



# Tim's Wine Market

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*After a great deal of internal discussion it is time to announce that starting in January 2023, we will be taking our first price increase for membership in the Explorer Club. The price is increasing to \$39 per month, from the current \$29, excluding sales tax. While it is easy to blame inflation for this increase, the reality is it has been overdue for a few years. We launched this club in June 2005 and have never increased the price but frankly the quality we can offer at this current price is becoming increasingly limited. Rather than select one virtual wine after another we feel that we can offer much better quality, from family owned wineries, by breaking through to another level. We hope you understand and encourage you to try it for a few months. We strongly believe the difference will be obvious and you will not be disappointed. - **Tim Varan***

This holiday season, in a departure from our traditional recommendation of cru Beaujolais, we recognize that not everyone sits down to a plate of turkey on Thanksgiving. Some of our customers tell us they now cook “non-traditional” Thanksgiving fare such as grouper, lamb, and even lobster for the holiday table. On a personal note, my family and I have enjoyed Indian cuisine more than once to commemorate the occasion! In the spirit of expanding one’s horizons, we are pleased to wish you a happy Thanksgiving and present you with two red offerings suitable for whatever happens to be on the table.

## **Prisma Pinot Noir 2020 - \$18**

Chile was, until recently, not the first place one would expect to find Pinot Noir. Commonly associated with Bordeaux varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenere, the image of Chile in the minds of many wine drinkers was of a hot, dry climate with plenty of sunshine, similar to the wine regions of neighboring Argentina. The truth, however, is a little more complicated. Proximity to the Pacific Ocean, high altitudes, and granitic soils make the Casablanca Valley of Chile ideal for the cultivation of Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc. Winemaker Ricardo Baettig uses all of these to his advantage, crafting sustainable wines in the mountainous Lo Ovalle sub-region.

To make this wine, Ricardo selects younger-vine blocks of Pinot Noir, planted around 2004 in his family’s hillside Fundo Belén vineyard. Three different clones of the variety, including the Pommard clone utilized in the Willamette Valley, are planted here, and all are utilized for the finished wine. After being harvested by hand, the fruit is brought to the winery for sorting and de-stemming before fermentation in stainless steel. Once dry, the wine is then raked into a selection of used French oak barrels of varying sizes. The finished wine sees 8 months in oak before light filtration and bottling.

When you open this wine, I strongly suggest decanting for 15 minutes to a half hour. In addition, this wine benefits from a slight chill so do not hesitate to put it in your refrigerator for a bit before serving! On the palate, this wine delivers typical notes of Chilean Pinot Noir with notes of crushed strawberry, red cherry, strawberry leaf, and graham cracker. Drink now through 2024 with grilled salmon, noodle soups, goat cheese and crackers, or baked brie.

## **Triton Tinta de Toro 2021 - \$18**

For those whose Thanksgiving table usually boasts more red meat than poultry (or whose Thanksgiving largely consists of football and tailgate fare such as burgers and bratwurst), why not consider a Tempranillo-based wine? This “noble grape” of Spain is a firm favorite on the international market for its full-bodied characteristics, longevity, and its expression of terroir. Known by many synonyms such as Tinta Roriz, Tinta de Toro, and Cencibel, this month we present a Tinta de Toro from (where else?) Spain’s Toro region.

Situated in the autonomous region of Castilla y León, Toro is located downstream of Ribera del Duero, another stronghold of Tempranillo production. Here, the soils are predominantly sand, making Toro one of the few Spanish regions never affected by phylloxera. As a result, the region boasts some of the oldest vines in all of Spain which, combined with the long, hot growing season, leads to wines of considerable body and ripeness. “Triton” is one of the passion projects of Jorge Ordóñez, an importer who was instrumental in bringing many long-neglected Spanish regions and wine styles to the American market.

