

FERRY PLAZA WINE MERCHANT & WINE BAR

## NOVEMBER 2018 WINE CLUB



### 2013 Eclectic Wines Charbono, Suisun Valley, CA

Mike Trotta developed a fascination with fermentation while studying Microbiology at CSU Northridge and began what would be a fruitful career in wine in 2000 working harvest at Bernardus Winery in Carmel Valley. While he learned traditional Burgundian winemaking methods at Bernardus, he was also exposed to large scale production and progressive techniques during a stint at Yalumba Winery in Australia's Barossa Valley. Mike went on to become the winemaker at Elyse Winery in Napa where he has been crafting elegant Cabernet, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Chardonnay since 2001. In 2012, Mike and his wife, Wendy, who honed her winemaking skills at Dominus, HdV Wines and Cain, launched their own label appropriately named 'Eclectic Wines'. After both spending years dedicated primarily to Napa's king of grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon), Mike and Wendy yearned to make underrepresented varietals (Viognier, Vermentino, Tempranillo and Charbono) more accessible to a wide audience who may be suffering from undiagnosed 'CCS or Chronic Cabernet Syndrome'! With a minimalist winemaking philosophy of 'less is more', the husband and wife team produce single vineyard, food friendly, approachable wines like this robust yet impeccably balanced Charbono that we were thrilled to procure for the wine club!

If you've never heard of Charbono, it's likely due to the fact that only 80 acres total are planted to the varietal in California and it is rarely seen outside of the state. We were incredibly lucky to snatch up the very last pallet of this super small production (120 cases total) wine which was love at first scent for us! Dark and brooding in tone, it exudes aromas of inky black fruit as in black currant, blackberry and boysenberry alongside some earthier elements like dried thyme, black licorice and leather. The six months spent in twice used French oak barrels lends softness to the otherwise slightly chewy tannins, yet it does not obscure the fresh acidity and lingering, juicy black fruit notes that flow through to the medium-bodied palate. The finish is long and peppered with more of that savory thyme and leather character, making this an ideal accompaniment for an herb-crusted rack of lamb or coffee-rubbed steak.

*Suggested Recipe: Coffee-Rubbed Steak*

Mixed and Red Selection

**\$20.00**

**\$17.00**

**Wine Club Member reorder price**



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### 2016 Marco Felluga Collio Bianco 'Just Molamatta', Collio DOC, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy

Marco Felluga grew up in a winemaking family whose mark on the industry can be traced back to the 1800s on the Istrian peninsula, where his grandfather, Marco Sr. pioneered the production of indigenous grape varieties like Malvasia and Refosco. In 1920, Marco Sr.'s son, Giovanni relocated the family business to Grado, near Collio in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region of Northeastern Italy. After studying oenology at the prestigious Consorzio Colli di Conegliano, Marco worked at his family's estate before establishing his eponymous winery, Marco Felluga in 1950 in Gradisca d'Isonzo. Today, Marco's son, Roberto runs the estate and oversees 250 acres of vineyards, most of which are family owned and farmed within the Collio DOC and planted primarily to white varieties including Friulano, Ribolla Gialla, Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon and Chardonnay. A small percentage of red varieties are also cultivated including Refosco, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. The unique 'ponca' soils in Collio, comprised of marl, sandstone and marine fossils, yield powerfully textured, concentrated wines while the region's nearby Adriatic Sea and Julian Alps provide a protective climate with high diurnal temperature shifts that are conducive to preserving acidity and finesse.

Marco Felluga has always personally cherished and championed the Pinot Bianco grape despite its humble stature (in relation to the more renowned Pinot Grigio), and this wine flaunts its inherently charming qualities. Comprised of 67% Pinot Bianco, 24% Pinot Grigio and 9% Friulano, this 'Just Molamatta' Collio Bianco is named in reference to the village of Molamatta in the province of Gorizia where the grapes grow. Fermented entirely in stainless steel tank before aging on the lees for six months and the bottle for one, it offers a fresh and lively character with a pleasantly unctuous texture on the palate. Aromas of quince, bosc pear, blanched almond and limestone greet you on the nose, introducing a fairly light and lithe palate that is lush and delicately creamy. Here, notes of poached pear, sweet meyer lemon and golden delicious apple emerge, balanced by a surge of cleansing acidity and an ever so slightly bitter almond skin flavor. The finish is long and lingering, revealing more of that beautifully supple texture and vivid minerality.

