



The Wine and Cheese Cask

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December 16, 2025 – January 14, 2026

Wines of the Year

Very Classy Chardonnay

2022 Viré-Clessé (Domaine de Roally)

Regular Price \$37.99 – Sale Price \$29.99 NET

In 1999 the French wine authority combined the Mâconnais villages of Viré and Clessé to create a super Mâcon. This came as a late-in-work-life reward for Henri Goyard, the proprietor of Domaine de Roally. He retired soon after and sold his estate to the Thevenet family of Domaine de la Bongran, assuring that quality would be maintained. The 2022 Roally is a terrific golden-colored Chardonnay with superb ripe fruit and a long, layered, dry finish.

Brunello

2019 Brunello di Montalcino ‘Pianrosso’ (Ciacci Piccolomini d’Aragona)

Regular Price \$89.99 – Sale Price \$71.99 NET

In the 1970’s Montalcino was the poorest hill town in Tuscany. Then came the Brunello boom. Today, wines from Montalcino are among the most coveted, and vintages like 2019 sell out quickly. We luckily got our hands on several cases of Ciacci’s special Pianrosso. This gigantic wine will age effortlessly for another 5 years, gaining elegance along the way.

Light On Its Feet Barolo

2021 Barolo (Alberto Ballarin)

Regular Price \$37.99 – Sale Price \$29.99 NET

Nebbiolo from Piedmont has become a powerful force. There was (and always will be) tannin in Nebbiolo, but producers now deliver wine with polished fruit and ripe tannins. This 2021 Ballarin is a graceful Barolo that is charged with dark berry fruit and a silky finish.

Eternal Unico

2014 Ribera del Duero ‘Unico’ (Vega Sicilia)

Regular Price \$750.00 – Sale Price \$500.00 NET

Vega Sicilia’s Unico has long been hailed as Spain’s finest red wine. The incredible 2014 harvest keeps this claim afloat. Aged ten years in a combination of casks and bottle. While suitable for drinking now, it will easily age another 50 years.

Pure 1er Cru Chablis

2023 Chablis Premier Cru ‘Montmain’ (Louis Michel & Fils)

Regular Price \$49.99 – Sale Price \$39.99 NET

Louis Michel’s always-unoaked Chablis are some of the purest expressions of Chardonnay that we know. The 2023 Montmain is beautiful from the start, with crisp orchard fruit and pronounced mineral dryness.

A Big Deal

2016 Rioja Reserva Conde Valdemar (Bodegas Valdemar)

Regular Price \$44.99 per 1.5L – Sale Price \$34.99 NET per 1.5L

Who doesn’t love a magnum? Nothing brings smiles to a table quicker than a humongous bottle. When we tasted this Rioja Reserva in magnum, we couldn’t resist its charm. We knew that this wine in this format would be perfect for dinner parties at this time of year. Its fresh and lush fruit along with well-integrated oak, tannins, and spice provide wide and immediate appeal, especially to any Cabernet Sauvignon lover in your group. Considering that this wine will soon be a decade old, this is an amazing price for the flagship wine of a storied bodega.

From the Library

2019 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir ‘Shea Vineyard’ (St. Innocent)

Regular Price \$74.99 – Sale Price \$59.99 NET

St. Innocent has long been one of our favorite Oregon producers. Their single-vineyard offerings are always excellent. This year we hoarded a few cases of their library release 2019 Shea Vineyard. This elegant Pinot Noir will be fabulous with a roast duck or venison.

All Organic, All Napa Cab

2021 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville Winery)

Regular Price \$54.99 – Sale Price \$43.99 NET

This family winery delivers a gorgeous Napa Valley Cabernet without being excessively oaky or excessively priced. Ripe, smooth, and ready to drink with a roast tenderloin of beef.

Bargain Champagne

Brut Tradition (Girost-Moussy)

Regular Price \$37.99 – Sale Price \$29.99 NET

The Girosts of the village of Congy are new to the market and have made a splash with their delicious and affordable bone-dry Champagne. The Brut Tradition will be a delight with oysters and smoked fish.

Essencia

2009 Tokaji Essencia (Royal Tokaji Wine Company)

Regular Price \$1000.00 per 375ml – Sale Price \$750.00 NET

If ever a wine truly deserved the name legendary, it is Tokaji Essencia, made only in exceptional years from the purest juice that flows from barely pressed Tokaji grapes. The 2009 vintage produced 1,386 half bottles. It comes in a beautiful presentation box with a crystal spoon. Monarchs kept this wine at their bedside believing it could revive them if needed.

