



PJ's Wine of the Month Club September 2008 Selection

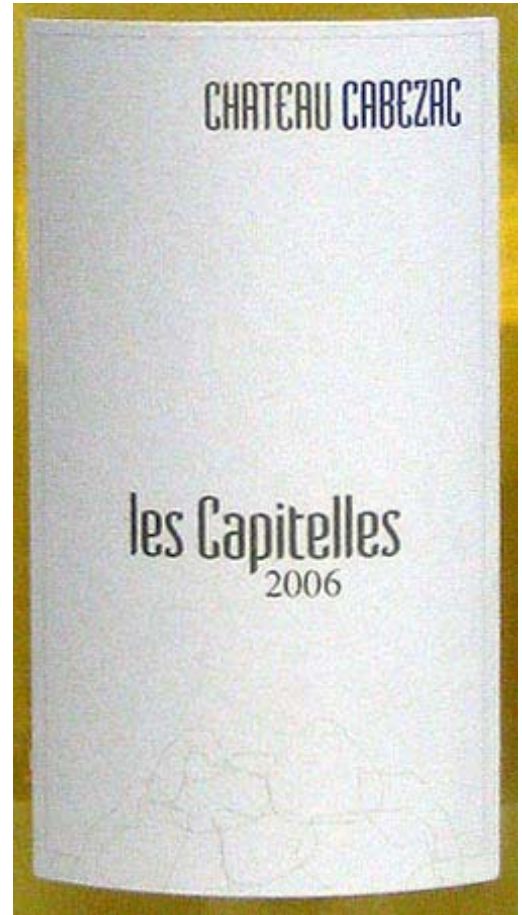
White Selection

**2006 Chateau Cabezac Cuvee "Les Capitelles" Blanc
Minervois**

Suggested Retail Price: \$14.99 PJ's Price: \$12.99

Location: Chateau Cabezac is located in the appellation of Minervois in the western region of the Languedoc. The appellation stretches for about 20 miles from east to west and sits about 15 miles from the Mediterranean coast.

History: 2008 will be the tenth vintage for this relatively young winery in the south of France. In 1997 Gontram Dondain acquired the domain consisting of 34 hectares of which 28 were planted with vines. At this time the land was rather rough as it had been neglected for the past 20 years so the first task was to revitalize the land in order to produce quality fruit. No shortcuts were taken, each plot was assessed and treated separately, and new trellising systems were put in place to maximize sun exposure. Over the next 10 years the staff of the Chateau worked tirelessly to both produce better and better quality wine and improve the vineyards. They added about 15 hectares to the estate and continued to replant vines and maximize the performance of the vineyard. With all the advances taking place in the vineyards it was only time until they looked to the cellars. They built a state of the art cellar and winery that is truly world class. This continuing improvement is a testament to the commitment of the owner and staff. At present, the domain includes 70 hectares of which 48 hectares are in production.



Vinification: All the wines of the domain are produced on the basis of "Culture Raisonnée" (responsible cultivation), a mix of organic, bio-dynamic and biological methods that minimize the use of chemicals and instead exploit the natural cycles and character of the varieties and their terroir. The vineyards encompass different complementary types of terroir, the majority of which are classified as AOC Minervois. The "Plateau de Belvèze" is an exceptional terroir situated at 200 meters above sea level with well-drained vineyards planted on clay subsoil that benefits from a hot, dry microclimate cooled by the wind from the Causse hills and the Pyrenees. The "Garrigots," another terroir, has an excellent filtering soil of river pebbles, ensuring good drainage. The "Plateau of Cazelles," a third terroir, is situated at 350 meters above sea level and produces subtle, very well-balanced, concentrated and complex wine from soil rich in organic matter, aided by frost-shattered limestone that accumulates heat during the day and gently warms the vines at night. From this wide range of growing conditions an astonishing range of wines are produced, from the fullest richest southern Rhone style to light fruity reds (most of which PJ Wines has in stock).

Description: This white blend of Roussanne, Maccabeu, and Grenache Blanc is produced from the "Garrigots" and "Belveze" terroirs. The wine is pale lemon yellow in color and has intense aromas of white flowers mixed with citrus fruit including lemons and grapefruit. It explodes on the palate with flavors of more citrus and notes of wet stone and hints of nuts. It has good acidity, medium body and leaves one with the flavor of lemons and acacia blooms; refreshing but substantive.

