$60 Wine Club Selections

**Kobal Winery, Blaufrankisch, Slovenia, 2019**

About . . .
**THE AREA**

Croatia and Slovenia have, along with Greece, the longest winemaking history in Europe that pre-dates even the Roman Empire. The perfect climatic conditions, hands-on care in the vineyards and traditional hands-off winemaking result in delicious, distinctive wines that are top-quality and world class.

Slovenia

Slovenia’s winemaking tradition has historically been influenced by Austria to the north and Italy to the west. Slovenia is still one of Europe’s greatest wine secrets. Slovenia has been producing quality wines for centuries, and since becoming independent in 1991 it has become a source of highly-regarded private-production wines.

Štajerska (or Styria) is the largest of three major grape-growing regions in Slovenia. It comprises the northeast corner of the country. Hot summers, cold and dry winters, steep terrain and mainly marl, gravel and clay soil make Štajerska the ideal terroir to produce fresh and mineral whites, elegant and gentle reds and unbelievable dessert and ice wines.

Istria, Vipava and Brda-Collio, located in Slovenia’s southwest, are some of the most charming and scenic regions of the country. This area of gently rolling hills, occupied by picturesque villages and dotted with small churches, offers wine lovers lots to explore. Indigenous grapes, such as Malvasia Istriana, Rebula, Pinela, Zelen, Klarnica, Barbera and Refošk, cultivated here by small family wineries, are a big part of this region’s renowned culinary tradition.

Kobal wines come from the Haloze appellation in Štajerska Slovenia. Since the Roman times, Haloze has been considered one of the top wine-growing sites in Central Europe. The soil of these steep slopes consists predominantly of marl, and the roots of vines that average 35 years old go deep into the ground to absorb minerality. Owner and winemaker, Bojan Kobal, is the true scientist of his craft. The amazing variety of styles of wines he produces shows that there is nothing he cannot do. The lineup of fresh Kobal whites is Bojan’s expression of Haloze fruit and varietal character. The Bajta wines are all fermented with natural yeasts only. From juicy and playful Pet Nats to the mature skin contact Belo – there is a delicious wine here for any occasion

**Climate:**Continental, with dry and hot summers, and snowy winters

**Terrain:**The terrain of the entire Štajerska region is made up of steep-sloped vineyards and narrow, wind-rich hill valleys. A diverse geological soil composition, consisting mainly of sand and clay with marl in the lower layers. The vineyards spread out over the finest wine-growing sites of Haloze Hills.

**Farming:**No irrigation. Environmentally friendly cultivation, following the integrated farming guidelines of Slovenia.

**Vinification:**Hand-picked grapes were de-stemmed and then skin macerated for a period of 21 days. The fermentation process was spontaneous, in large open oak vats. The wine matured in used barrique barrels for 6 months where it finished malolactic fermentation. After that the wine was bottled un-filtered and un-fined, and aged for an additional 3 months in the bottle before it was released to the market.

**Tasting Notes:**Blaufrankisch is a dark ruby-colored wine with an aroma which resembles overripened blackberries, chocolate, black mulberries and dried plums. The harmony of fruity aromas is nicely rounded up with wood characteristics both in scent and in flavor, with a moderately long velvet finish. We recommend allowing the wine to decant for up to 45 minutes before consumption.

This is a wine that is definitely for drinking year-round.

**Food Pairing:** We suggest cured and smoked ham, grilled or roasted pork chops, brick-oven pizza, roasted chicken or turkey, grilled chicken salad, grilled burgers and French fries, any type of game – venison, wild fowl, wild boar, rabbit – and hearty stews.

luscious mouthfeel persists across a lengthy finish. Several vineyard sites throughout the

**Gainey Vineyard, Sauvignon Blanc, Santa Barbara, 2019**

Ynez Valley AVA

Santa Barbara, Central Coast
The Santa Ynez Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area) located in Santa Barbara County, California covers over 76,000 acres and is part of the larger Central Coast AVA. The Santa Ynez Valley is home to the most wineries in the county and contains two smaller AVAs, Sta. Rita Hills known for quality [Pinot Noirs](https://www.goldmedalwineclub.com/varietal/pinot-noir) and Happy Canyon of [Santa Barbara](https://www.goldmedalwineclub.com/region/santa-barbara-county-region) which host some of the best [Cabernet Sauvignon](https://www.goldmedalwineclub.com/varietal/cabernet-sauvignon) grapes in the region. The valley formed by the Purisima Hills and San Rafael Mountain on the north and the Santa Ynez Mountains to the south, offers growers a wide range of temperatures to grow many types of grapes.

