



Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2BT

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Member Services: 01438 741177

Wine Notes

These wine notes were created on 20-Sep-2020.

The Society's Sicilian Reserve Red 2016

Extremely popular and praised by members and journalists for its spot-hitting quality and value, this smooth generous and fragrant red is a cracking example of Sicily's own nero d'Avola grape.

Product Code	IT28721	Dominant Grape	Nero d'Avola
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2023
Origin	South and Islands	Alcohol Level	13.5%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Cork, diam
Vintage	2016 vintage	Price £	8.50 / Bottle

Producer : Feudo Arancio

This substantial Sicilian estate is based on the windy south coast of Sicily. It has two large vineyard areas, covering almost 700 hectares in total, situated at Sambuca di Sicilia in the west and Ragusa in the east.

The grape varieties are each planted in separate blocks, and are used to produce a range of single-varietal wines in the state-of-the-art, temperature-controlled winery, although some of the wines are also bottled at the excellent Mezzacorona winery at the foot of the Italian Dolomites in north-east Italy.



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The Society's Beaujolais-Villages 2018

With intense and vibrant black-fruit perfume, this is a classic Beaujolais-Villages with good balance and a ripe yet fresh palate. Tim Sykes blends this every year at Les Vins Aujoux, home of The Society's White Burgundy. A delicious wine year after year that highlights Beaujolais' crunchy fruit-forward style.

Product Code	BJ7901	Dominant Grape	Gamay
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2021
Origin	Beaujolais	Alcohol Level	13.0%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2018 vintage	Price £	7.95 / Bottle

Producer : Les Vins Aujoux

This is the source of the bulk of our Beaujolais for the last 50 years, and many members will also have tried the fruits of The Society's work with this excellent Beaujolais-based négoce in the form of our bestselling white wine, The Society's White Burgundy, sourced from the Mâcon.

Dealing with a négociant allows The Wine Society to pick and choose, often blending together from different estates in order to end up with a wine that is better than any of its parts.

Négoces have had a huge part to play in the recent history of Beaujolais, some of it not so good but some of it very positive. For all its apparent simplicity, Beaujolais is a complicated region that is often the victim of its own capricious climate with late frosts and violent hailstorms a common recurrence.

The one name that stands out for us is Dépagneux: Jean Dépagneux was the last of this illustrious merchant family who, with his partners, bought up a list of ailing names such as Aujoux, which had made its name selling Beaujolais to the once profitable Swiss market. Jean retired about a dozen years ago and his place was taken by a young and talented oenologist from Viré called Jean-Marc Darbon. One consequence of the change has been the meteoric rise in the quality of The Society's White Burgundy.



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The Society's Rioja Crianza 2016

For the 2016 vintage we chose our Rioja from entirely tempranillo aged in American oak - the traditional way to make this famous Spanish style. We're thrilled with the result, which is alluringly soft, leathery and silky.

Product Code	SP15201	Dominant Grape	Tempranillo
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2021
Origin	Rioja	Alcohol Level	14.0%
Style	Full Bodied	Closure type	Cork, diam
Vintage	2016 vintage	Price £	8.50 / Bottle

Producer : Bodegas Palacio - See next page.



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Producer : Bodegas Palacio

Bodegas Palacio is located in the heart of the Rioja Alavesa, at the bottom of the road leading up to Laguardia, a spectacular fortified hilltop village set against the backdrop of the Sierra Cantabria. The original stone-built bodega, now a small hotel, was first superseded by a rather four-square winery, but was replaced with a new, modern winery in 2014.

Palacio was founded in 1894 by Don Cosme de Palacio, an entrepreneur from Bilbao, one of the pioneers of winemaking in the region who made many positive changes, including the introduction of ageing in oak barrels. After a period under French ownership in the 1980s, during which Bordeaux guru Michel Rolland consulted here, Palacio was acquired in the 1990s by Hijos de Antonio Barcelo, one of Spain's largest winemaking conglomerates, itself part of the giant Acciona group. Thanks to a high level of investment, Palacio has been able to expand, modernise and thrive.

This is an unusual enterprise in many respects. It buys in most of its fruit from a long-established network of contract growers, effectively controlling 255ha of vineyards, all in the Alavesa. It concentrates almost exclusively on tempranillo and viura, though in the new *alta expresión* white, Cosme 1894, there is a touch of malvasia. The winery has a 13,000 barrel capacity and exports a third of its production. A number of distinctly different bottlings reflect the bodega's historical French bias, from the almost *bordelais* El Portico (named after the ornately carved door of the church of San Bartolome in Logroño), to the high-definition prestige *cuvée*, Cosme de Palacio developed by Rolland.. More true to regional style is Glorioso, though its maturation – six months each in French and American oak – is hardly typical. This is an outfit which does its own thing, to be sure, and does it well, if the medal tally from international fairs and shows is anything to go by.

