzzle seemed heavier with Blackberry jam and Cherry compote. The finish brings everything together with very nice acidity on a rather long finish with medium tannin. This wine can be paired with hamburgers, to filet mignon. I recently had this wine with a vast array of cheeses, and I was in heaven.

Easton Zinfandel

Amador County 2008 \$18.99

I have been a big fan of Bill Easton's wines for some time now. His other label is called "Terre Rouge", which concentrates on Rhône varietals. Amador County is world-famous for the zinfandels that come from that growing region as well as all of the Rhône varietals. Bill was onto something a long time ago. Amador County has rich red soil, extremely hot days, and chilly nights since its situated 3000 feet on the western side of the Sierra mountain range. All very important components that are responsible for producing excellent wine grapes.

This Zinfandel is made in a Beaujolais style, lighter, but still expressing that terroir of this growing region. The grapes come from old vines that are ahead pruned, whole cluster pressed, and fermented in barrel for only eight months. I get the classic Amador County blackberry bramble and dusty cocoa that makes this region so infamous in its Zinfandel production. This wine is fruit forward, medium bodied, and very easy drinking. Cranberry, dusty blackberry, and chocolate on the nose. Espresso bean, chocolate covered cherries, bramble, and blackberries pop up on the palate. This is a true food wine that can be paired with a smoky barbecued brisket sandwich, or hamburgers and hot dogs served for your summer family reunion. This is one Zinfandel that can be drunk in the sunshine without it being too heavy, yet extracting all the flavors of this famous Zinfandel region.

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Ramian Estate “Parlay” Red Blend California 2006 \$17.99

This wine is made by Brian Graham. We have sold his wines in the store for many years, mostly his old-vine Grenache that he sourced from an abandoned vineyard in Shasta County. Parlay is a second label from Brian. It has been quite popular in Napa Valley restaurants this summer, and I actually first tasted it in a restaurant and was blown away by all the delicious flavors he extracted from the grapes. It's mostly Cabernet Sauvignon, with Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, and Petite Verdot.

This is perhaps the biggest wine I am shipping in the summer club. Huge fruit comes out on the front palate while you're looking at the dark color of this wine in the glass. The nose has tobacco, leather, and bacon fat wafting up to your nostrils. Blackberry pie, ripe plums, currants, and roasted herbs hit your palate. The finish is long and extracted with medium tannin, and more blackberry fruit coating your taste buds. This is the perfect wine to finish off your evening after a barbecue, sitting around the table noshing on cheese or brownies.

Bandwagon Pinot Noir Monterey County 2008 \$21.99

This is a new wine and label from Tony Leonardini, the volunteer fireman from St. Helena in the winemaker from several previous wines chosen for the club under the label “Volunteer” and “Two-Faced”. This is what Tony has to say about his new brand:

Know where you're going. The Bandwagon is a phenomenon of instinct and probability. Distinct wines created from a crush of nature and skill. The Bandwagon Chardonnay grape hails from lofty origins high above Monterey County. We challenged ordinary wine making practices to retain this vineyard's unique characteristics with a crisp, clean horizon in sight. Jumping on the Bandwagon is instinctual. Extraordinary wines highly probable. 'Nough said.... The man has a way with words, no? This Pinot is from Arroyo Seco in southern Monterey Co. Cool climate, nice acidity, ripe fruit. The wine was aged in 80% French oak – 20% Hungarian oak, 30% new wood for 7 months. This Pinot Noir represents the perfect balance between fruit and earth. Red fruits, such as strawberry, cranberry, and pomegranate shine on both the nose and the first sip. Multilayered, complex, and very well-balanced, this Pinot Noir has all the right components that will make your summer alfresco dinner shine. Big fruit coupled with muted earthiness will intrigue your palate. The mouth feel is lush and rich, the finish is long and extracted, yet it's a medium bodied wine that does not intrude. I would pair this wine with grilled chicken, pork tenderloin, or salmon.

Bell Cellars Merlot Napa Valley 2006 \$17.99

Anthony Bell must really like me, because I keep on getting these great deals from him to share with you. He sells this delicious Merlot for \$30 on his website. Anthony, as you will recall was the dude who pretty much discovered the famous Clone 6 Cabernet vines in an abandoned experimental vineyard planted by the Ag department of UC Davis at the turn of the century. He was also the winemaker at BV Winery and helped revive the famous George La Tour reserve bottling there. Anthony is an expert making Bordeaux varieties and this one is super yummy. I really mean what I said about letting this monster Merlot get some air. I tasted the wine after sitting open for 24 hours and WOW, did it ever evolve. Fermented in 40% new French oak, you can really taste the vanilla and experience the creaminess of the wood by letting the wine breathe. Crème de Cassis, plums, blackberries, on the nose then repeated on the palate. Leather, cedar, and pipe tobacco, with spicy black pepper and grippy tannins on the finish. This is a Cab lovers Merlot, no doubt. This wine screams for a Filet Mignon to be served alongside this chewy, yummy wine.