Food Pairing: Once again I am drawn to the light seafood dominated cuisine of this region to pair with this wine. Squid marinated in spices and herbs and the quickly grilled would be fantastic with this interesting white.



PJ's Wine of the Month Club

September 2008 Selection

White Selection

2007 Huguet Can Feixes "Blanc Seleccio" Penedès

Suggested Retail Price: \$13.99

PJ's Price: \$11.99

Location: The Can Feixes estate is located in the northern reaches of the Penedès D.O. surrounded by the mountains that make up the northern border of the appellation. Set in the Catalunya region the bodega is only about 25 miles from the center of Barcelona.

History: A family winery that is rooted in tradition and respect for terroir. They are committed to limiting production; this is done not only because of the superior product that is produced but to not strain the land. They believe that pushing production to higher levels will negatively affect the fertility of the land and strive to prevent this from happening. They know that this will limit their growth but they are happy to be a well respected small production winery as opposed to a large player that releases less than stellar wine. Can Feixes sees themselves as a steward for generation to come.

Vineyards: The Can Feixes vineyards rest at an altitude of 400 meters, which is quite high for this coastally region in north Spain. Because of this elevation the vines are subject to wider temperature variations than other areas of Penedès. This results in a slower ripening of the fruit that, in turn, yields berries that are more concentrated with great levels of acidity and sugar. The soil is mostly chalk clay and fairly rocky which is low yielding. All of these factors combine to create a vineyard that produces grapes that are high in character and quality. All across the world it holds true (generally) that grapes from vines that are stressed (just the "right" amount in just the "right" way) yield grapes that are of higher quality.

Penedès: This is the most important and largest of the DOs in the region of Catalunya. With a great number of different terroirs this region produces a wide range of wine styles. This is the home of Cava production, Spain's light, mineral driven sparkling wine. In the 1970's this was the first region of Spain to produce a significant amount of Cabernet Sauvignon. However most the reds produced here are from Garnacha, Carinena or Monastrell and produce full typical reds that can have a bit more finesse than others produced in the south. All of these wines are produced in different climates and goes to show the variation in growing conditions in this region.

Vinification: Only grapes from Can Feixes' vineyards are used for this wine and they are all picked by hand and sorted before being used. Pneumatic presses are used to obtain the best quality juice from the exterior of the grape flesh. The wine is a blend of 40% Parellada, 34% Macabeo (both used in Cava production), 20% Chardonnay and 6% Malvasia all fermented in temperature controlled stainless steel.

Description: This wine is bursting with aromas of apples, ripe pears and hints of lemon zest. There is also a whiff of mineral in the background of the nose. On the palate there are more developed notes of stone fruits and melons that lend way to citrus. The medium bodied with plenty of acidity and has a finish of melon and citrus.

Food Pairing: This white would be perfect as an aperitif or with light passed hors d'oeuvres.





PJ's Wine of the Month Club September 2008 Selection

Red Selection

2005 Feudi di San Gregorio "Rubrato" Aglianico

Suggested Retail Price: \$14.99

PJ's Price: \$12.99

Location: The Feudi di San Gregorio winery is officially based in the Sannio DOC in the Campania region, in the village of Sorbo Serpico, about 3 hours southeast of Rome.

History: Feudi di San Gregorio is a winemaking venture that began in 1986. The winery takes its name from the Sixth Century A.D. Pope Gregory the Great. A sizable 250-hectare estate, Feudi di San Gregorio comprises a winery, a restaurant and a New World philosophy that embraces sustainable agriculture, a project to produce organic, locally-farmed livestock, the Slow Foods movement, and a partnership with the area's best grape growers. The progressive owners of Feudi, the Ercolino and Capaldo families of Irpinia, have maintained 100-year old Sirica vines (an indigenous varietal) in the Taurasi district. However they specialize in the Aglianico grape which is the only grape used in the production of Taurasi, the highest regarded of all southern Italian wines.

