



Rather, this chiseled and floral rosé evokes distinctive flavors of Mediterranean herbs, grapefruit, and red berries, all of which culminate in an unusually long and mouthwatering finish.

Like both Leccia's rosé and Muriel Giudicelli's *rouge*, which star Niellucciu, this month's Sardinian selections feature grapes grown elsewhere along the Mediterranean—Cannonau (that is, Grenache) and Vermentino—but the expressions of these grapes that hail from Sardinia's rugged interior are entirely distinct from Châteauneuf-du-Pape's Grenache-based reds or the Vermentinos you'll find along coastal mainland Italy or even Corsica!

Finally, this month's club also features wines from one of the most culturally enthralling islands in the Mediterranean, Sicily. Riofava's Marzaiolo and Vigneti Vecchio's Crasà Contrada highlight the beautiful possibilities of Sicily's great varieties, including Nerello Mascalese and Grillo, among many others. While the Marzaiolo displays tantalizingly fresh flavors of tangerine and jasmine, transporting you to the southeastern coast of Sicily, Nerello Mascalese in the Crasà Contrada channels the smoky, stony essence of Mount Etna.

Unique and enchanting, these six wines reflect all the beauty, independence, and distinctiveness of their island origins. —TOM WOLF



CHEVALIER

ISLAND WINES



ISLAND WINES

Visit any island around the world and you're likely to encounter a common thread that ties together the year-round inhabitants of Tasmania, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Nantucket, and many other such places: a proudly independent streak coupled with a healthy skepticism of whatever mainland society governs them.

Fortunately for those of us who cherish diversity when it comes to dialects, customs, and gastronomic traditions, this independence tends to result in a dedicated preservation of the local culture. In Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily, that extends to the cultivation of grapes and the production of wine. We import whites, rosés, and reds from these three islands—the first one governed by France and the other two by Italy—and, thrillingly, they resemble no wines made on the mainland, even if they occasionally feature grapes also grown there.

Consider Yves Leccia's Île de Beauté rosé. Although most of the blend is made up of Niellucciu—Corsican Sangiovese—it tastes nothing like *rosati* produced in Tuscany, thanks to the windy coastal terroir of northern Corsica as well as the addition of the indigenous grape Sgiaccarellu to the final blend.

2021 TERRE SICILIANE BIANCO “MARZAIOLO”

◆ RIOFAVARA \$22

AS INTEREST in Sicily’s winemaking regions grows, so increases the demand for Massimo Padova’s wines—and it’s about time! Take his Marzaiolo, a sun-dappled blend of Grecanico, fragrant Moscato, and one of the island’s most ancient varieties, Inzolia, a grape with plump, juicy berries. It is a brilliant white bursting with sunshine, tangerine, and sea spray. Most important to Massimo is to respect the environment and honor Sicilian identity. He works organically and only in collaboration with local businesses, as indicated by the statement *Cento Per Cento Sicilia*—“100 Percent Sicily”—embossed into the collar of his glass bottles. Pair this wine with a saffron spaghetti topped with blistered tomatoes, or tasty appetizers of small fish or prawns.



2021 VERMENTINO DI GALLURA SUPERIORE “FRIA”

◆ DEPERU HOLLER \$37

THE NORTHERN SARDINIAN REGION of Gallura, a windswept land of craggy granite bluffs where the sea is never too far away, is the ideal habitat for the Vermentino vine. Carlo Deperu, who runs a small organic farm with his wife, Tatiana Holler, refuses to follow the enological handbook that homogenizes many local wines: he is one of the only producers in the entire appellation who does not inoculate, relying instead on wild yeasts to kick off fermentation following a brief period of skin maceration—a long-lost tradition here. He forgoes filtration, preserving succulent, juicy flesh to coat the wine’s refreshing mineral backbone. Carlo’s calculated approach to natural winemaking yields a mouth-filling Vermentino saturated with herbs, flowers, ripe orchard fruit, and an unmistakable Mediterranean signature.



2022 ÎLE DE BEAUTÉ ROSÉ

◆ YVES LECCIA \$34

YVES SELECTS certain parcels from his Patrimoine vineyards planted to Niellucciu, the noble grape of northern Corsica, to produce this direct-press rosé. Much like Sangiovese in Tuscany (from which it is descended) or Mourvèdre in southern France, Niellucciu here maintains proper acidity in high heat and has ample antioxidative properties in its skins, creating a rosé that is both delicious and characterful and has staying power. Like biting into juicy red berries, this beauty from the Île de Beauté confirms that Yves is just as comfortable making irresistible daily drinkers as *grands vins de garde*.