Bearing little resemblance to any of these in style – Glorioso is perhaps the closest – is The Society's Rioja, which is also made here., The head of winemaking, forty-something Roberto Rodriguez [Martinez] has worked here since the tender age of 18: his deep understanding both of his craft and of the plots at the bodega's disposal enable him to preselect, in anticipation of the buyer's final blend, a range of appropriate component wines that he knows will both appeal to members and maintain the consistency and quality of this best-seller.

A last word about Cosme Palacio 1894, Palacio's newest prestige project, named in honour of Palacio's founder and year of establishment, and developed with input from consultant winemaker Sam Harrop MW. The white is a remarkable viura-based blend, with a little malvasia and garnacha blanca, from very old, low-yielding vines grown at up to 800m, The red is 90% tempranillo with 10% graciano. The inaugural 2007 vintage was released in 2010 and has already won critical acclaim.



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The Society's Cotes du Rhone 2018

Ripe, full-bodied grenache-syrah blend from Vinsobres in the southern Rhône. Cool mountain breezes helped contain some of the ardour of the exceptional 2018 vintage, making this perennial favourite fresh as well as fruity.

Product Code	RH53931	Dominant Grape	Grenache Syrah
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	2019 to 2022
Origin	Other Southern Rhone Wines	Alcohol Level	14.0%
Style	Full-bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2018	Price £	No longer for sale

Producer : Domaine Jaume

Domaine Jaume, which celebrated its centenary in 2005, has been supplying The Wine Society with Côtes-du-Rhône since 1981. The wines are among the best-selling red Rhône on our list. The domaine is based in Vinsobres, a beautiful hillside village in the southern part of the Valley, blessed with extremely well-exposed vineyard sites. The Jaumes worked hard to get cru status for Vinsobres and in the end won the argument based on their Cuvée Référence. Though geographically close to villages like Cairanne or Rasteau, the climate here is quite different with particularly interesting potential for the syrah grape. The Jaumes also own plots of vines high above village at an altitude of some 420 meters which inspired the name for another of their cuvées – Vinsobres Altitude 420.

Brothers Pascal and Richard Jaume are highly committed vigneron and strongly believe that wine should be highly enjoyable and approachable so the style they look for is smooth, round and satisfying. Pascal is often found in the vineyard and his wife Isabelle does much of the pruning. Richard divides his time between the cellar and the office. A warm welcome awaits visitors here, especially Wine Society members, with Richard's wife Laurence on hand to meet and greet with genuine pleasure.



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Domaine Laborie, Pays d'Oc 2019

A longstanding favourite southern French red that has been a fixture in our range, and many members' wine racks, for years. The 2019 keeps the tradition alive in style, offering a floral scent, ripe brambly fruit and mouthwatering freshness. Deliciously dependable drinking.

Product Code	FC38331	Dominant Grape	Carignan Grenache
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2021
Origin	Languedoc and Roussillon	Alcohol Level	12.5%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	6.50 / Bottle

Producer : LGI

LGI was the brainchild of Alain Grignon, formerly of the Foncalieu co-operative group, who had the vision of making inexpensive wines designed specifically for the export market. In this he was helped at the beginning by English merchant, and ex- Waitrose buyer, Mark Lynton.

Most of the wines are sourced from a number of cooperatives, mostly along an axe between Carcassonne and Béziers with some fruit also coming from Limoux and from further away in Gascony. The winemaking and bottling is supervised by Xavier Roger, a Sancerrois and recently promoted to chief executive.

The core business remains at entry-level prices, which, for The Society, means delicious wines like Domaine Laborie, Domaine Raynier and the marsanne-viognier blend, Pierre Borde, but LGI is also able to act as broker for several top estates. For The Society, this includes Domaine Barroubio in Saint-Jean de Minervois and Christophe Barbier in La Clape.



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The Society's Claret 2018

With an almost unbroken run as our bestselling red, this fruity, unoaked merlot-based Bordeaux is the result of a long and fruitful partnership with the Sichel family, whose impeccable credentials include ownership and part ownership respectively of crus Angludet and Palmer. They've supplied us with this wine for over a quarter of a century, and we select the final blend each year to keep it fresh and easy-drinking with true Bordeaux character.

Product Code	CL221	Dominant Grape	Merlot
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Drinking now
Origin	Bordeaux	Alcohol Level	13.5%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Twin top
Vintage	2018 vintage	Price £	7.50 / Bottle

Producer : Maison Sichel

Maison Sichel first set up an acquisitions office in Bordeaux in 1883, and since then six generations of the Sichel family have built upon their empire. Not only do they sell wine today, but they are also growers and winemakers, and represent some very well-respected names. They currently own wine estates covering 350 hectares of vineyards, including Châteaux Angludet and Palmer in Bordeaux, and Château Trillol in Corbières.

Their technical director is Yvan Meyer, and he is the winemaker behind The Society's Claret, which is currently our bestselling red wine. It is made at Cave Bel Air in the Premières Côtes de Bordeaux region, and the grapes are sourced from local producers. Every year our Bordeaux buyer, Tim Sykes, travels to Maison Sichel to select the final blend.

