

Wellington Red Case

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ACTING WINE CLUB MANAGER




This month's case offers a balance of lighter and richer styles, classics and something a little more unusual. Two top-class Clarets lead the way, with one each from the Left and Right Banks, which cry out for a comparative tasting over a leisurely lunch or dinner. It would also be interesting to try the two Pinot Noirs in this month's case – a Burgundy from a lesser-known village and a Californian example – alongside each other. Graci's Etna Rosso should, I hope, be a new discovery for most of you, while Mullineux's outstanding Syrah is further proof of the exciting wines coming out of South Africa today. Perfect fodder for a braai, if the weather's warm enough.

2016 ETNA ROSSO, GRACI



Mount Etna, famous for its black lava soils and elegant red wines made from the Nerello Mascalese and Cappuccio grapes, has been undergoing a revival over the last two decades. Alberto Graci has been making wine at Passopisciaro, on the northern slope of the volcano since 2004. He prefers to work as naturally as possible.

The Graci Etna Rosso is made of 100% Nerello Mascalese, coming from 15-year-old vines located at 600 to 700 metres above sea-level on the north-eastern slopes of Etna. The fruit undergoes a 20-day maceration on its skins, and is then matured in a mixture of cement tanks and *botti grandi* for 18 months. The resulting wine is elegant with a succulent nose of wild cherry, eucalyptus and blood orange. It is fresh yet enticing, with finely woven tannins and a smoky edge. Drink now to 2024.

Food matches	Aubergine caponata, sheep and cows' milk cheeses, meatballs or oily fish
Price	£24.50 per bottle
How to serve	Serve at cool room temperature, 16 to 18°C
Region	Sicily, Italy
Grape variety	Nerello Mascalese
Product code	V9305B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	Volcanic soils rich in fossils, minerals and iron
Buyer	Matt Smith

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

YOUNG RED BURGUNDY OR GERMAN REDS

2015 PERNAND-VERGELESSES ROUGE, DOMAINE ROLLIN



Domaine Rollin has been passed from father to son for the last four generations and is now managed by Simon Rollin. Their philosophy is to make fresh, clean wines while respecting nature. One of the best estates of Pernand-Vergelesses, Domaine Rollin is renowned for producing honest wines.

Medium ruby in colour, this wine positively glows with energy. The nose offers plenty of spice and rich fruit courtesy of the warm 2015 vintage, while the palate is juicy and classically Pinot Noir in feel; with lots of red berry fruit, silky tannins and refreshing acidity. Drink now to 2024.

Food matches	Lightly spiced dishes or grilled meats
Price	£25.95 per bottle
How to serve	Serve at cellar temperature (16°C)
Region	Burgundy, France
Grape variety	Pinot Noir
Product code	L3371B
Style	Dry, oaked, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	Clay-limestone soil in a cool valley behind the hill of Corton
Buyer	Adam Bruntlett

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

CHOREY- OR SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE

2015 MULLINEUX, SYRAH



Mullineux was established by husband and wife winemakers Chris and Andrea Mullineux. Since 2007, their ambition has been to produce wines that are a true expression of the Swartland. They work closely with a select group of growers who follow sustainable, reasoned farming practices.

This concentrated Syrah has notes of orange peel, spice and black fruit, interlaced with florals that are reminiscent of violets. The palate is elegant and restrained with a silky texture balanced by a fresh, natural acidity. The finish is long with supple tannins. Drink now to 2022.

Food matches	Roasted red meat or slow-cooked pork
Price	£27.25 per bottle
How to serve	Serve at cellar temperature (16 to 18°C); will benefit from decanting
Region	Swartland, South Africa
Grape variety	Syrah
Product code	Y7759B
Style	Dry, full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Decomposed granite and sandstone
Buyer	Katherine Dart MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like: CROZES-HERMITAGE

2014 CH. LAROQUE, ST EMILION



Ch. Laroque is a large St Emilion estate famous for its stunning 18th century chateau, as well as the quality of its wines. It is owned by the Beaumartin family and was granted Grand Cru Classé status in 1996. Its 61 hectares of vineyards (27 of which are used for the Grand Vin) are situated in the commune of St Christophe des Bardes and it produces nearly 25,000 cases a year.

From the cool, classic 2014 vintage, this Claret is fresh and balanced. The blend is Merlot-based and the wine is aged in French oak barrels for 12 months, giving a nice aroma of spice and wood smoke. The palate is fleshy with a hint of plum, the tannins fine and firm, leading to a generous finish. Drink now to 2029.

Food matches	Roast lamb or venison
Price	£33.00 per bottle
How to serve	Decant for 30 minutes and serve at room temperature
Region	Bordeaux, France
Grape variety	Merlot 87%, Cabernet Sauvignon 11%, Cabernet Franc 2%
Product code	V7395B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	Limestone and clay
Buyer	Oliver Barton

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:
OTHER GOOD ST EMILION OR TOP POMEROL

2014 JOSEPH SWAN, CUVÉE DE TROIS PINOT NOIR, RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY



Winemaker and owner Rod Berglund (also known as “The Rodfather” to friends) was a protégée of Joseph Swan and has been making the wines here since the late 1970s. Based in the Russian River Valley in California, Rod continues to make restrained wine in the style of Burgundy.

Light ruby in colour with some paling of the rim, this has pure and lifted red berry fruit aromas with a restraint and herbaceous note that is more commonly associated with Burgundian Pinot. The texture is silky, and the tannins fine-grained, with a supple and juicy coating. There is a spicy character that flows through the wine, which continues on the finish with a jasmine tea note. Drink now to 2028.

Food matches	Beef enchiladas, pork cheeks, shepherd's pie or moussaka
Price	£30.00 per bottle
How to serve	Decant half an hour before drinking
Region	California, USA
Grape variety	Pinot Noir
Product code	V5945B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	A mix of calcareous mudstone, sand, gravel and clay
Buyer	Fiona Hayes

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like: OTHER CALIFORNIAN PINOT NOIR

2014 CH. HAUT-BATAILLEY, PAUILLAC



Located in the very south of the Pauillac appellation, this property shares a similar climate to that enjoyed by the Médoc: maritime, with the Gironde estuary and the Bay of Biscay combining to act as a climate regulator, while the coastal pine forests shelter the vines from the westerly and north-westerly winds.

This delightfully rewarding wine comes from a classic vintage. Cassis and cherry mix gracefully with smoke, cedar and spice. The tannins are fine-grained but offer a little grip, while the palate is fresh with a smooth, lingering finish. Drink now to 2028.

Food matches	Roast beef with all the trimmings
Price	£33.80 per bottle
How to serve	Decant for half an hour and serve at room temperature
Region	Bordeaux, France
Grape variety	Cabernet Sauvignon 61%, Merlot 36%, Petit Verdot 3%
Product code	Y8284B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	Gravel and limestone
Buyer	Oliver Barton

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:
LEFT BANK BORDEAUX