



RED & WHITE WINE CLUB



Foyt Family Wines Chardonnay

Sonoma County 2009 \$17.99

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 They originally made – well, actually, bought some shiners – as a little bit of swag for the racing team's sponsors. 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. This Chardonnay is a cuvee of three different Sonoma County vineyards, including a first rate Russian River site. 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. Made with 20% new French oak and partial malolactic fermentation, this wine has bright acids to cut through even the richest turkey gravy. Hints of crisp apples, apricot, buttered toast, and papaya on the palate. Aromas of tropical fruit and toasty oak lead the way to a tart crisp finish. Great wine for cheese, seafood, or turkey.

Rivino Chardonnay

Mendocino County 2008 \$24.99

Discovered this winery through Josh Metz on our trip to Mendo back in September. We set up an appointment at the end of our first day up there and Amelia and I were a bit buzzed from the earlier 4 tastings. We sort of poured out of the car..... This is a small family winery run by Jason and Suzanne McConnell. Jason is the winemaker, Suzanne is the money lady – both by tracking it in the winery and by having inherited the property from her father, the Shrader Ranch Vineyard. They sit on 200 acres of vineyard (!) and select the best blocks for their own label, selling the rest of the grapes to other wineries. Amelia and I instantly took a liking to this couple, Jason being a very funny irreverent sort of Canadian bloke, Suzanne starting off shy and reserved but opening up later as we sat on the patio trying wine after wine overlooking the amazing view of vineyards weaving down to the Russian River. This Chardonnay is all stainless steel tank fermented without allowing the wine to complete the secondary malolactic fermentation. The result is a crisp and clean Chard that isn't masked by butter and oak.

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The truest of fruit screams from the glass. From their Block 2 estate vineyard, the grapes were handpicked in the early morning when they were still cold from the Mendocino fog, transported a few hundred yards to the winery, and whole-cluster pressed. Minimal handling – maximum flavors. Freshly sliced Asian pear, nectarine, and pineapple on the nose. Honey, mineral, pear tart, and quince on the palate. The finish is crisp and clean with a gush of apple pie and spice on the end. Perfect aperitif wine with any appetizer, or crabcakes.

Wattle Creek Chardonnay

Yorkville Highlands

Mendocino County 2007 \$18.99

Christopher and Kristine Williams migrated from Arizona after they purchased a vineyard and winery in the Alexander Valley in 1994 and jumped fully in the wine biz. In 1998 they bought another 600 acres in the Yorkville Highlands of Mendocino County and planted some amazing vineyards. This Chardonnay was made in a completely different style than the Chards in this shipment. Fermented in 25% new French oak, full malolactic, aged lees for 8 months – yet this is not a fat and flabby butter/oak bomb. French Burgundy perhaps..... this wine could age another 3 years and develop even more interesting components. This is truly an "Estate Wine", allowing the vineyard team and winemaker complete control over every single variable. Most wineries buy grapes (or juice) and wing it. Estate grown fruit is way different – and this wine is. Apples, honeycomb, and lemon on the nose – lemon curd, vanilla, white pepper, apple butter, and caramel on the tongue, leading to a surprisingly crisp finish. Great with grilled and brined, smoked turkey.

W H Smith Pinot Noir Umino Vineyard

Sonoma County 2008 \$24.99

These are the dudes who resurrected the famous ghost winery on Howell Mt called La Jota back in the 1970's. Originally part of a Spanish land grant that covered 4,000 acres, La Jota Vineyard was built and operated by Frederick Hess until Prohibition. Turned over to prunes and pigs, the winery and land were in disrepair when Bill Smith purchased La Jota in 1974 from a group of San Francisco investors. Commuting from the Peninsula on weekends, Bill and Joan enlisted the help of family and friends to establish a vineyard, and spent hours irrigating each vine by hand. A growing passion for wine, intermittent success as home winemakers, and the thrill of a challenge inspired Bill and Joan in 1982 to offer their first commercial vintage.

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RED & WHITE FALL WINE CLUB



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The ultimate compliment—Markham Vineyards purchased the highly successful La Jota Vineyard Co. in 2001. Bill had a passion for Pinot and Helen Turley convinced Bill to plant some vineyard out near her in Cazadero in the Sonoma Coast AVA. This Pinot is from the Umino Vineyard and retails for \$48 on their website. David Umino planted the 11 acres of Pinot near Sebastopol (many folks thought him crazy to plant Pinot in such a cool growing region) to 4 different Dijon clones – this wine uses mostly clones 115, 477, and 459. 100% French oak. The aroma of dried flowers and smoky bacon fat waft up the glass. Flavors of strawberry, leather, moss, baking spice predominate the palate. This well balanced wine is elegant and exotic with bright acidity which will pair nicely with your Thanksgiving meal.

Edward Sellars Syrah

Paso Robles 2008 \$16.99

Ed and I have been doing business for sometime now. Many of his wines have been featured in the Club over the years. Lately he has been scoring in the 90's from Robert Parker on some of his premier wines – and well deserved. He chose great vineyard sites, planted the proper Rhone varietals to those sites, and developed an understanding of how best to extract the optimum flavors for his wines. I always enjoy visiting with him over the Hospice du Rhone every May in Paso. This Syrah is perhaps the best value Rhone wine I have tasted. You folks, with the club discount are paying \$15 bucks and change for this brooding, dark beauty. Smoke, mineral, and lavender on the nose. Almost black in the glass. ... Plums, blackberry, leather, and earth on the palate. Long extended finish. This wine will be great with Thanksgiving leftovers, especially if you smoked your bird.

Kuyam Red Blend “13 Moons”

Santa Barbara County 2007 \$24.99

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 has 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. Kuyam 13 Moons is a blend of 37% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Petite Verdot, 9% Cabernet Franc and 4% Malbec from Santa Barbara Highlands. Yield of 2 to 4 tons per acre. Aged 11 months in 20% new French Oak Barrels and six months in the bottle. This wine ROCKS. Big fruit and huge flavors emerge from the dark wine in the glass. The nose has components of blackberry, huckleberry, cola, and black pepper. More dark fruit on the palate with roasted herbs, cherry, tobacco, and cocoa. Long rich finish with medium tannin and nice acidity. Serve with grilled Tri-Tip, Santa Maria Style.