The blend varies greatly each year, but in each vintage our aim remains the same: to create a fresh, easy-drinking and accessible wine with true Bordeaux character, but without the firmer tannins of other clarets that may need more time in the cellar. It is perhaps for this reason that The Society's Claret is always a huge hit with our members.



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Sabina Tempranillo, Navarra 2018

Over 200 wines were lined up across two Mediterranean Reds sessions in this year's Wine Champions tasting, and this warmhearted Spaniard came out fighting! An impressive balancing act of richness and joyful red-fruit flavour rarely encountered at under £6.

Product Code	SP14801	Dominant Grape	Tempranillo
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2021
Origin	Navarra	Alcohol Level	14.0%
Style	Full Bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2018 vintage	Price £	5.95 / Bottle

Producer : Bodega Principe de Viana

Everything about Bodegas Príncipe de Viana is vast: owners of over 400 hectares of vines in Navarra, controlling a further 500 hectares, planted to Spanish grapes (graciano, garnacha and tempranillo) and international ones (cabernet, merlot and chardonnay). Príncipe de Viana also boast one of the region's most technically modern wineries, built in 2004, with a barrel room that contains more than 15,000 oak barrels. Despite this the winemaking approach is sensitive and modest, aiming always for clean, balanced flavours.

The scale of Príncipe de Viana's production brings an enormous economic advantage: by controlling everything from vineyard to bottling in combination with the high volumes produced means that the wines offer some of Spain's best value for money.

Sabina is a special label made by Príncipe de Viana for The Wine Society and is one of our top selling Spanish reds. The name Sabina is taken from the indigenous Spanish juniper tree grown locally in Navarra, where this wine comes from. This unoaked style of tempranillo (with a small amount of cabernet sauvignon to add structure) is made in a fruity and balanced style with lovely clean flavours. Perfect on its own at parties or enjoy with a plate of jamón.



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The Society's Argentine Malbec 2019

Fruity, brambly and deservedly popular Argentine malbec which impresses with its round, soft, generous fruit flavours.

Product Code	AR4161	Dominant Grape	Malbec/Cot
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2023
Origin	Argentina	Alcohol Level	13.5%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	8.50 / Bottle

Producer : Dominio del Plata - See next page.



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Producer : Dominio del Plata

After an already long and successful career in winemaking, Susana Balbo described her own winery – Dominio del Plata – as ‘like my third child, a dream come true.’ Susana graduated with a degree in oenology in 1981 – the first woman in Argentina to do so, but this wasn't enough for the gutsy Balbo: she also achieved the degree with honours as the best graduate of her year. Having worked extensively both in Argentina and throughout the winemaking world (Spain, Chile, Italy, Australia, and California among others) since the early eighties, it wasn't until the cusp of the shiny new millennium in 1999 that she finally realised her ambition of making her own wine at Dominio del Plata in the famous Mendoza region.

Susana established her winery in Agrelo, assisted by the renowned Argentine viticulturist Pedro Marchevsky who helped plant the vineyards. Susana's ideas on social responsibility extend to sponsoring the local football club, community dining scheme, and also contributing to the education of their workers' children.

The team at the winery are young and dynamic, enabling Susana to continue with her quest for innovation to satisfy an ever-changing and increasingly discerning world palate. As well as significantly raising the profile of the torrontés grape by using it to make fresh, citrusy white wines, Susana is seen by many as queen of malbec in the country that made the grape truly famous. Her success with this grape ranges from the vibrant, youthful, everyday Faldeos Malbec – a range made for The Wine Society – to the silky, oak-aged Signature (in which she also earns great success with cabernet sauvignon). One of her finest wines - the Susana Balbo Brioso – is an artful blend of cabernet, malbec, merlot, cabernet franc and petit verdot, and is always a triumph with members. Maybe it is her maternal affection for her wines that has made her so skilled at the art of blending, enabling her to achieve some of the most delicate and balanced aromas and flavours with the malbec grape at staggering value for money (a far cry from its early days as the many-named ugly duckling of the French varieties). Achieving this at a time when few thought women capable of even being winemakers makes this accolade all the more admirable.



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The Society's Exhibition Fleurie 2019

Winning our Wine Champions panels' hearts for the second year in succession, our flagship-label Fleurie shows off the hallmark floral fragrance that gives this Beaujolais cru its name, along with the richness of the vintage and gorgeous length on the palate.

Product Code	BJ8481	Dominant Grape	Gamay
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Beaujolais	Alcohol Level	13.0%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Cork, natural
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	10.50 / Bottle

Duo du Midi, Pays d'Oc 2019

A delightfully fruity blend of cabernet franc and malbec from the Languedoc in the sunny south of France. Ripe and full flavoured, very round and delicious with grilled lamb chops.

Product Code	FC38721	Dominant Grape	Malbec/Cabernet Franc
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Languedoc and Roussillon	Alcohol Level	13.0%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	6.50 / Bottle

Producer : LGI - See next page.



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