

Our goal with the Natty Club is to provide you with a fresh take on the classics while digging deep into wine's roots. This club, we bring to varying styles of Alsatian Natural wine, a dig into the incredible prices aged of wines from Southern Italy, and a crowd-favorite orange from Christian Binner.

# THE CELLAR D'OR

## WINE & CIDER

Natural Wine Club • January - February 2022

### Cooperativa Copertino Riserva 2011

**Key Words:** Puglia, Italy    Negroamaro & Malvasia Nero    2011 Current Release    Cooperative    Brettanomyces! (Mushroom, leather, farmyard)

As wines age, special things happen... polyphenols breakdown, tannins resolve, fruit chills out (becomes less primary and bright). Components that seem clunky and unrefined can morph into nuanced, elegant tones that ingratiate themselves into the folds of a wine. It's magical. It's why people have wine cellars and why we tend to celebrate wines with age. At the same time — don't get it twisted — aged wines aren't necessarily good. Just as rich, bold wines aren't necessarily better than elegant lifted wines: they're just different. Plus, wines have drinking windows... at a point, further aging a wine may only muddle and mute its character.

There are number of regions across the world where you can find aged wines at incredibly low prices. These regions will have a history of aging. Rioja is a prime example. Assembling a library of back-vintage wine is a costly endeavor for any winery. Aging requires time, space, and care. A winery working with limited resources might rather invest in other areas rather than the zero-short-term-gain of cellaring a vintage for 10 years. So wineries release their wines at not the optimal aging potential for monetary reasons, but also because many wines are enjoyable both in youth *and* with age. The Copertino Negroamaro we've packed from Puglia, Italy is a wine released at its optimal age. Look to Salice Salentino and Copertino in Puglia for aged wines \$16 and under. This drinks in the realm of an aged Chianti: mushroomey-cherry, leather, red licorice.

### Le Grange de l'Oncle Charles Alsace Blanc 2019

**Key Words:** Alsace, France    Started in 2014    Biodynamic    9 Classic Alsatian Varieties    Spontaneous Ferm    No Sulfites Added

I could live off of this wine. A lean-to with a hatch that leads to cellar with a couple hundred of bottles of Oncle Charles Alsace Blanc, is my vision. And a Zalto. And I'd catch pheasants. Hey, anyone can learn. Cool. That's the write up. Hope you all enjoy Oncle Charles. Byyyyyye... Alsatian natural wine is one of these broad categories I can't help but fling myself behind. Juicy, over the top, tropical gushing fruit — Alsace has got you covered with its array of aromatic grapes like Muscat, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris and Riesling. These grapes are behind many of our favorite oranges. Field blends? Alsace has a long history of cultivating vineyards planted to many different varieties, harvesting them all at once. Acidity? Alsatian white wine has what I describe as seamless, persistent acidity. Jerome Francois started Le Grange de l'Oncle Charles out of his Uncle Charles' barn, hence the name. Francois' 2019 Alsace Blanc is comprised of Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir, Pinot Auxerrois, Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Muscat, Sylvaner, Chasselas. There is a purity and freshwater mineral that I couldn't get enough of, here. This wine feels strikingly delicate, and lofty and pure. It's a different side of Alsatian natural wine and a different more delicate display of these aromatic grapes than we commonly expect. This is such a pretty wine.

### Christian Binner Eros de David 2020

**Key Words:** Alsace, France    Orange Wine    Organic    Hand-Harvested    Coferment    10-Day Maceration    No Sulphur Added

Christian Binner's 'Eros' line of aromatic orange wine from Alsace is something we've come to rely on year after year. Christian Binner steps in amongst smaller Alsatian growers, growers that would otherwise sell their grapes in bulk on the market, and helps them bottles their fruit on their own. In doing so, Christian is capturing and maintaining the sense of place of these vineyards and the efforts of their growers. Christian helps finish and consult on these wine projects and he has an entire line of these terroir-driven wines from Pinots, to Petnats, ro oranges. His Eros oranges are a staple not only in our shop but in natural wine shops and bars across the country. Like many a natural wine, Eros de David hits the shelves and sells out quickly — a people and their place can make only so much wine. Could the producers Christian Binner works with combine their grapes and make just a few wines in a more conventional fashion that are available year-round? Quite possibly. And does that sound like a better 'product' for large companies to rely on? You bet. The economic and structural forces that work against some of the things Christian Binner is doing in Alsace. This is why Christian Binner, the growers he works with, and the wines they make deserve to be celebrated. Plus, they are pristine examples of aromatic orange wines.

### 680 Cellars Semi-Carbonic Cabernet Franc 2020

**Key Words:** Finger Lakes, New York    Semi-Carbonic Fermentation    Aged in Cocciopesto!    Winemaker From Barry Family Cellars

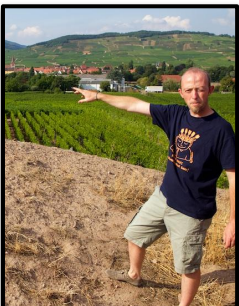
This Finger Lakes red tastes like world class wine. I don't mean that this wine feels serious, or dense, or reminiscent of other great wines of the world. Six Eighty Cellars' Semi-Carbonic Cabernet Franc *tastes like it came from the Finger Lakes and is world class wine*. Too often, when we speak about a great Finger Lakes wine, its with a nod to another regional style. And, when it doesn't meet the expectations of that other style, we think less of it. Any new region sporting grapes that were commonly grown elsewhere for half a millenia prior falls into this same dilemma. It's why Six Eighty Cellars' Semi-Carbonic Cab Franc struck me so. It feels like world class Finger Lakes wine that wears it's Finger Lakes terroir in a way that feels identifiably FLX-ey. It's the fresh, candid fruit — the carbonic maceration provides a fresh, plush, friendly fruit profile. And, it's the freshwater mineral. It's using a grape that has shown to do reasonably well here through the decades. Ian Barry (of Barry Family Cellars) is the winemaker at Six Eighty Cellars. He's been given free reign to experiment with vessels ranging from concrete eggs to the mixed-terracota-like vessel this Cabernet Franc was raised in. Even so, I don't find the vessel to make too much of an imprint here. This tastes like semi-carbonic Cab Franc from FLX!



Copertino & Salice Salentino



Jerome Francois + Horseplow



Christian Binner



Ian Barry [photo cred: Maiah Dunn]