The vineyards that provide most of the fruit for this wine are small hillside parcels sited at elevations from 1,000 to 1,300 feet near the Monte Taburno hills in Sannio. These are well-exposed hillsides that receive lots of sun and the dry, tall grasses in the surrounding lowlands whisper as the winds blow through them. Most of these vineyards are owned and farmed by local growers under strict supervision by Feudi winemakers, who maintain long-term contracts with the growers for their best fruit. With an eye to the future, Feudi is progressively purchasing these vineyard sites. Mario Ercolino is the chief winemaker, who works with one of Italy's foremost consulting enologists, Ricardo Cottarella. Mr. Cottarella has an impressive record that makes him one of the most qualified winemakers in central Italy crafting quality, value and low-production wines.

I.G.T.: Indicazione Geografica Tipica (IGT) is a legal designation for Italian wines that means that it comes from a particular area and has qualities indicating the region. Created in 1992 this classification is below DOCG and DOC and is roughly equal to the French Vin de Pays classification.

Description: The 2005 Rubrato is produced from 100% Aglianico and is packed with rich and ripe aromas of black cherry, raspberry, and red flowers. There is also an underlying note of mineral that holds the nose together. On the palate the wine is dry and dense with more ripe red fruit flavors that blend with earth and spices. This wine has good acidity that cleanses the palate and leaves you with cherry and red currant flavors. With medium tannins that provide some grip this wine is perfect for a rich meal.

Food Pairing: This is a great wine for full rustic Italian or southern French cuisine. It has nice tannins that work very well with any sort of fat, such as sliced cured meat, or oil marinated roasted vegetables. This wine pairs very well with grilled or pan seared meat, the slight bitterness of the charred meat and the fruit and the richness of the wine come together perfectly.





PJ's Wine of the Month Club

September 2008 Selection

Red Selection

2006 Esencia de Monte (Vinos de Terrunos) Monastrell Yecla

Suggested Retail Price: \$14.99

PJ's Price: \$12.49

Location: Esencia de Monte (AKA Vinos de Terrunos) is located in the southern region of Yecla. This region is south east of the country and borders the appellations of Jumilla and Alicante.

History: The Yecla region of Spain is one of the hottest and driest in the country. Only in the last 20 or so years has this region been able to produce table wines for direct consumption. There have been grapes grown in this region for hundreds of years however because of the climate and the remote location the wines were used for other things. Much of the wine made in this region was used for adding color and tannins to wine that was made more northerly regions. The wine from the north at this time tended to be a little light in color and therefore they would blend in deeply colored wine from the south to add certain qualities to the wine. As this region of Spain began to be modernized it became possible to create great wine. As time pasted skilled producers and vineyard managers looked at the Yelca appellation and took advantage of the elevation and diurnal differences in particular locales in the region. This allowed the grapes to reach ripeness without becoming a raisin and kept the all important acidity from dropping too low. These advances in the vineyard were followed by advancement in the winery, such things as stainless steel fermenters and other technologies that help produce wines in hot climates. In the mid-nineties irrigation was allowed and this opened up the world of southern Spain.

Monastrell is the Spanish name for the Mourvedre grape that is used in the southern France which is the same grape as Matro, which is the named used in Australia and some part of the United States. In this region of Spain Monastrell is used in "port-like" wines that are sweet, long lived and very interesting. However more and more dry wines are being made either out of 100% Monastrell or with a blend of Syrah and Garnacha (this blend, of course, being the tried and true recipe of the southern Rhone in France).

Vinification: This is a cuvee that is made especially for the importer and geared toward the American market. All the grapes used for this wine, from a number of different vineyards scattered around the Yecla appellation, are organic. However sulfites have been added to preserve the wine once it is in bottle. The wine saw no new oak treatment; the goal was to retain all the great primary fruit aromas by not ageing in oak.

Description: This is a deep dark wine that is full of dark notes of blackberry, earth and liquorices. On the palate the wine is dry and medium-full bodied with good levels of acidity. It is overall a bit lighter than the 2005 but it also has better acid which makes for a more food friendly wine. There are intense flavors of more blackberry and black cherry and smooth tannins that give a little grip at the end.

Food Pairing: This is one of those wines that you can drink by itself at a gathering with friends or with a movie. However it is great paired with roast lamb, pot roast or even pizza on an uneventful evening.

