



Merry Monks

Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks

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The Winter Table

Just as many species hibernate during the dark season, humans tend to slow down and pull inward, seeking the solace and warmth of home, hearth and comfort foods. Shifts in our metabolism and energy level coincide with the availability of seasonal ingredients.

It is no accident that foods grown in winter are loaded with nutrients and energy to get us through the colder months. These include carbohydrate-rich veggies such as winter squash, potatoes, parsnips, carrots and other root vegetables, as well as vitamin-rich kale, brussels sprouts, chard and collards. Before the advent of global food distribution, we also relied on dried, canned or otherwise preserved foods. Even today, dried legumes and grains play a central role in winter cooking.

Even though winter doesn't have quite the color and diversity of ingredients as other seasons, it can still be a season of abundance. The options for soups, stews and roasts are seemingly endless. And a fine bottle of wine can elevate most meals into feasts. Following are three winter menu discussions focused around the three wines in your winter club shipment. We are also providing for you three of our signature soup recipes to pair with these wines. May you enjoy many occasions with good food, wine and company this winter!

Included in your winter shipment:

2017 GSM, Sierra Foothills (Pre-release)

Harvest Brix: 25.9 pH: 3.70 TA: 5.04 Alc: 15.1% RS: 0.0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 300 Aging: 2 years in mostly neutral European oak

We are excited to offer you a pre-release of the new vintage of our Rhone-style blend (50% Grenache / 25% Syrah / 25% Mourvedre). This lush, elegant wine balances well with heavy, flavorful dishes. Our favorite pairing with this wine is a hearty, French country dish called *cassoulet*. Think of duck, chicken, sausage, bacon, white beans and herbs de Provence, all baked together with a breaded topping. It is perfection with a bottle of GSM on a chilly evening, but it is quite time-consuming to prepare. Our second favorite pairing is one that you might have tried in our tasting room—Christine's Smoky Ham & Bean Soup. It is dead simple, and it is an equally great pairing with this wine. In response to many requests for this recipe, we will finally share it with this club shipment. Prepare it with a side of garlic bread (or just a good crusty artisan bread) and some sautéed collards or another hearty winter green, and you will have a very satisfying meal.

2015 Zinfandel, Herbert Vineyard

Harvest Brix: 25.7 pH: 3.34 TA: 7.30 Alc: 16.1% RS: 0.0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 224 Aging: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

Our current release of Herbert Vineyard Zinfandel is exceedingly food-friendly and versatile. During the winter months, we love this wine with chili, particularly our signature "Zin Chili." It is also fantastic with Italian dishes—and lasagna is a perfect comfort meal to enjoy with this wine. This wine's versatility goes much farther, however. It is excellent with slow-cooked lamb shanks with star anise and root veggies, as well as lamb curry. For the purpose of our shipment theme, however, we will recommend Christine's Hearty Minestrone Soup recipe. (Sorry, we can't bring ourselves to part with our Zin Chili recipe!) Consider some spicy sausages or Asiago cheese and prosciutto panini on the side, as well as a kale salad, and you will achieve perfection.

ESTATE WINERY & TASTING ROOM: 5980 Meyers Lane, Somerset, CA 95684

www.cantigawine.com

2014 Troubadour, El Dorado (Reserved for wine club)

Harvest Brix: 25.2 pH: 3.56 TA: 5.40 Alc: 14.8% RS: 0.0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 171 Aging: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

We are so thrilled to have our signature Cabernet-Shiraz blend available for you. (We lovingly refer to this blend as our “Aussie Bordeaux!”) This wine is reserved for our club, and it is very special and limited. Some of you may have received this vintage from us a year ago. It was wonderful then, but it just keeps getting better! This wine also has a lot of potential for pairing with winter menus. We have previously recommended our Troubadour with *Tourtière*, a traditional French-Canadian meat pie (recipe can be found on our website). It is also our “go to” wine for prime rib or other beef roasts, and is also wonderful with lamb. Some of our favorite side dishes with hearty roast meats include roasted root vegetables (a medley of gold potatoes, parsnips, yams, carrots, turnips, beets, brussels sprouts and fennel), and sautéed mushrooms. And for our soup theme, we are pleased to offer you a recipe for Christine’s Shiitake-Lentil Soup. You may have sampled this soup in our tasting room at some point, paired with Troubadour or Cabernet. It is a fantastic pairing, and a very satisfying, delicious soup. Enjoy it with fresh sourdough bread and a hearty stir fry of chard, brussels sprouts and yellow crookneck squash. Delicious!

To access our signature recipes:

Go to <https://www.cantigawine.com/recipes-and-more>

click on Download buttons for PDF files.

Bon appétit!