In the cooler parts of the Valley, Pinot Noir and [Chardonnay](https://www.goldmedalwineclub.com/varietal/chardonnay) do very well. In the far eastern portion farthest from the influence of the Pacific Ocean fog, [Merlot](https://www.goldmedalwineclub.com/varietal/merlot) and Cabernet Sauvignon thrive.

From Dan Gainey . . .

IN 1962, MY GRANDFATHER AND FATHER PURCHASED 1,800 ACRES OF UNDEVELOPED LAND STRETCHING ACROSS THE EASTERN END OF SANTA YNEZ VALLEY. WITHIN A YEAR, THEY STARTED A CATTLE OPERATION AND CONVERTED 600 ACRES INTO FARMLAND FOR VEGETABLES, FRUIT, FLOWERS, AND HAY CROPS THAT HAVE SUSTAINED OUR FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS.

After my grandfather passed away, my father took over farming our Home Ranch and planted 50 acres of grapevines, nurturing a dream he had of one day producing a Gainey family wine. In 1984, he established our Spanish-style winery – designed to produce small quantities of high-quality wine – and released a Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

The following year, I joined my father in the family business and set about learning it from the ground up. In 1996, I purchased an additional plot of land in what would become the Sta. Rita Hills appellation in western Santa Ynez Valley, and planted 60 acres of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah. I named the vineyard Evan’s Ranch after my great-grandfather. The Sta. Rita Hills proved ideally suited to those varieties, so in 2009, I planted another 50-acre parcel in this cool, maritime appellation and named it Rancho Esperanza.

Today, our vineyards and winery comprise an important part of my family’s agricultural operations, and we’re fortunate to have vineyards that yield enough high-quality fruit to estate bottle all our wines. My wife, Diane, and I are proud that our son and daughters, the fourth generation of Gaineys in the Santa Ynez Valley, are continuing our family’s tradition of farming and winemaking in this most beautiful region of California. We invite you to come visit us the next time you’re in Santa Barbara wine country.

*The Ranches . . .*

MY FAMILY’S THREE RANCHES ARE LOCATED IN TWO OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY’S MOST ESTEEMED APPELLATIONS: THE SANTA YNEZ VALLEY AND THE STA. RITA HILLS.

Each ranch offers a unique combination of soil types, microclimate, sun exposure and grape varieties, ensuring great complexity in our wines. We grow warm climate varieties at our Home Ranch in the warmer, eastern end of Santa Ynez Valley and cool climate varieties at our Evan’s Ranch and Rancho Esperanza in the cool, marine-influenced Sta. Rita Hills appellation. All three ranches yield grapes of exceptional character, allowing us to craft 100% estate-grown wines. Controlling the process from vine to bottle ensures we maintain a consistently high level of quality.

My family and I have long employed sustainable farming practices at our three Santa Ynez Valley ranches. Long before it became fashionable, we were using cover crops, compost, and natural soil amendments to condition our soils; avoiding the use of pesticides to ensure the well-being of our environment and vineyard workers; controlling weeds by hand to prevent the use of herbicides that can leach into ground water; and relying on organic sprays to combat mildew and vine pests.

Farming sustainably reflects our longstanding commitment to our land and the Santa Ynez Valley community.

Tasting Notes:

Produced entirely from grapes cultivated at the Home Ranch in eastern Santa Ynez Valley, the Estate Grown Sauvignon Blanc boasts bright citrus, honeydew melon, mineral and subtle herb aromas. On the palate, the wine is rich, mouthwatering and beautifully structured, with vibrant grapefruit, melon and guava flavors culminating in a long, crisp finish invigorated by zesty citrus, spice and mineral tones. Delicious now with a broad range of seafood, poultry and salad dishes, it will develop further nuance with another 1-2 years of bottle age, from the date it was bottled.

**Domaine Gensac, Pas de Deux Red Blend, Armagnac, 2016**

Merlot, Tannat, Fer Servadou

**About the region**:

**Armagnac**, historic region of southwestern [France](https://www.britannica.com/place/France), now contained in the département of Gers. It is a region of hills reaching a height of 1,000 feet (300 m) and is drained by the Gers and other rivers, which descend fanwise from the Lannemezan Plateau. On the slopes of its hills grow the grapes from which the well-known Armagnac [brandy](https://www.britannica.com/topic/brandy) is made.

