

French Bubbles: Available from our Holiday Marketplace

Our selection is made up of four Champagnes, four Crémants (made by the same process as Champagne but from different regions and sometimes different grapes), and four seriously fun bubbles that you may not be familiar with, but which you're gonna love.

1. Champagne. What can we say? IT'S CHAMPAGNE!
 - **Pierre Moncuit Grand Cru Cuvée Pierre Moncuit-Delos Reserve Brut Blanc de Blancs** (Grower Champagne.) A Grower Champagne is one where the entire process, including farming the grapes is carried out by a single producer, and Blanc de Blanc (white from white) means the wine is 100% Chardonnay. An intense, citrusy sparkler showing the bright acidity of vines grown on chalk. Robert Parker describes it as showing, "notes of chalk dust, white peaches, subtle honey, brioche, and yellow plums. Medium-bodied with gorgeous as well as persistent effervescence, and a dry fabulously pure, laser-like finish."
 - **Jacquesson Cuvée 743 Extra Brut Champagne NV.** 59% Pinot Noir and 41% Chardonnay, all from one vintage. Described by Antonio Galloni, "The natural radiance of 2015 comes through in the wine's ample, creamy feel. Apricot, spice, dried flowers, hazelnut and lightly honeyed notes are all beautifully laced together." 60% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir.
 - **Henri Dosnon Recolte Noire Blanc de Noir Champagne NV.** Blanc de Noir is a white Champagne made from red grapes. How? Keep the juice from contact with the pigmented skins as the grapes are pressed. This wine is 100% Pinot Noir grown on Kimmeridgian Marl (the stuff of the White Cliffs of Dover that is one of the best soils in Champagne for Pinot.) Elegant fruit, bright acidity, with a lovely background of fresh berries.
 - **Henri Dosnon Récolte Rose Champagne NV.** The base wine starts with a Blanc de Noir from Pinot Noir, and the lovely color and spice comes from the addition of Pinot Meunier before initiating the second fermentation. *Wine and Spirits* calls it "floral notes of strawberries, violets and wildflower honey—with some maturity coming through in scents of rose hips, dried fruit and black tea" and scored it at 93 points.
2. Crémants: When wines are made in the same method as champagne but from elsewhere in France, you must call the method Methode Traditionelle. The wines are known as crémants.
 - **Louise Chéreau Vices & Vertus Orgueil Méthode Traditionnelle Brut NV.** Wow! A traditional method sparkler from the Loire Valley made with

Muscadet (Melon de Bourgogne)! Just delicious, folks. Certifiably delicious with summer berries and goat cheese or pop it open and enjoy alongside crab cakes or grilled trout.

- **Francois Pinon 2017 Vouvray Brut.** A 100% Chenin Blanc crémant from the Loire Valley. Think of baked pear and apricot with a touch of honey. Only enough dosage to pop the fruit with lots and lots of persistent bubbles. Serve this lovely wine with meat and cheese platters (particularly good with goat cheese), with rich and creamy poultry and fish, or simply as an aperitif.
- **Stephane Tissot Crémant BBF NV.** 100% Chardonnay. The name BBF stand for blanc de blancs élevé en fut meaning it was aged in a Burgundy barrel. From *Bio Wine On-Line*, “Flavors of toasted brioche, bitter almond, tangy lemons and limes with a fine mousse. Guzzle daily for any occasion.”
- **Cave de Bissey Cremant de Bourgogne NV.** From the Côte Chalonnaise. An unusual blend of 60% Aligote with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Dry and crisp with tons of orchard fruit, citrus and lemon with hints of brioche on the finish. Lovely!

3. The really fun stuff

- **Domaine Rosier Blanquette de Limoux Jean Philippe.** The oldest documented sparkling wine in the world. The monks of the Abbey at Saint Hillaire made sparkling wines in the 1500s – 150 years before the advent of Champagne. Made from Mauzac, a grape local to the region, with up to 10% Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay, this lovely sparkler is pale gold in the glass with intense aromas of crisp apple, ripe pear and white flowers.
- **La Dentelle Bugey Cerdon Sparkling Rosé.** From the foothills of the French Alps comes a sparkling rose made from 80% 100 year old Plusard vines and 20% Gamay made by a man who spent 41 years as a Sommelier in a 3 star Michelin restaurant. Filled with red fruit and rose petals, it will beautifully complement your holiday table. You have to try this wine!
- **Francois Pinon 2019 Petillant Natural Rosé.** 50% Cot (Malbec) and 50% Grolleau from the Loire Valley. “PetNat” (Petillant Natural) is all the rage in wine circles these days. You’ve heard of it - do you know what it is? Here is the story: The grapes are direct pressed. Then the juice partially ferments in stainless steel or barrel. It is then bottled and capped. The fermentation continues inside of the bottle, and the trapped CO2 creates the wine's natural effervescence – so single fermentation and

lightly sparkling, as opposed to Champagne or Crémant which undergoes two fermentations: one in tank or barrel, and one in the bottle which results in a lot more pressure and more bubbles. Look for tons of red berry on the nose, and tart and creamy raspberry and strawberry on the palate.

- **Julien Pineau Pet Nat Bocca di Rosa 2015.** Another PetNat, but this one is made from (yes) Cabernet Sauvignon! It's refreshing, it's savory, it's juicy, full of red fruit and lightly sparkling. Join the PetNat craze and enjoy this wine!

