

the Culture Club!

DECEMBER 2021

Baller Club ~ Special Club Edition

"In Champagne, there are around 19,000 growers that cultivate vines. Most sell their grapes to large houses like Taittinger, Moët & Chandon and Veuve Clicquot. Just 5,000 produce wines at their estates. Their bottles are sometimes called "grower wines" or "farmer fizz," a type of Champagne praised for its ability to reflect the characteristics of a given vintage. By contrast, many house-style Champagnes are blended from different plots to ensure consistent taste.

But how does one judge the best of the best grower Champagnes? There are, after all, thousands from which to choose, and they are less well known. That's where the Special Club designation comes in.

What is Special Club Champagne?

Special Club Champagne is the highest tier of classification that grower Champagnes can achieve. The official name is Club de Trésors, or Club of Treasures. It was established in 1971 under the name Club de Viticulteurs Champenois, to assess quality among certain growers in Champagne.

There were 12 founding members, three of which currently remain: Pierre Gimonnet, Gaston Chiquet and Paul Bara. New members come and go every year. As of 2021, there are 28 members.

The process to become a Special Club Champagne is practically as laborious as the process of making Champagne. The wines must pass two rigorous stages of selection. Before that happens, members gather each February to taste each other's still wines from the previous vintage. The members vote on whether to declare a vintage year, which would mean that the vintage was outstanding, and worthy enough of a vintage-dated Champagne. The vote must be unanimous.

If a vintage year is declared, the process for Special Club selection begins. The selection committee includes wine professionals and enologists, including a Club-employed enologist that presides over the blind tastings."

Special Club Champagne by the numbers

2000: Bottles of Special Club Champagne produced

1971: The year the Club de Trésors was established

167: Around the number of cases of Special Club Champagne produced by members

28: Member-producers that make up the Club de Trésors

7: Producers who produce blanc de blancs Special Club bottling

4: Producers helmed solely by women (as of 2021)

4: Members who make a rosé Special Club

3: Remaining members of the original 12 Special Club producers

2: Number of producers who produce Meunier-only Special Club bottlings

1: Producer who makes a 100% Pinot Noir-based Special Club bottling

~ Wine Enthusiast

2015 Mousse et Fils Special Club Meunier

100% Pinot Meunier

95 points Wine Advocate: "Disgorged in October 2019 with one gram per liter dosage, Moussé's 2015 Extra-Brut Special Club Lieu-Dit Les Fortes Terres unwinds in the glass with notions of pear, honeycomb, mirabelle and red apple. Full-bodied, elegantly muscular and enveloping, with racy acids, a beautifully refined pinpoint mousse and a long, precise finish, this concentrated but impressively vibrant, incisive wine has turned out very beautifully. Tightly coiled, this is serious but not at all austere and will reward at least a few years' patience." - William Kelley, March 2021

Reg. \$110 Club \$93.50

2014 Pierre Gimonet Special Club Brut Grand Terroirs de Chardonnay

100% Chardonnay

94+ Wine Advocate: "Disgorged in May 2019 with four grams per liter dosage, Gimonet's 2014 Brut Special Club Grands Terroirs de Chardonnay has turned out beautifully, wafting from the glass with aromas of citrus oil, crisp orchard fruit, white flowers and fresh yogurt that are still quite youthfully reserved. Medium to full-bodied, layered and concentrated, with racy acids and an elegant pinpoint mousse, it's seamless and complete. Still tightly wound after its recent disgorgement, it will reward patience." - William Kelley, March 2021

Reg. \$110 Club \$93.50

2013 Jose Michel Special Club 50% Chardonnay and 50% Pinot Meunier

From Michel's oldest vines (all older than 70 years). The wine is aged 6yrs on lees with dosage of 7g/l. Disgorged on demand. Multiple layers of mineral deliciousness that are tightly coiled and ready to reward time in the glass or time in the cellar. Jose Michel was one of the 12 founding members of the Club Tresors de Champagne (Special Club) back in 1971. All of the grapes are farmed with certified (HVE) sustainable practices.

Reg. \$85 Club \$72.25

Breakfast Club

Includes the three P.O.P. (Yeah You Know Me) below plus:

Pizzolato Paloma Rosé Secco, Veneto, Italy 95% Glera, 5% Raboso

The Pizzolato family has been working in agriculture for more than five generations living in harmony with nature and the environment. The estate covers 58 hectares and it collaborates with neighboring producers contributing an additional 48 hectares of organically grown grapes. The estate is located in the rich and flourishing countryside in the north of Treviso and the vineyards are situated on the plains and hillsides in this DOC area.

