

# August Wine Club Selections

## *R & R Club*

### **2009 Princepessa Gavia Gavi**

In 1979, John and Harry Mariani, owners of the U.S. importer Banfi Importers, acquired a mid-18th century Piedmont winery, known as Bruzzone, revitalized it and renamed the facility Vigne Regali. Just a few kilometers from Strevi lies the Princepessa Gavi Gavi estate established by the Mariani family around the same time as Vigne Regali. This single vineyard is dedicated exclusively to the cultivation of the Cortese di Gavi grape, the sole white grape used to make the prized still wine Princepessa Gavi.

This wine is named for the Princess Gavia, daughter of Clodimor, king of the Franks, who legend tells us married against her father's wishes. After the requisite troubles and trials, she and her father are reconciled, and he bequeaths the couple the town they had chosen to live in. In her honor the King names both the town, and the charming wine that figured in the tale, Gavi.

Made from the Cortese di Gavi grape, the Princepessa captures the floral aromas of a spring day, with touches of clover, rose petal, currant and melon. It is beautifully crisp and refreshing on the palate, centered on green apple, citrus and pineapple. The perfect choice on a hot summer day, this is a very versatile wine that marries well with fish, veal, pork and chicken. It goes great with simple pastas and is perfect with thin crust Neopolitan style pizzas. With its delicate flavors it also makes a good match for sushi or other Japanese cuisine.

### **2008 Montes Alpha Syrah**

History reveals that in 1880, Doña Paula Jaraquemada, a brave Chilean patriot, hid 120 Chilean soldiers on her 175 acre estate during that country's revolutionary war. Today, Viña Doña Paula is named in her honor. In 1997, the Claro Group from Chile (owners of Santa Rita and Los Vascos, among others) decided to expand its wine business into Argentina to continue the group's tradition of producing world-class wines. Their first investment was to acquire the Ugarteche Estate. The property encompassed some 345 acres of old Malbec and Chardonnay vines. To expand their holdings, they continued to acquire land and add additional plantings. These sustainably managed vineyards grow in a challenging climate with a breathtaking landscape located at more than 3,300 ft. above sea level where they enjoy the constant breeze from the Andes Mountains.

One of the six noble grapes of Bordeaux, Malbec is known for its robust tannins. It is not an easy grape to grow, susceptible to both frost and downy mildew. As a result it has declined in popularity in its native France. But in Argentina it has found its true home. With smaller berries in tighter clusters, Argentine Malbec appears to be a unique clone, and it produces wines of deep color with intense fruit and a velvety texture. This 2009 estate wine offers ripe plum and black cherry fruit flavors with nice touches of licorice and herb. A great choice for late summer barbecues, pair it with grilled meats, poultry or portabella mushrooms.

## *Passport Club*

### **2009 Newton Chardonnay**

An early pioneer of Spring Mountain and one of the first Napa Valley wineries to craft unfiltered and naturally fermented wines, Newton Vineyard has become one of the most inspiring and fascinating wine estates in the world. The single square mile of hillside first owned by the Newtons in 1977 is an impressive site, with expansive vistas of Napa Valley and beyond. The dominant feature of this remarkable property appears at the vineyard's highest point where a single pine tree crowns the ridge line. This lone pine, over 100 feet tall and visible from many points in Napa Valley, is called Pino Solo. It appears as the icon on the label of Newton Vineyard wines, a mark designating singular wines created from a singular passion.

Newton Vineyard Red Label wines offer lively character and harmonious balance derived from a meticulous approach to winemaking. Sourced from Newton's estate vineyards and other Napa and Sonoma County vineyards these wines are made to showcase the purity of fruit. This 2009 Chardonnay offers enticing and delicate aromas of stone fruit, mango and vanilla spice are intertwined with baked apple and caramel notes. The aromas carry through to the palate where they are accented by ripe melon, fig and fresh pineapple flavors. The velvety mouth-feel of this well-balanced Chardonnay persists throughout the lingering and refreshing citrus finish. This is a very food friendly style of Chardonnay. Pair with grilled fish (halibut or sea bass would make great choices)

### **2008 Montes Alpha Syrah**

Viña Montes started their vineyard operations in 1987, the partnership of two men, Aurelio Montes and Douglas Murray, who already had long standing experience in the Chilean wine industry. Previously, for the most part, that country's wine market had been producing low-quality bulk wine for both export and distribution to local supermarkets. Their vision, along with that of Alfredo Vidaurre and Pedro Grand who joined the team in 1988, was to produce world class wine in Chile. They achieved this with their Alpha line of wines, and Montes was named "Winemaker of the Year" by the Wine Spectator in both 2002 and 2006.

Montes lead the way venturing into Chile's Apalta Valley seeking out mountain locations for their vineyards. They pioneered the introduction of Syrah there. The slopes of Apalta in Colchagua (in the Central Valley) enclose a half-moon shaped area with a unique micro-climate, defined by the mountains and one of Chile's widest rivers, the Tinguiririca. That terroir, along with extremely low yields of just over two tons per acre, results in grapes of admirable intensity.

This 2008 Alpha Syrah is made in an elegantly structured, fruit forward style. The nose is filled with dark berry fruit backed by touches of smoke and spice. The juicy plum, creamy cherry and fig flavors are plush and silky, lingering nicely on the finish. It's a full bodied wine that would go great with everything from pizza to pasta, or from hamburgers to tenderloin.