Prince Olivier

2020 Pessac-Léognan 'Le Dauphin d'Olivier'
(Château Olivier)

Sale Price \$34.99 – \$356.90 case of twelve



Allow this dark, rich Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon blend to breathe for at least a half hour and you'll be rewarded with classic graphite aromas that evoke the gravelly soils of its home in Bordeaux. It will only get better over the next hour as its texture silken, its blackberry fruit deepens, and

a wisp of smoke quietly emerges. Its umami notes reminiscent of soy sauce would be beautifully echoed by a London broil. Then, enjoy the last of the bottle (watch out for sediment) with a creamy slab of Roquefort on crusty bread.



Bargain Rhône

2023 Côtes du Rhône
(Domaine de la Solitude)
Sale Price \$13.99 – \$142.70
case of twelve

Domaine de la Solitude, our best bargain Côtes du Rhône, is on sale for the holidays.

The 2023 is a mouth-filling

blend of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre.

Singular Sangiovese

2022 Chianti Classico 'Lamole' (I Fabbri di Susanna Grassi)
Sale Price \$27.99 – \$285.50 case of twelve

With each vintage we gain more respect for Susanna Grassi's restoration of the Lamole vineyard in Greve. This is a hallowed site for Sangiovese in Chianti Classico. When we heard that the 2022 vintage had dwindled down to a dozen cases we bought them all. This is gorgeous Sangiovese.



Erath Pinot Noir

2022 Oregon Pinot Noir (Erath)
Sale Price \$17.99 – \$183.50 case of twelve



While Erath may be one of the largest producers of Pinot Noir, they can be counted on for quality and value. Their 2022 is a juicy, elegant red with lovely berry fruit and good structure. A nice match for a big group and a holiday turkey.

The Fizz

Méthode Traditionnelle Brut (Charles Bove)
Sale Price \$17.99 – \$194.30 case of twelve

Our Champagne Method alternative bubbly for this holiday season is from Charles Bove. Hailing from the Loire Valley, this fizz is mostly Chenin Blanc, which gives a nice dry, wooly base to the wine. There is also a dollop of Chardonnay for a little extra orchard fruit. Bubbles make everything better.

Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 'Bosco di Gica' (Adami)

Sale Price \$39.99 per 1.5L – \$143.97 case of four



Got a crowd of eight coming over? Start it off with a magnum of Adami's Bosco di Gica Prosecco Superiore. This light and lively sparkler will be lovely with blinis and smoked salmon.

Premier Cru Extra Brut Champagne 'Enfant de la Montagne' (Bertrand-Delespierre)

Sale Price \$49.99 – \$539.89 case of twelve

We're happy to announce that the Enfant has come down from the Montagne in time for the New Year. This disgorgement from March of 2025 is serious bubbly. By using a high percentage of older reserve wines they create a low-dosage, nicely weighted Extra Brut Champagne. This has a yeasty aroma along with subtle mushroom flavors. We think of this as a mealtime Champagne along with shellfish.



Viognier

2024 Principauté d'Orange Viognier (Domaine de la Janasse)
Sale Price \$29.99 – \$305.90 case of twelve

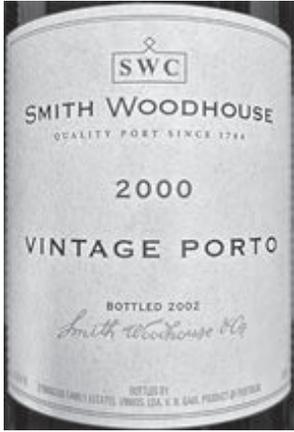
(Note: this may arrive a few days after we post this newsletter.) The last couple of vintages of this sold out quickly, so you may need to act fast. The folks at Janasse sourced their Viognier vines from Château Grillet, a tiny northern Rhône property that is its own appellation. This is so packed with floral aromas and exotic fruit that the balancing acidity is doing heroic work to keep everything in focus. This is a proven winner with spicy Thai food.

 **Happy Holidays &**
A Wonderful New Year 

Millenium Porto

2000 Vintage Porto (Smith Woodhouse)

Sale Price \$79.99 – \$431.95 case of six



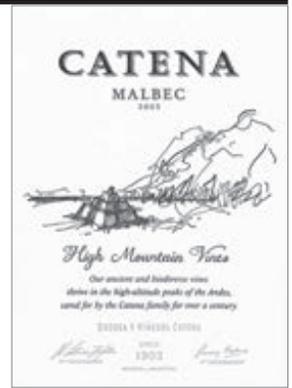
With the 2000 Port vintage producers got what they wanted in quality, just not in quantity. But with the triple naught in the year they could easily have sold much more than nature gave them. Recently a wholesaler found some dusty cases in the warehouse and luckily our offer was accepted. At 25 years old this Port can be called mature, fully formed, and absolutely ready to drink. Just be careful with the cork.