Grown at significant altitude (over 2400 feet above sea level), the fruit used in this wine is sourced from eight small vineyard sites owned by Bodegas Vatan, one of Ordóñez family's partner wineries. These vineyards, planted as early as 1915, are planted in red clay and sandy soils which retain water and facilitate ripeness. As with all of this importer's projects, the vineyards are dry farmed and the winemaking team eschews chemical pesticides and other synthetic treatments.

To make this wine, the winemaking team at Bodegas Vatan harvest each plot by hand. After sorting and de-stemming, the fruit undergoes spontaneous fermentation in open-topped steel tanks. Only brief skin maceration takes place, about 7 or 8 days, to avoid over-extraction and produce a wine that is not overtly tannic. Once dry, the wine is racked to gently used French oak barrels where it undergoes full malolactic conversion. Similar to the Prisma Pinot Noir, the wine spends 8 months in oak before bottling, however it is neither fined nor filtered.

When you open this wine, I recommend decanting for at least half an hour. On the palate, this is a full-bodied expression of Tempranillo with notes of cooked blackberry, black cherry, black plum, dried herbs, and black pepper. Drink now through 2027 with London broil, burgers with bacon and cheddar, or sausage and bean stews.

## **Flank Steak Pinwheels**

This recipe is from Cook's Illustrated but there is also an Alton Brown version. Both are excellent and easy, once you get the hang of the preparation. This recipe works great with both wines and is a nice post-Thanksgiving dish to serve while watching football.

To butterfly a flank steak you will want to freeze it for 30 minutes, then place on the cutting board in front of you with the long edge to the left. Make your cut along the right side with the blade even with the counter, opening the steak like a book. Leave a 1/2 inch seam before cutting through the left side. Then lay the steak open, cover with plastic wrap and pound to an even thickness, trimming any ragged edges to make a rectangle.

**2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)**  
**1 small shallot, minced (about 2 tablespoons)**  
**2 tablespoons fresh parsley leaves, finely minced**  
**1 teaspoon sage leaves, finely minced**  
**2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for oiling grate**  
**1 flank steak (2 to 2 1/2-pounds)**  
**4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto**  
**4 ounces thinly sliced provolone**  
**8 - 12 skewers soaked in water for 30 minutes**  
**Kosher salt and ground black pepper**

Combine garlic, shallot, parsley, sage, and olive oil in small bowl. With steak positioned so that grain runs parallel to edge of counter and opened side faces up, spread herb mixture evenly over surface of steak. Lay prosciutto evenly over steak, leaving 2-inch border along top edge. Cover prosciutto with even layer of cheese, leaving 2-inch border along top edge. Starting from bottom edge and rolling away from you, roll beef into tight log and place on cutting board seam-side down.

Starting 1/2 inch from end of rolled steak, evenly space 8 to twelve 14-inch pieces of butcher's twine at 1-inch intervals underneath steak. Tie middle string first; then working from outermost strings toward center, tightly tie roll and turn tied steak 90 degrees so seam is facing you. Skewer beef directly through outermost flap of steak near seam through each piece of string, allowing skewer to extend 1/2 inch on opposite side. Using chef's knife, slice roll between pieces of twine into 1-inch-thick pinwheels. Season pinwheels lightly with kosher salt and black pepper.

Turn all burners to high and heat with lid down until very hot, about 15 minutes. Scrape grate clean with grill brush. Dip wad of paper towels in oil; holding wad with tongs, wipe cooking grate. Leave primary burner on high and turn off other burner(s).

Grill pinwheels directly over hot side of grill until well browned, 3 to 6 minutes. Using tongs, flip pinwheels; grill until second side is well browned, 3 to 5 minutes longer. Transfer pinwheels to cooler side of grill, cover, and continue to cook until center of pinwheels registers 125 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 1 to 4 minutes (slightly thinner pinwheels may not need time on cooler side of grill). Transfer pinwheels to large plate, tent loosely with foil, and let rest 5 minutes. Remove and discard skewers and twine and serve immediately.