



ALL RED FALL WINE CLUB

Emtu Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley 2007 \$24.99

This is a true Thanksgiving wine. John and Chris Mason are two extraordinary people who have taken their dedication to humanitarian causes quite seriously. Together, they craft a single estate Pinot Noir from a dry-farmed, 2-acre certified organic vineyard located in Forestville at the juncture of the Russian River Valley and the Green Valley appellations of Sonoma County. They live on their property, farm their adjacent estate Labyrinth Vineyard, and control all the winemaking. That in itself is quite an accomplishment, but the Masons have looked beyond their farm for self-fulfillment. The Masons (both of them had the surname Mason before marriage, but were unrelated, and thus the derivation of the name Emtu, a phonetic spelling of M2) have been international relief workers since 1999 when they traveled to Kosovo to build homes and shelters in remote villages as part of the relief efforts for homeless families.

John is a retired paramedic and Chris is a retired worker in the health care field with a master's degree in dietary science. Every winter they close up the farm as the vines lay dormant and the wine rests in barrels and travel to a foreign country where their skills are most needed. They have been in Gujarat, India helping in the aftermath of a disastrous earthquake, in Bmenda Highlands of Cameroon assisting AIDS educators, and in Chaman, Pakistan where they established medical clinics in two border refugee camps and provided medical aid to over 30,000 refugees. In 2005, the Masons founded the Labyrinth Foundation for Disaster Relief to allow them to operate independently or in cooperation with other aid organizations. All the profit from the sale of Emtu wines goes to their charitable foundation.

This wine normally sells for close to \$40. The money you just spent to buy this wine, magically, went to help people world-wide – at Thanksgiving. How cool is that? And what a deal you got. This elegant Pinot is fussed over by the owners. The Labyrinth Vineyard was planted to clones 115 and Pommard 4 and 5 in 1999 and 2003. The vines are rooted in deep Goldridge soils and grafted onto 101-14 rootstock. Each vine is cane pruned individually and every year each vine is carefully assessed to determine the appropriate number of buds to be left as fruiting wood. This balances the vine and permits adjustments in fruit load from year to year. Early passes through the vineyard for shoot thinning and positioning ensure optimal canopy density, with the aim of achieving an even and dappled exposure to sunlight on each cluster of grapes. As the season progresses, additional passes are made to evaluate and adjust vine growth and fruit. If during the growing season the vine seems out of balance, both shoots and fruit are removed to allow the vine to fully ripen the grapes.

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The nose provides fresh strawberry, thyme, and cherry cola. Light brick in color. The subtle and delicate mouth feel reminds me of Burgundy that costs a hundred dollars or more. Acacia flower, strawberry, watermelon, saddle leather, and black cherry all pop on the palate with a hint of tannin and some sweet oaky vanilla on the finish. Turkey? Nuf said. And give thanks to these folks for making war on injustice and hunger all over the world.

Glass Ceiling “110% Red” Red Wine Blend

Napa Valley 2010 \$20.99

My friend Bob Janis, bocce aficionado and fellow Meadowood golfer, sat down with his partner and winemaker Glenn Cook, with Grenache and Petite Sirah and started to do blending trials. They initially wanted to keep the varietals to just those two grapes but soon found out that the Petite over-powered the delicate Grenache. So Glenn had an idea to add some Merlot and ...viola. BUT, they had 50% Grenache, 40% Merlot, 20% Petite in the beaker, adding up to a grand total of 110% (thus the name of this blend). More tweaking ensued and the final result is this delicious red wine and yours to enjoy. Glass ceiling was initially coined to describe the two partners' wives experiences in the job market. They both hit the “glass ceiling” in their respective careers.

This vintage sports a pink label, unfortunately due to both wives having experienced cancer in the last year (at the same time) – but both of these beautiful women are in remission (thank god). As Bob says: “Gayle and Cathy have but the glass ceiling on the floor and are walking all over it”. Love that. Let's give thanks to their health..... This wine has a gorgeous nose of cappuccino, strawberry preserve, and dried flowers. The mouth feel is lush yet delicate. Strawberry, plums, mocha, and a hint of leather round out the flavors with some delicate oak on the smooth finish. Perfect with left over Hot Turkey sandwiches and stuffing.

Foyt Family Wines Meritage “No 72”

Sonoma Valley 2008 \$16.99

What a deal. \$32 on their web site.... What a delicious wine. Last name sound vaguely familiar? Yes, it's A. J. Foyt, the famous race car driver. Mario Andretti has a winery here in the Valley, plenty room for another. I discovered these wines on a tip from a friend who tasted them and met the GM by selling him a desk from Craig's List. They originally made – well, actually, bought some shiners – as a little bit of schwag for the racing team's sponsors.