A part of the duchy of [Gascony](https://www.britannica.com/place/Gascony) in Merovingian and Carolingian times, Armagnac became an [autonomous](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/autonomous) political unit during the 10th century. From the 12th century on it gained strategic importance as a buffer zone between lands controlled by the kings of France (Toulouse) and those controlled by the kings of [England](https://www.britannica.com/place/England) (Guyenne). Its counts used their position to shift [allegiance](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/allegiance) and became highly independent. The [Treaty of Calais](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Treaty-of-Calais) (1360) during the [Hundred Years’ War](https://www.britannica.com/event/Hundred-Years-War) (1337–1453) gave suzerainty over Armagnac to the English; an appeal by the Armagnac [count](https://www.britannica.com/topic/count) Jean I against English rule (1368) gave Charles V of France a pretext to resume that war.

During the 14th century the counts of Armagnac greatly increased their holdings. By the beginning of the 15th century, their lands reached from the [Garonne River](https://www.britannica.com/place/Garonne-River) to the [Pyrenees](https://www.britannica.com/place/Pyrenees) and also included parts of the [Massif Central](https://www.britannica.com/place/Massif-Central).

The position of his holdings, along with the services of Gascon mercenaries, made it possible for Count [Bernard VII](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bernard-VII-comte-dArmagnac) to play a major role in France’s internal conflicts of the early 15th century. The [Armagnac party](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Armagnac-party) was formed in opposition to the [Burgundians](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Burgundian) as a result of the murder of Louis, duke of Orléans (brother of the mad king Charles VI), by [John the Fearless](https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-duke-of-Burgundy), duke of Burgundy (1407). With the marriage of his daughter to the son of the victim, Bernard came to head what had been the Orleanist party. Because the Burgundians often aligned with the English, the Armagnacs seemed to be a national party but were basically a power-seeking group. They gained control of the mad king from 1413. Bernard was named constable, chief of the army, and governor of all finances. The Armagnacs led the resistance to the English [king Henry V’s](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Prince-Hal) invasion of France but suffered a setback in the [Battle of Agincourt](https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Agincourt) (1415). Profiting from discontent caused by the harsh government of the Armagnacs, the Burgundians entered Paris and killed Bernard and many of his followers in the summer of 1418. After 1418 the Armagnacs rapidly lost power as the new king [Charles VII](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-VII-king-of-France) gained leadership and was [reconciled](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reconciled) with Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy. The counts gradually lost their regional position. In 1473 a royal army captured their capital of Lectoure, and Count John V was killed. On the death of his brother Charles in 1497, the countship was united to the crown of France by [Charles VIII](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-VIII). Francis I of France, however, bestowed it upon another Charles (nephew of the last count) and at the same time gave him his sister Margaret in marriage. After the death of her husband, by whom she had no children, Margaret married Henry II of Navarre; and thus the countship of Armagnac came back to the French crown along with the other dominions of their grandson, who became king of France as Henry IV (1607). During the 17th and 18th centuries, Armagnac existed as an administrative division of the gouvernement-général of Guyenne-et-Gascogne.

**About the Winery**:

Deep in the southwest of France, about halfway between Bordeaux and Toulouse, lies the famous region of Armagnac. And right in the heart of it, the Gensac estate stretches across 300 hectares of land and features a beautiful castle from the 13th century, the Château de Gensac. Vines have been cultivated here for over 600 years.

Over the years, the Domaine de Gensac has gained a strong reputation for highest quality red and white wines from regional vine varieties.

By picking all their grapes by hand, they ensure only to collect premium grapes to meet the highest quality standards. As a result, the wines are able to compete with the best of their guild.

Our red wines are mainly made from Tannat, Malbec (Cot), Merlot, Fer Servadou and Cabernet Sauvignon.

The white wines are made from Semillon, Sauvignon gris, Petit Mansegn, Petit Courbu and Colombard.

The exceptional clay-limestone terroir very favorable climatic conditions are why they produce Wines and Armagnacs of character and very high quality.

Tasting Notes: In combination, the selection of these grapes creates notes of wonderfully fresh fruit, underlined by well-rounded, ripe tannins. Our state-of-the-art wine cellar enables us to produce this truly refined and expressive wine.

**$90 Wine Selections**

**Silenus Winery, Tyros Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, 2017**

77% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot

### **In 1968 the perfect spot to grow Cabernet Sauvignon was located in the Southwest corner of the Napa Valley right along Dry Creek.**

In 1968 a walnut orchard in the Southwestern corner of Napa Valley, in what is now the AVA of the Oak Knoll District, was converted to Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards by Bruce Newlan, a rocket scientist from San Jose who vacationed in Napa Valley. The roots of Silenus Winery were firmly established.

The choice of locating in the Oak Knoll District (OKD) was very deliberate. The OKD lies at the southern end of the Napa Valley where the growing season is longer, providing early bud break and a long, leisurely growing season for optimal, balanced ripeness.

