

Join a monthly wine club and become a connoisseur

Many of us enjoy buying an occasional bottle of wine for a special dinner or around the holidays, while others may like a glass of wine with dinner each evening. However, most people in America are not familiar enough with wines to be able to pick vintages or wineries and become stuck in a rut, only purchasing one or two brands we know we like. You may have gone out on a limb once or twice, buying a fancy looking label only to discover it was too sweet, too dry or just not to your taste. Monthly wine clubs are a great way to learn about wines that you may not find at your local bottle shop.

Price alone is not the best way to gauge taste. Some small boutique wineries may bottle a fine wine, but will price their product low, hoping to gain a niche in the market with new satisfied customers. Others may design an artistic label, but the wine in the bottle is hardly worth drinking. Monthly wine clubs take all the guesswork out of choosing a good wine.

The basic concept of monthly wine clubs is to educate the consumer while gaining new customers for their select inventory of wines from around the world. Their wine buyers are well able to discern quality. They travel to small wineries around the U.S. as well as overseas. They taste before they buy and when they find a fine wine at a reasonable price, they may buy that vintner's entire stock. This earns them a substantial discount, which they pass on to you.

Each month brings new selections. The catalog gives descriptions which tell you if its dry or sweet, particular foods, such as meats, cheeses or desserts that are especially complemented by that wine. Some of the monthly wine clubs allow you to choose which wine you'd like to try that month. Others will automatically ship the buyer's choice unless you specify another choice.

Have you heard of the fine wines that may be found in places like Australia, Chile and South Africa? Did you know there are many fine boutique wines, produced in small runs, that come from Ohio and Vermont? Monthly wine clubs give you an opportunity to try some of these wines. You can educate your guests on the special qualities and nuances of this fine wine, making that bottle from Ohio serve as an interesting conversation point as well.

Monthly wine clubs give you discounts on cases and half cases of single wines or a mix of several. In addition, you'll benefit from printed materials they send you which introduce you to wine tasting. Terms like 'nose', 'bouquet' and 'a hint of peach...' become meaningful, so you learn what it is you enjoy about the wine you're drinking and why.

If you'd like to become more knowledgeable about your wines, join a monthly wine

club. You'll reap lots of benefits, as will your guests.