

SEPTEMBER 2025

CHEVALIER

LE CHEVAL





Here is what Domaine Tempier's vineyard manager Jean-Philippe Fourney says, for instance. "Our work with horses is much more precise than with a tractor. We have many old *gobelet* (bushed-trained) vines on the estate, which are more fragile due to their size and age. With animal traction, we don't have any breakage, which is unfortunately more often the case with tractors, even with an experienced driver. Ploughing with horses also allows us to better feel the soil and sense its texture, which can reassure us or alert us to areas that need attention."

Whether a grower uses a horse for precision in ploughing, or to avoid ploughing altogether, these animals compel their human partners to engage even more with the earth and its needs than they otherwise might, meaning that both the act of using the horse *and* the sensitivity and rigorousness this act demands result in wines with an elevated freshness and soul. You will no doubt taste how alive each of the six gorgeous cuvées are in this month's club. —TOM WOLF

LE CHEVAL

If you ever find yourself driving down the dirt driveway of a domaine in rural France or Italy and you spot a horse amid the vines, this isn't a *guarantee* that you're about to taste greatness, but it is about as good a sign as you can get. Vignerons have a wide variety of reasons for using horses, but on the most fundamental level, the ones who go to the effort of doing so prove to be among the most diligent, perceptive, and thoughtful grape growers you'll meet, and their wines more often than not display a heightened elegance, purity, vibrancy, and—of course—a distinct sense of place. In fact, there is such a correlation between the use of these animals, on one hand, and an intense curiosity and rigorousness, on the other, that you might wonder whether the verve in your glass is thanks to the benefits of the horse itself or to the underlying perfectionism of a vigneron who refuses to cut corners. I would say this is a fair question, but the vignerons represented in this month's club are such true believers in the advantages of their furry friends that I can't help but take their word for it.



2023 FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA FRIULANO “LA DULINE”

◆ VIGNAI DA DULINE \$49

CONSIDERING HOW WINEMAKER Lorenzo Mocchiutti approaches his work—his passion—a bottle from Vignai da Duline is a glimpse into his soul. He works with such intention: following a rigorous personal philosophy honed from years of practical experience and observation in nature to care for his vines, maintaining the region’s traditions of using Slavonian oak casks, and allowing his white wines to finish their malolactic fermentation, which brings balance and complexity. This invigorating bottle of La Duline blends local Tocai Giallo and Tocai Verde and will transport you to a wilder place where Mother Nature is queen, her essence captured in a wine.



2024 VIN DE FRANCE ROSÉ “FAUSTINE”

◆ DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI \$42

AROMAS OF CLEMENTINE AND SWEET SUMMER MELON abound in this plush, mouth-filling rosé from the granite hills above Ajaccio, Corsica’s capital city. Biodynamic farming guru Jean-Charles Abbattucci crafts it primarily from the island’s indigenous Sciaccarellu grape, which he values for its capacity to produce lively wines with a real taste of the land. An alluring sun-kissed, wind-swept quality is reminiscent of the Mediterranean coastline, as if Jean-Charles bottled up the essence of summertime in Corsica for us all to experience.

2021 PAYS D’OC “CUVÉE LES VIEILLES VIGNES DE MOURVÈDRE”

◆ CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE \$28

There’s nothing quite like old-vine Mourvèdre from a rugged landscape to illustrate the colorful spirit of southern France. Around the imposing vertical escarpment known as the Pic Saint Loup, abundant limestone litters the vineyard floor, balmy fragrances of *garrigue* herbs waft through the dry Mediterranean air, and the nearby mountains bring cool breezes that temper the intense meridional heat. Mourvèdre thrives in these conditions, yielding tooth-staining reds that capture the wildness of the Languedoc countryside like no other.



2023 CHÉNAS “VIBRATIONS”

◆ DOMAINE THILLARDON \$39

PAUL-HENRI THILLARDON OFTEN WORKED in his family’s vines in the southern Beaujolais as a kid, and aspired to one day make his own wine. At age twenty-one, he purchased a small vineyard in the cru of Chénas, seeing potential in an appellation that lacked the superstar talent of nearby Morgon and Fleurie. It wasn’t easy at first: “Paulo” didn’t know anybody and slept in the back of his car, parked amid the vines, while he struggled to make ends meet.