French Bubbles: A case of 12 bottles is yours for \$385* per case. Average retail on these wines is \$448**w

**Based on average retail prices from WineSearcher.com

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Our Instant Cellar Mixed Case* is made up of four wines in each of three categories:

1. Four everyday wines - easy to drink sippers for a simple dinner, an evening with a good book, or just something delicious to slurp while preparing dinner.
 - **Domitia Picpoul de Pinet 2019** from Languedoc. The name means "Lip Stinger" in Occitan: with white flower, melon and lemon zest on the nose and mouthwatering citrus and pear on the palate. Grown in sight of the oyster beds of the Bassin de Thau, this is the perfect wine to accompany shellfish, or to pique the palate while cooking.
 - **Domain Durand Saint Peray 2018.** Marsanne and Rousanne from the northern Rhone Valley. Beautiful gold in the glass, aromas of ripe apricots and stone fruit, citrus and orange peel on the palate, and a long, elegant finish.
 - **Chateau Pesquie Terrasses Rouge** from the Ventoux, in the southern Rhone. Everything you love in Rhone reds: gorgeous ruby color, an intense nose, rich deep red fruit, and a velvet finish.

Visit the Alliance Française de Portland Holiday Marketplace at <https://www.afportland.org/portland-featured-french-events/soiree-gala/merry-bright-holiday-market-december-5-15>

- **Combel-la-Serre Cahors "Pur Fruit du Causse" 2018.** This is the home of Malbec, known for centuries as "The Black Wine of Cahors." Aromas of blackberry liqueur, violets and citrus, with blackberry and raspberry on the palate. Light on alcohol (only 12.5%), this is a wine you can sip and savor.
2. Wine for that dinner when you made something really delicious.
- **2018 Thomas Labaille Sancerre "Les Monts Damnes."** The Damned Mountain is one of the top vineyards in Sancerre, named because the slope is so steep the vigneron must work the vines on hands and knees, but its clay/limestone soil produces some of the best Sauvignon in the world. Oysters? Absolutely. Salad with baked goat cheese from Chavignol? A match made in heaven. White meats or fish with fresh green herbs? Perfection.
 - **Domaine Marcel Couturier Macon-Loché Les Longues Terres 2017** White Burgundy from the Mâcon is rich, round, and delicious. Known for Hawthorn flower and ripe orchard fruit on the nose and a lovely minerality on the palate, this is Chardonnay that presses all of my buttons. Enjoy it with that perfectly roasted chicken, pasta in a creamy sauce, or seared scallops.
 - **Pavillon de Chavannes Côte de Brouilly Cuvée des Ambassades 2017.** The best Beaujolais Crus are among the most food friendly red wines in the world. Sadly, due to the quantity of bad Beaujolais Nouveau on the market, the top wines of the northern vineyards often don't get the respect they deserve. This wine is hard to resist: a nose full of red fruits, refreshing acidity, lots of concentration, silky tannins, and a delicious lingering finish.
 - **Peira Les Obriers de la Peira 2012.** Cinsault and Carignan from the Terrasses du Larzac in Languedoc. This is one of those wines I am happy to hold, and just sniff. It is gorgeously floral: violets, lilacs, and baking spices overlay blackberry fruit that keeps evolving in the glass. Try it with a Moroccan tagine, a lamb curry, or a savory stew. You're gonna love it.
3. **Wine for that Special Occasion.** Is it a birthday? An anniversary? Or the first time you feel safe having friends over to dinner once again!
- **Domaine du Closel 2017 Clos du Papillon** (Chenin Blanc, Savennières, Loire Valley). I was leading a wine tour of the Loire in the spring of 2017 when a series of frosts devastated the vines of Savennières. Little fruit survived, but what did ripen was extraordinary. Concentrated and rich, yet delicate, with beautiful lemon zest, almond,

and orchard fruit. Try this wine with pan fried trout, with any white meat in a creamy sauce, or with mushrooms or a dish with truffles.

- **Thomas Pico Domaine Pattes Loup Butteaux Chablis 2016.** Butteaux is the southernmost of three Premier Cru climats that make up the wider Chablis Montmains Premier Cru. From *Vinous*, "The 2016 Chablis Butteaux 1er Cru is a very pretty, airy wine that remains light on its feet with soft contours. White flowers, mint, lime and jasmine come together in an exotic perfume. The 2016 has tremendous flavor intensity while remaining gracious and elegant." Perfect with oysters and other shellfish, smoked fish, foie gras, goat cheese, (and for me, anything baked with gruyère.)
- **Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition 2017.** If I could only drink wine from one region for the rest of my life, it would be the southern Rhone valley, and my favorite of the Southern Rhone's is Châteauneuf-du-Pape. This is a big wine: full bodied yet velvety on the palate. Tons of red fruit, cedar and garrigue. You can smell the rocks and wild herbs. Delicious now, and will age for at least another decade if you can keep yourself from opening all you have. Drink it with roast lamb, roasted or grilled beef, or if you are like me, settle down in front of the fire with a good friend and enjoy how the wine evolves in the glass.
- **Les Tourelles de Longueville Pauillac 2014.** (Bordeaux) The second wine of the famous Château Pichon-Longueville Baron, one of Bordeaux's most famous estates. Second wines are made from younger vines and blended for earlier drinking (i.e., a greater proportion of Merlot in the final blend) than the Grand Vin. The 2014 is made of 65% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot. Like the Châteauneuf, this wine can be enjoyed now, and will continue to evolve. Enjoy it with best quality red meat, simply prepared, to let this wonderful wine shine.

Instant Cellar: A case of 12, all delicious, all French, and all at a special price for Alliance members and friends. Average retail for these wines: \$409**. Your price, \$360*. Available in 1, 2, or 3 case lots. (After all, if you love the wine, you're going to want more than one bottle!)

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