*Suggested Recipe: Sea Scallop Risotto*

Mixed and White Selection

**\$20.00**

**\$17.00**

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### 2016 Portelli Vittoria Frappato, Sicily, Italy

Alessandro Portelli, who works alongside his father, Salvatore, is of the fifth generation to tend to his family's land in Vittoria, in the southeastern corner of Sicily. Originally founded in 1863 by Basilio Portelli, the estate was one of the first growers in the Vittoria area to grow their own grapes, vinify their own wine and sell it in bottle. Today, the estate grows Frappato and Nero d'Avola (known locally as Calabrese) from certified organic vineyards and following traditional agricultural techniques in the vein of Biodynamic winemaking. Benefiting from the wealth of experience cultivated by their family over many years and adhering to their winemaking philosophies, Alessandro and Salvatore continue to harvest by hand, employ spontaneous fermentation and age wines exclusively in stainless steel tank in order to craft fresh, vibrant versions of their beloved native grapes. A fairly small and niche operation, the estate produces 2400 cases annually of 3 wines total: a Cerasuolo di Vittoria (a blend of Calabrese and Frappato), a Calabrese and this Frappato which we were stoked to procure for the wine club before it hastily sold out!

Believed to be a genetic cousin of Tuscany's preeminent Sangiovese grape, Frappato is Sicily's answer to a food-friendly, versatile and easily loveable red. Generally fermented and aged in stainless steel tank exclusively (as this version is), Frappato is often blended with the more robust Nero d'Avola grape in Sicily's sole DOCG, Cerasuolo di Vittoria. However, we love the clean and fresh versions of 100% Frappato like this 2016 Portelli Vittoria that showcases vibrant aromas of black cherry, plum, raspberry and violet on the nose. The light to medium-bodied palate is marked by a bright and slightly tangy acidity accompanied by vivid notes of red raspberry, bing cherry and juicy pluot. The slightly grippy tannins and lively acidity make this ideal for a variety of rich or tomato-laden foods such as pizza, porchetta or a slow-cooked ragu over pasta.

*Suggested Recipe: Spaghetti with Abruzzese Lamb Ragu*

Red Selection

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**2017 J. Rickards Viognier, Salem Ranch, Dry Creek Valley,  
Sonoma County, CA**

Jim Rickards grew up in San Francisco yet was always fascinated by the agrarian life and dreamt of being a farmer. In 1969, he purchased a cow, relocated to Petaluma and began leasing farmland throughout Sonoma and running cattle. Although he worked a full time job as an RN at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, he purchased a 60 acre ranch in Alexander Valley in 1976 and spent all of his spare time revitalizing the property. While skeptics told him there was no water on the ranch and its best use was a rock quarry, Jim located water sources and built two wells and two large ponds for irrigation before setting out to rejuvenate the property's original pre-Prohibition Zinfandel vineyard from 1908. He also began planting new Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon vines which were well suited for the rocky soil and weather patterns on his northern exposure hillsides. In 1991, when Eliza joined him, Jim expanded the property under vine to 45 acres by adding Petite Sirah, Merlot and Malbec vines. While Jim and Eliza started off making small-batch wines for personal consumption, friends who were happily benefiting from their hobby ultimately encouraged them to establish a winery. Thus, J Rickards launched in 2005, and while a majority of grapes are sold off to neighboring wineries such as Silver Oak and Passalacqua Winery, Jim and Eliza pick selected blocks for their own wines and source other grapes such as Barbera, Gewürztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat Blanc and Viognier from smaller, Sonoma County farms.

Although the motto at J Rickard's Winery is "Darn Fine Barn Wine", this 100% Viognier is far from rustic, showcasing grace and impeccable balance that is hard to find in this varietal on its own. Exotic in tone, aromas of orange blossom, lychee, jasmine and pineapple waft from the glass and carry through to an opulent, medium-bodied palate. Voluptuous and mouthcoating, the wine exhibits that subtle oily texture that is signature of Viognier yet does not come across as flabby thanks to the presence of a persistent and juicy acidity. Flavors on the palate are strikingly concentrated and while they mimic the wine's floral and tropical fragrance, there is also quite a lot of yellow peach and candied orange peel coming through in addition to baking spices like vanilla bean and nutmeg. While Viognier is too often over-oaked, the winemaker practiced restraint here in fermenting only half of the juice in neutral oak barrels, lending structure and creaminess without obscuring the generous flavors. Definitely one of the best domestic Viogniers we have come across recently (especially at this price point), we recommend pairing alongside a mild Thai chicken curry for extra enjoyment!

*Suggested Recipe: Curried Chicken Stew with Squash and Cashews*

White Selection

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