He farmed organically from the start and soon became exposed to the world of natural wine, eagerly soaking up advice from mentors such as Guy Breton, Jean-Louis Dutraive, and Yvon Métras. As the budding vigneron began to find his feet, he seized an opportunity to purchase an old farmhouse surrounded by stubby centenarian Gamay trunks on the upper slopes of Chénas. Paul-Henri’s sister and two brothers soon joined him at the domaine, and today the Thillardon siblings have increased their holdings to ten hectares on a polyculture farm featuring cows, pigs, and a horse trained to help them work their steep hillside parcels.

In the cellar, Paulo has adopted time-tested methods pioneered by Jules Chauvet and Morgon’s Gang of Four to yield Beaujolais with vivacious fruit and a strong soil signature. Fermentations are 100% whole-cluster with native yeast, and he bottles unfiltered with little to no sulfur. It’s no wonder the Thillardons have earned a reputation for their explosively fresh, low-alcohol, irresistibly silky expressions of Gamay from a previously unheralded corner of Beaujolais’ crus.



Blended from young and old vines across a diversity of terroirs, this cuvée provides a delicious snapshot of Chénas. Its shimmering red fruit comes alive with a nice chill.

2021 SAUMUR CHAMPIGNY “LA MARGINALE”

◆ THIERRY GERMAIN \$56

THIERRY’S CABERNET FRANCS FROM Saumur Champigny are models of purity, finesse, and drinkability. This blend of parcels from the communes of Chacé and Varrains is only made in the best vintages, and sees the longest aging of Germain’s reds—up to twenty-four months in a mix of older barrels and *foudres*. Thierry is a pioneer of biodynamics in the Loire Valley, with great experience and wisdom acquired under the tutelage of Clos Rougeard’s Charly Foucault. With incredibly pristine, vivid fruit along with a deep, rich structure and silky-fine tannins, Germain’s reds are grand examples of the heights biodynamic wines can achieve.



2021 BANDOL ROUGE “LULU & LUCIEN”

◆ DOMAINE TEMPIER \$69

“Summertime wine? Certain reds work and others don’t. When it turns hot, some reds we import reveal unexpected virtues if served at a cool temperature. Either uncork one right up from a cool cellar, or, particularly if you are dining outdoors, place the bottle in a lightly iced bucket. Or put the red in the fridge until it’s cool, not cold. We have red wines that shine under such conditions. Domaine Tempier’s is one.” —KERMIT LYNCH, AUGUST 1987 NEWSLETTER

TEMPIER’S FLAGSHIP BANDOL ROUGE is a sophisticated wine, but it never hides its country roots. It is as equally suited to ribeyes for a special occasion as it is to homemade pizza on a Thursday night. You can even enjoy it as Lulu Peyraud did, and just put a slight chill on it before popping the cork on a warm summer evening. A cool glass of Tempier *rouge*, sweating in a small tumbler, can be more refreshing than any burly red has a right to be.

But no matter how you choose to enjoy it, beneath the pure dark fruit, the intense depth of flavor, the energy, the enticing Provençal aromatics, lurks a wildness—perhaps owing to the large percentage of Mourvèdre—that is never tamed. Or as Kermit wrote, “there is always something wild and unpredictable about it, spirited, shall we say, yet it is honest and impeccable, full of warmth and finesse.”

Much like 1981 or 2013, the 2021 vintage has turned out a beautiful and classically styled Bandol *rouge*, full of finesse and grip. Stony and dark-fruited, this is one to dig into now.