Aromas and flavors of almonds, lemon chiffon, ripe apples, and summer peach with a silky, vibrant, fruity light body and a polished, medium-length finish. A friendly sparkler with a sophisticated side; appropriate for celebrations of all sizes. Pairs with Charcuterie & sautéed vegetables, grilled fish, desserts.

Sustainability Certified Organic, Vegan, Natural Fermentation.

Reg. \$16 Club \$13.60

Querena Brut Cava, Spain
90% Macabeo 10% Chardonnay

Fruity and refreshing cava of pale yellow color with greenish hues, bright, with delicate bubbles. Fresh and clean entry, On the nose Clean and intense aromas of citrus and stone fruit. It is a fresh cava ideal to consume as an aperitif or accompanying white fish, a maki or sashimi.

Could be used for Mimosas or Holiday Cocktails!

Reg. \$11 Club \$9.35

Bellefleur Château de Haute-Serre, Cahors France.
100% Malbec

Pale pink color with deep purple highlights. Floral bouquet with hints of red fruit. The bubbles are fine and persistent, and the wine has a great deal of freshness as well as a beautiful long aftertaste.

Reg. \$35 Club \$29.75

Down with P.O.P. (Yeah You Know Me) Club

Jansz Premium Cuvee, Tasmania, Australia
60% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir

Two of the wines I have selected for this club have special significance behind them. Since it's the holidays, I wanted to pick two meaningful wines that bring fond memories of two people who are no longer able to celebrate the holidays with us. One being my father, Doug. This year is the 20th anniversary of his death. Of course I miss him, but I chose this particular wine because it puts a huge smile on my face. Doug was obsessed with Warner Bros and in particular the Tasmanian devil. So when I had the opportunity to try some wines from Tasmania, it made me giggle. Jansz stood out to me as an exceptional sparkling wine. It's fun, zippy, complex and a lingering finish that just keeps going. I hope you enjoy this wine as much as I do, it really has a lot of meaning behind it. Cheers!

Sourced from selected vineyard sites across Tasmania ranging from the Pipers River and Tamar Valley regions in the North to the Coal River Valley in the South; representing the best of sparkling Tasmania.

Very pale gold in color, with a persistent fine mousse. The nose displays aromas of honeysuckle, citrus zest and fresh strawberries from the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir fruit. Extended time on lees during secondary fermentation contributes more complex aromas of nougat and roasted nuts. The palate is well balanced with delicate fruit flavor, fine creamy texture and a refreshing natural acid drive. The finish is dry and fresh with lingering flavors of citrus and nougat.

Reg. \$28 Club \$23.80

Domain Pinon Methode Traditionnelle Brut Vouvray, France 100% Chenin Blanc

This is my second special club pick, in memory of my father-in-law Dennis. He was not a wine drinker, but he could never say no to Vouvray. He adored it!! So every time we would have dinner, I would always make sure Vouvray was on the table Especially during the holidays, as it's one of the most perfect wines to pair with a variety of dishes. This sparkling Vouvray is no different.

This 100% Chenin Blanc sparkler is medium-bodied and dry. It has a fragrant nose of apple and pear with good minerality and acidity, and finishes with notes of quince, stone fruit, and honeycomb. It's made by Damien Pinon, the third generation to head the family estate. For Damien and his team, the main objective, from vine-to-wine, is the expression of the estate's terroir, a complex mix of clay and limestone soils. The estate is planted entirely of Chenin Blanc and produces only Vouvray, both still and sparkling.

Soft to semi-firm cow's milk cheeses, such as triple-cream brie, gruyere, cream cheese, yoghurt and cheddar work very well with Chenin Blanc. Also try herb-cruste goat cheeses.

Reg. \$25 Club \$21.25

M. de Ligny Blanc de Blancs Brut, Bourgogne France 100% Chardonnay

This affordable sparkling wine is an easy drinking bubbly that won't break the bank! No fuss about this wine. Lots of crunchy apple fruit, with some biscuity complexity and a really zesty finish.

Reg. \$12 Club \$10.20