

## March Monthly Two-Pack: A Tale of Two Chardonnays

**\$55 For the pair**  
Regularly \$32 & \$34 respectively



Chardonnay may be considered the Queen of the grape world. At its best, it is transcendent, with the power to alter one's perception about what flavor can be. At its worst, it can be like drinking buttered popcorn. Though first mention of it was made in the 1600's in the Mâconnais, a region in the southern part of Burgundy, Chardonnay is believed to have been widely planted in the region long before that. Today, it is the most widely planted white grape in the world with over 494,000 acres under vine. One of key reasons for Chardonnay's widespread popularity is its adaptability. In both growing habitat and wine style, Chardonnay is one of the most versatile grapes around. For our March two-pack, we have selected two Chardonnays: one from its native land, Burgundy, and one from its adopted homeland, California.

### **Joseph Drouhin Saint-Véran France 2021 (regularly \$32)**

The Drouhin family has been in the wine business since 1880. They are currently entering their fifth generation and have spent the past 140 years expanding their vineyard holdings up and down the length of Burgundy – from its southernmost tip in the Mâconnais to the northern apex of Chablis. The family was also an early proponent of the greatness of Oregon terroir and purchased land there in the late 1980's. Suffice it to say, these folks know Chardonnay! Added in 1971, Saint-Véran is the most recent sub-appellation in the Mâconnais. Thanks to its more southerly location, the grapes for this wine reach a full ripeness and display this ripeness in the subsequent wine; these ripe flavors are balanced and kept in check by cool evenings and the chalky, limestone soils in which the vines grow. After settling, two thirds of the wine is fermented in stainless steel vats, while one third is fermented in 500 litre, neutral oak barrels. According to Véronique Drouhin, this is “[a] wine that smiles and makes you smile! It is stylistically close to Pouilly-Fuissé, with its golden hue, its greenish reflection and its refreshing taste. The aromas are reminiscent of the ripe Chardonnay grape, with subtle notes of musk. A pleasant roundness coats the palate.”

### **Frog's Leap “Shale and Stone” Napa Valley CA 2021 (regularly \$34)**

For all of those who are familiar with us and our preferences, our love of Frog's Leap is no secret. Begun in 1981 by John Williams and Larry Turley, the first Frog's Leap vintage was released in 1982. Turley eventually sold his part of the business to Williams and it has been in the family ever since – the second generation is now at the helm. The Williams family has been making wine in Rutherford since before Rutherford was an appellation; they were an integral voice in its formation. The family has also been an active voice in encouraging sustainable practices, from guaranteeing to pay more for organically farmed grapes in their early years, to their current farming practices. The wines themselves also follow a sustainable model: fermented with native yeasts, unfiltered or filtered, minimal intervention or SO<sub>2</sub>, etc. Yet their wines are not new-age “natural” wines; they are expertly crafted, clean examples of what these practices can create when employed with knowledge and care. The winery's first vintage of Chardonnay was in 1985, and the wine has been made with grapes sourced from dry-farmed, biodynamic vineyards planted in shale and sandstone ever since. After harvest, the grapes undergo their initial fermentation in new French oak barrels then, at the height of the fermentation the wine is transferred into concrete tanks. “The time in oak allows Chardonnay the room to broaden its aromatic range to match the variety's promise, while the long cooling-off period *sur lie* gives the wine depth and incredible freshness. The end result is a Chardonnay that challenges preconceptions of what a Napa Chardonnay can do.”