The cooler nights and slowly rising daytime temperatures create a naturally long hang time for fruit to achieve bright acidity, great texture, fruit-forward aromas and elegant flavors.

Through the 1970’s the grapes from this vineyard were sold to Silver Oak, Robert Mondavi, and Inglenook wineries and consistently ended up in their reserve wines.

# **Sustainability​**

### **Silenus Winery Sustainability Statement**

Silenus Winery takes its responsibility to be good stewards of the land very seriously and have since their founding in 1968. Sustainability encompasses much more than ordering recycled office paper or reducing pesticides in the vineyard – it is an ongoing, dynamic process all staff participate in daily. Being sustainable means running the winery in a manner that puts the health of the planet and well-being of people in the forefront. They do this each day with every decision made.

### **A Story of Restoration through Carbon Sequestration**

Silenus Winery has been employing healthy environmental practices for many years. The winery firmly believes that sustainable practices for our vineyards and vineyard workers contribute to a better wine and a better life.

Recently Silenus has become one of the first Napa Green properties (the sustainability program from Napa Valley Vintners) to develop a Carbon Farm Plan for the vineyards to become Carbon Neutral. This type of regenerative farming has become the gold standard in sustainability and healthy farming. As other types of farming (organic or biodynamic) maybe be healthy for the grapes, they do not address the use of many fossil fuels or do not consider the backbreaking work that can be required of vineyard workers.

At Silenus the winery practices carbon sequestration, also known as carbon farming, the primary way for a vineyard to become carbon neutral. In addition to replacing fossil fuels with clean energy, Silenus also creates conditions for plants to retain as much carbon in the ground as possible versus releasing it into the atmosphere. This is accomplished primarily by planting specific cover crops in the vineyard in every other row, eventually plowing them back into the soil. Alternating the rows every other year means that the tractor is used half as much, yet the legume heavy blend consistently adds beneficial nitrogen back to the soil which helps with photosynthesis. This lessens the carbon footprint dramatically, as it acts as a natural fertilizer while helping to retain water which means less energy and more sequestration. This type of farming is supplanted with several other efforts, each aimed at reducing CO2 output. The winery is replanting a grape parcel that lies next to Dry Creek from a producing vineyard to a riparian buffer of native trees, plants and grasses. These local plants help to eliminate invasive species which create problems. In addition, a natural compost (which includes spent skins and seeds from the grapes) is added to the vineyard soil which additionally helps to reduce many tons of carbon.

The efforts at Silenus Winery for Carbon Sequestration have neutralized the carbon footprint of the winery, and has had the net effect of removing 886 tons of carbon from the atmosphere annually, equivalent of taking 188 typical cars off the road for a year – every year, while enhancing our vineyard practices and quality.

In addition to these efforts, in 2012 Silenus Winery installed 25 custom-built bluebird birdhouses. Studies have shown that bluebirds can eat up to 85% of the pests that cause problems in vineyards. By encouraging bluebirds to nest on our property we eliminate the need to use pesticides in our vineyards. For almost a decade we have had our lovely bluebird tenants that come back every year to help protect our vines and keep the place lively.

### **What is Napa Green**

Not everyone who visits the Napa Valley may know that in 1968 local leaders had the foresight to recognize that the only way to protect the valley from future over development was to create America’s first Agricultural Preserve. That is the reason large swaths of the Napa Valley remain planted to vineyards, making the Napa Valley a slice of paradise unique to the world.

Napa Green is a comprehensive sustainability certification program for vineyards and wineries in the Napa Valley. Soil-to-bottle stewardship includes protecting and restoring the Napa River watershed; saving energy and water; reducing waste and carbon footprint; and being conscientious employers and good neighbors. Independent, third-party certification of farms and winemaking facilities makes Napa Green one of the most rigorous sustainability accreditations the wine industry offers.

The Vineyards: This area is now designated the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area), and is one of the most diverse growing regions in the Napa Valley. The proximity to the San Pablo Bay provides the fruit with warm days and cool nights.

It has a perfect convergence of growing conditions, the mildest climate in the Napa Valley, alluvial soils that provide the right balance of nutrients, and the longest growing season in Napa Valley that results in full and complex development in the grapes. The result is a lush, balanced and deeply rich wine.

## Silenus & Tyros

Zeus, God of all Gods in ancient Greek mythology, had a son named Dionysus, God of Wine. At Dionysus’ birth Zeus appointed Silenus to teach his young son how to debauch and enjoy the finer things of life – like drinking wine! Together they traveled the world, planting grapevines and raising bees for pollination while always enjoying copious amounts of wine. They carried a fennel stalk topped with a pinecone as a sign of hospitality. The Silenus label incorporates these elements – the grapevine, the fennel staff with a pinecone and the bees.