2018 PATRIMONIO ROUGE

◆ DOMAINE GIUDICELLI \$64

COMPARED TO some other Niellucciu-based reds we import, Muriel Giudicelli’s Patrimoine shows a relatively strong kinship to its Tuscan cousins (remember that Niellucciu is genetically identical to Sangiovese, having migrated to the island centuries ago). Less rustic than its counterparts, it radiates pure class—a trademark of Muriel’s wines, achieved through organic and biodynamic farming, gentle, infusion-style vinifications, and long *élevages* in carefully selected *foudres*. This elegant thoroughbred of a wine emanates a deep and mysterious aroma you could get lost in. The flavors penetrate and linger, offering suggestions of black cherry and fragrant maquis.



2021 ETNA ROSSO “CRASÀ CONTRADA”

◆ VIGNETI VECCHIO \$60

ETNA NATIVES Carmelo Vecchio and Rosa La Guzza of Vigneti Vecchio tend little gardens of ancient vines, crafting tiny quantities of aromatic gems in their cramped Solicchiata basement. The Crasà Contrada, at 800 meters elevation, produces their most profound red, made from Nerello Mascalese co-planted with a smattering of other indigenous red and white grapes. This old-fashioned field blend recalls smoky incense, white pepper, and blackberries, while its tightly knit tannic structure promises great cellaring potential.



2020 CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA “BARROSU”

◆ GIOVANNI MONTISCI \$76

MAMOIADA MAY NOT BE a household name in the way that Châteauneuf-du-Pape, for example, is synonymous with world-class Grenache. And yet, with vineyards that reach 2,500 feet above sea level, this tiny village in the heart of central Sardinia’s highlands has proved to be a top site for Cannonau, as the grape is known locally. The mountain terroir is unparalleled in Sardinia or elsewhere, endowing Cannonau with extraordinary concentration while preserving precious freshness that allows its wines to elegantly toe a delicate balance.

Giovanni Montisci, who farms just three hectares of stubby old vines, remembers the traditional wines of Mamoiada—sweet, alcoholic, rustic brews served with the region’s similarly rustic cuisine—and refined things a bit, taking inspiration from Quintarelli, Rayas, and the best in Barolo. He crafts dry Cannonaus of a regal caliber that channel these legends through the lens of Mamoiada’s high-elevation, decomposed granite soils. The sweetly perfumed nose of rose petals, wild strawberry, and juniper prefaces this deep and powerful, yet exquisitely refined Cannonau, definitively putting Mamoiada on the map for lovers of Grenache and great Italian reds in general.



2021 Terre Siciliane Bianco “Marzaiolo” <i>Riofava</i> SICILY	45% Grillo, 20% Inzolia, 15% Moscato, 15% Grecanico, 5% other	12-year-old vines Clay, limestone	Serve cold 46–50° F Decant optional	Tangerine, jasmine, sea spray Zesty, crisp, succulent	Drink now
2021 Vermentino di Gallura Superiore “Fria” <i>Deperu Holler</i> SARDINIA	Vermentino	8-year-old vines Clay, limestone, chalk, granite, volcanic	Serve cold 48–52° F Decant optional	Green almond, lime blossom, wild herbs, chestnut Plump, aromatic, lively	Drink now
2022 Île de Beauté Rosé <i>Yves Leccia</i> CORSICA	80% Niellucciu, 20% Sciaccarellu	20- to 40-year-old vines Clay, limestone, schist	Serve cold 48–52° F Decant optional	Grapefruit, orange rind, red berries Refreshing, floral, long	Drink now
2018 Patrimoine Rouge <i>Domaine Giudicelli</i> CORSICA	Niellucciu	25-year-old vines Clay, limestone, granite, schist	Serve slightly cool 58–62° F Decant optional	Maquis, black cherry, plum Elegant, deep, fresh	Drink now
2021 Etna Rosso “Crasà Contrada” <i>Vigneti Vecchio</i> SICILY	90% Nerello Mascalese, 10% indigenous varieties (Inzolia, Grecanico, Catarratto)	Vines planted in 1930 Volcanic	Serve slightly cool 58–62° F Decant recommended	Smoke, blackberry, white pepper Suave, fine-grained, structured	Drink now through 2035
2020 Cannonau di Sardegna “Barrosu” <i>Giovanni Montisci</i> SARDINIA	Cannonau	60-year-old vines Sandy granite, clay	Serve slightly cool 58–62° F Decant recommended	Rose petals, wild strawberry, juniper Powerful, refined, exquisite	Drink now through 2030

front cover: Sicilian coastline. © GAIL SKOFF

inner panel: © GAIL SKOFF

far left, top: Massimo Padova and daughter Clementina.

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far left, bottom: Harvest. © DEPERU HOLLER

middle, top: Yves and Sandrine Leccia in the cellar. © YVES LECCIA

middle, bottom: Muriel Giudicelli and her husband, Stéphane.

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near left, top: © DIXON BROOKE

near left, bottom: Painted map on the cellar wall at Montisci.

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