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Word got out amongst the gear heads and then EVERYONE wanted a bottle from A. J. So they decided to put some money behind a little soirée in the vino biz and hired Tom Meadowcroft to make it. The number "72" signifies the year 1972, when A.J. won the Daytona 500 by the largest ever – a record that still stands to this day. I also have his Chard in the Red/White Club, #67, The number "67" on the label commemorates A.J.'s banner year of racing back then when he won his 3rd Indy 500 and then two weeks later finished first in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. In fact, set in the Loire Valley and sponsored by Moët Chandon, when A.J. was in the winner's circle, he was handed a bottle of Champagne by the host and he unceremoniously popped the bottle to douse the press standing nearby (he hated the press). The French dude was shocked – but the tradition has held up in every freaking car race since: the spraying of bubbly after a win – '67 was the first. This wine is a blend of 73% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, and 9% Malbec. Probably the best Bordeaux blend for sixteen bucks I have tasted. The fruit came from Chalk Hill and Alexander Valley and was fermented in 30% new wood. Dark color in the glass, massive fruit on the palate. Blackberry, plum, and licorice on the nose. Blueberry pie, blackberry, and plums on the palate with a hint of vanilla, spicy oak and espresso bean near the finish. Medium tannin, long rich finish. Have with some Virginia country Ham.

Meeker Syrah

Sonoma County 2006 \$17.99

Charles Meeker was raised in Dallas Texas and became a lawyer. He moved to LA and practiced entertainment law, then produced movies, and eventually became the president of MGM. All that to finance his winery habit. He and his wife Molly – also in the entertainment biz, bought their first vineyard in Dry Creek Valley in 1977 and opened their winery in 1984. Charlie wasn't able to become a full time winemaker until 1999. When he gave up Hollywood for bud wood. Here is what Charlie had to say about his 06 Syrah: "Well, if you've seen a darker, inkier Syrah than this one, we would appreciate you sending us a bottle, because it's probably darn impressive. This wine is dark. Bottom of the ocean dark. The nose shines with tart blackberries and jammy currants with leathery overtones. The palate explodes like the inside of a blackberry-black cherry turnover, with a cafe au lait on the side on one of those Sunday mornings that you dream about but don't get often enough. This Syrah is just as dreamy, except we hope you won't be drinking it on Sunday mornings. Not that we're against it, but we recommend Saturday night. But if Sunday morning floats your boat, we won't judge you, we promise". I concur, completely.... Serve with Lamb or a rib stickin' plate of spare ribs.

Turchi Pinot Noir

Santa Barbara County Camp Vineyard 2009 \$22.99

This wine is a second label of Core Wine Co. Dave Corey and I go way back to the early days of the Garage and we have had many of his wines in the Club in previous years. Dave got his start in the wine biz through bugs.... he has a masters in Entomology and Plant Physiology and worked as a consultant to many big-name Central Coast wineries including Sea Smoke, Sine Qua Non, and Andrew Murray - helping them in the vineyards with wine grape pests. He didn't think he would get bitten by the biggest, most costly bug in the vineyards – the wine bug. But he did, and with his wife Becky, they launched Core. A Parker darling from the get go, Dave did well. This is a label named after his Mother's family. Crisp and tart, like a choke cherry pie on the initial sip, it leads into softer, riper fruit on the mid-palate. Strawberry, pomegranate, and blueberry pie come to mind. The finish has evident tannins with a hint of vanilla. Nice Thanksgiving wine. Reminds me of Sea Smoke Pinot – at \$120/btl.

Horse and Plow "Harvester Red" Red Blend

North Coast 2009 \$19.99

Horse and Plow is a small husband and wife run winery in Santa Rosa that focuses on making handcrafted wines exclusively from organic and biodynamic grapes. Chris Condos and Suzanne Hagens started Horse & Plow in 2008 making only 600 cases of wine and are currently making 2500 cases. Chris started making wine in 1995 at Pine Ridge Winery in Napa Valley. He is also co-owner of Vinum Cellars, which he started in 1997, as well as the winemaker for Kathryn Kennedy Winery. Suzanne's first harvest was in 1998 at Comte Armand in Pommard, with California experience at David Bruce and Goldeneye. She is also the owner and winemaker for Lutea, founded in 2004, which produces organically grown pinot noir. They utilize organic farming, small lot fermentations and traditional techniques to make balanced, food friendly and site specific wines. Their goal is to make world class wines from organically grown grapes. They feel that in addition to the environmental benefits of organic farming, the resulting wines show more varietal character and sense of place. All wines are made naturally from vineyard to bottle. This blend is 40% Carignane, 25% Syrah, 22% Petite Sirah, 5% Charbono, 5% Zinfandel, and 3% Grenache. Very cool wine, killer varietal composition. Dark in the glass, aromas of fresh baked bread, boysenberry, slate, and moss. Flavors of raspberry, cinnamon, plums, and strawberry preserves. Rich and velvety mouth feel, subtle tannins, long finish. Serve with Pot Roast, Brisket, or any braised red meat.