## Tyros: Beginner or Apprentice

As Silenus mentored his charge Dionysus, God of Wine, Dionysus became the apprentice, or Tyros to Silenus. We see Dionysus on the Tyros label as he has clearly been debauching. He seems to be asking us to join him in a glass of wine, and to above all **ENJOY**!

Tyros wine is the perfect expression of the Napa Valley. The vineyards that contribute to this wine span most of the AVA’s (American Vinicultural Areas) in the Napa Valley and include the Pope Valley at the North end of the valley, through St. Helena and the Oak Knoll district and end up in the Carneros AVA in the Southern end of the valley. They are blended together to form a harmonious and expressive wine.

The Cabernet Sauvignon portion of the wine includes 8% from the Silenus Estate Vineyards and another 21% from the Oak Knoll District AVA, 17% from the St. Helena AVA, 7% from Pope Valley. The Merlot comes primarily from the Oak Knoll AVA with 15% and the Carneros AVA with 8%.

The wine was aged for 22 months in 50% new French oak, 10% new American oak and the rest in neutral barrels. This blend of oak integrates perfectly with the lush fruitiness of the wine and lends just the right amount of tannins for a perfect balance.

### **Tasting Notes:**

The Tyros Cabernet Sauvignon has a deep ruby red color with beautiful garnet tones reaching the rim. The nose introduces rich flavors of perfectly ripened plum, black cherries and playful notes of Tahitian vanilla bean. True to its classic Napa style, the palate is dominated by its fruit forward personality with secondary tones of bay leaf, dried rose petals and toasty oak lingering on its velvety long finish.

**Keplinger, Vermillion Red Blend, Sonoma/Sierra Foothills, 2017**

### Grenache 40%, Syrah 20%, Cabernet Sauvignon 10%, Petite Sirah 5%, Counoise 3%, Viognier 2%

# Winemaker

The culture of wine has been a part of my life since I can remember. My dad had a wine cellar, which was the source of my childhood wine bottle collection – I also collected rocks, an early indication of my future as a winegrower. Wine accompanied every gourmet dinner my mom prepared nightly; this combination of food and wine was an important part of our family evenings together.

I always had an intense curiosity for science, a huge appreciation of art, and a gravitation toward and revitalization in nature – all which dynamically come together in winemaking. In 1998, I moved to California to attend the MS program in Enology at UCDavis.

Since UC Davis, I have worked with Heidi Barrett, Kathy Joseph, Michel Rolland, and David Abreu. Since 2004, I have been the winemaker for some exciting projects, including Cellers Melis (Priorat), Kenzo Estate, Fort Ross, Sarocka, Scullly, Arrow & Branch, and Bryant Family Vineyards. I am currently focused solely on Keplinger Wines.

I absolutely love what I do – I constantly strive to make great wines, respond to the curveballs of Mother Nature, and respect that each wine is a reflection not only of its origin, but the variables and characteristics of a particular vintage.

Helen Keplinger

### **ABOUT THE PRODUCER**

Vermillion is the brainchild of husband-and-wife team Helen Keplinger and DJ Warner. The quality of wine is based on the quality of all its inputs, good vineyards, smart farming, and pure winemaking. They make this wine from the vineyards to the bottle, working closely with grape growers from awesome little vineyard sites in Napa Valley, Sonoma County, and the Sierra Foothills. They’ve sought out interesting sites with great dirt, farm them with care and thought, and use traditional winemaking to craft honest wine and make an artisanal red wine blend to match any occasion, any food, any time. Vermillion is a terroir-driven, delicious, hand-crafted wine to be enjoyed any night of the week.

Vermillion is Keplinger's "2nd label" and the Vermillion red gets much of the same fruit and the same expert winemaking as the pricier, fully-allocated Keplinger wines. Helen Keplinger and DJ Warner set out to create a pure, high-quality Rhone style red blend with the Vermillion label and what they've created is even more than that.

**TASTING NOTES:** Helen Keplinger (Grace Family, Bryant Family, Carte Blanche, and many more) makes this drink-me-every-day red blend that is mostly their beloved Grenache grape. It is vividly bright and juicy, easy-drinking (as intended) and dances all over the palate. Crazy delicious --- pretty much everything Helen does overdelivers in a massive way. Packed with bright juicy but refined blackberries, spicecake, herbs and warm, fresh pie- wonderful balance, too -- dangerously drinkable!

Food Pairing: Red meat, white meat, hard cheeses, cured meats

Cheers!

Shelli & Maverick