<p>2023 Friuli Venezia Giulia Friulano “La Duline”</p> <p><i>Vignai da Duline</i></p> <p>FRIULI</p>	<p>40% Tocai Giallo, 60% Tocai Verde</p>	<p>Vines planted in 1920 and 1936</p> <p>Limestone, clay</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F</p>	<p>Peach, wet stone, bitter almond</p> <p>Vibrant, rich, textural</p>	<p>Drink now through 2030</p>
<p>2024 Vin de France “Rosé “Faustine”</p> <p><i>Domaine Comte Abbattucci</i></p> <p>CORSICA</p>	<p>85% Sciaccarellu, 15% Barbarossa</p>	<p>20-year-old vines</p> <p>Granite</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F</p>	<p>Citrus skin, watermelon, sour cherry</p> <p>Sun-kissed, herbaceous, saline</p>	<p>Drink now</p>
<p>2021 Pays d’Oc “Cuvée Les Vieilles Vignes de Mourvèdre”</p> <p><i>Château La Roque</i></p> <p>LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON</p>	<p>70% Mourvèdre, 20% Syrah, 10% Grenache</p>	<p>50- to 60-year-old vines</p> <p>Clay, limestone scree</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F</p>	<p>Black cherry, iron, blood orange</p> <p>Plush, approachable, classy</p>	<p>Drink now through 2032</p>
<p>2023 Chénas “Vibrations”</p> <p><i>Domaine Thillardon</i></p> <p>BEAUJOLAIS</p>	<p>Gamay</p>	<p>10- to 100-year-old vines</p> <p>Granite, alluvial</p>	<p>Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60°F</p>	<p>Raspberry, earth, rhubarb, smoke</p> <p>Expressive, juicy, mineral, chillable</p>	<p>Drink now</p>
<p>2021 Saumur Champigny “La Marginale”</p> <p><i>Thierry Germain</i></p> <p>LOIRE</p>	<p>Cabernet Franc</p>	<p>45-year-old vines</p> <p>Clay, Turonian Supérieur limestone</p>	<p>Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60°F</p>	<p>Currant, leather, plum</p> <p>Fresh, elegant, fine-grained</p>	<p>Drink now through 2032</p>
<p>2021 Bandol Rouge “Lulu & Lucien”</p> <p><i>Domaine Tempier</i></p> <p>PROVENCE</p>	<p>75% Mourvèdre, 14% Grenache, 9% Cinsault, 2% Carignan</p>	<p>40-year-old vines</p> <p>Clay, limestone</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F</p>	<p>Blackberry, anise, sandalwood</p> <p>Stony, deep, complex, sophisticated</p>	<p>Drink now through 2035</p>

front cover: © JULIA ISSLEIB
inner panel, left: Biodynamics in the vineyard.

© CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE

inner panel, right: Farrier at work. © JIMMY HAYES
far left, top: Lorenzo Mocchiutti with his horses.

© VIGNAI DA DULINE

far left, bottom: Cyriaque Rozier. © GAIL SKOFF

middle, top: Old press in action. © DOMAINE THILLARDON
middle, bottom: Brothers Paul-Henri and Charles Thillardon.

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near left: Fresh horseshoes for Thierry Germain’s horse Ben.
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back cover: Horse at Domaine Thillardon. © JOANIE BONFIGLIO

To reorder any of our Wine Club selections, please give us a call at 510.524.1524
to speak with a salesperson, or send us an email at wineclub@kermitynch.com.

Our two magnificent Haflinger mares, Gya and Gaby, have been with us since 2018. They are part of the estate and the beauty that surrounds us; they contribute to our viticulture by trimming the grass cover during the fall and winter (after the harvest and before the vines bud). We don't use them for any work in the vineyards because the most important element of our vineyard philosophy is not working the soil. The manure they produce (thanks to the forage from our vineyards) is used to encourage the growth of the young vines we plant. —Federica Magrini, Vignai da Duline

We have three draft horses—two Ardennes and one Percheron—named Comtesse de Conteville, Ben des Noyers, and Cadrille. Horses have been part of the domaine since the beginning, and for us, as practitioners of biodynamics, they could not be more important. They reinforce the age-old relationship between horse and man, and remind us to respect the soil and listen to the life around us while working. They allow us to work with finesse—not force—which permits better rooting for the plant with less stress in its development; better biological activity of the soil with less runoff, while promoting microbial life essential in the terroir identity. The horse is essential in our notion of life, and the energy that the horse gives us in sometimes difficult days is incredible.—Thierry Germain, Domaine des Roches Neuves