High Mountain Malbec

2023 Malbec (Catena)

Sale Price \$23.99 – \$244.70 case of twelve

The Catena winery is considered by many to be the best winery in Argentina. They achieve this by producing stunning single-vineyard Malbec and Chardonnay grown at high altitude. But they also produce terrific wines from these vineyards for their entry-level wines. Last month's Chardonnay was one such excellent bottle. This month we learned of an upcoming price increase on their reliably excellent Malbec and bought extra to keep the price down. The 2023 is a smooth, darkly fruited red that will match well with a holiday rib roast.



Specialty Foods

Serious Cheeses for Serious People, Part 3

We recognize the whiplash in going from last month's values to this month's collection of admittedly very expensive cheeses. But there is no better time of year to reflect on and appreciate the wonderful heights of gustatory delight that expert makers and affineurs can achieve from the starting point of high-quality

yet humble milk. Plus, we like to celebrate the holidays (and mark the end of a very long year) with a little indulgence and we don't think we're alone in that. These four top-of-the-line cheeses from France and Switzerland represent some of the best in the world and are our absolute favorite imported cheeses at the moment.

Sbrinz AOP (Gourmino) — \$42 per lb

Often considered Switzerland's answer to Parmigiano, Sbrinz has its own long and storied history, dating back to at least the 16th century. Coming from only 42 dairies in central Switzerland, it is still made by hand in copper vats and with raw milk. The large wheels require a minimum of 18 months of aging before consumption, but at least 24 months is ideal for it to develop its very firm texture and nutty, spicy flavors. Makes an excellent grating cheese for pastas, or just enjoyed in chunks (to better appreciate its texture) along with fruit and red wine for an after-dinner treat.

Comté 36 month AOC (Rodolphe Le Meunier) — \$42 per lb

France's most famous alpine cheese is commonly sold as a young version aged between 6 months and a year. Two years of aging is a treat, bringing out a savory side to match the creaminess and fruitiness. But after three years of aging, Comté develops incredible layers of intensity and complexity not found in the younger versions. Dense and intense, nutty and fudgy, and with the satisfying crunch and texture of tyrosine crystals.



Beaufort 2 year Alpage AOC (Rodolphe Le Meunier) — \$48 per lb

Renowned French affineur Rodolphe Le Meunier brings us this benchmark example of the most noble of alpine cheeses. Made exclusively with raw, summer milk from cows that graze above 1,500 meters, Rodolphe ages this version for two years to bring out its intensity and complexity. This bold cheese begins with a deep, brothy flavor and moves into a briny finish.

Vacherin Mont d'Or/Vallée de la Joie (Gourmino) — \$54 per piece (approx. 1 lb)

Though Switzerland is better known for Raclette and Fondue, those who know know that the real winter treat is Vacherin Mont d'Or. This Swiss specialty is produced only during the fall and winter when the cows transition to a diet of hay, which increases the fat content of the milk and makes the resulting cheese especially rich and custardy. The spruce band wrapped around the small wheel imparts a hint of woodsiness. We can't get the raw-milk AOP version, but this thermized (a gentle process of heat-treating the milk which preserves more of the flavors of raw milk than pasteurization) version hardly feels like settling. Though you can enjoy it at room temperature, we highly recommend wrapping it in foil and baking it in the oven until warm, and then scooping out the gooey insides with a spoon.

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Wines of the Month – December 16, 2025 through January 14, 2026

2023 Mâcon-Villages ‘La Côte Blanche’ (Cave de Lugny)

Sale Price \$11.99 – \$129.49 case of twelve

The Cave de Lugny comes through again with their great value unoaked Mâcon-Villages. An all-purpose and crowd-pleasing white.

2024 Rueda (Marqués de Cáceres)

Sale Price \$9.99 – \$107.89 case of twelve

The Verdejo grape stars here in this crisp and dry white from Rueda in Northern Spain. Fine with seafood.

2024 Pays d’Oc Pinot Noir (Moulin de Gassac)

Sale Price \$10.99 – \$118.69 case of twelve

Moulin de Gassac’s 2024 Pinot Noir is smooth and fruity. Great for roasted salmon.

2023 Castillon-Côtes de Bordeaux (Château Lartigue)

Sale Price \$10.99 – \$118.69 case of twelve

Lartigue overachieves again with this hearty and dry Merlot-based Bordeaux. Excellent with lamb stew and strong cheese.

