

October 2-Pack
Bordeaux Varieties on Parade

\$49 for the Pair (regularly \$36 & \$25 respectively)

The Bordeaux wine region is quite literally the stuff of legends. Though grapes have been planted in the region since before the Common Era, for ease of this discussion, the history of Bordeaux as we know it began in 1152 CE with the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry Plantagenet – aka Henry II, King of England. The union opened trade between the countries that would change the English wine palate and, in turn, change and grow Bordeaux wine production into what it is today. Bordeaux was further changed by the influence of Dutch traders in the 17th Century, who pushed for an emphasis on fine wines and introduced the technique of barrel sterilization with sulphur. It was just a quick hop-skip-and-a-jump from the visit of Thomas Jefferson to the Napoleonic Classification of 1855, to the development of proper wine regions in the New World, to the near-global domination of Cabernet Sauvignon; and we've covered a few thousand years of wine history in just a few sentences.

The key thing to remember about Bordeaux is that it's all about blends. Blending different grapes together achieves two important goals: maintaining consistency between vintages and, more importantly, providing a bit of insurance during a hard year – if for some reason all of one grape is destroyed, chances are that another will be viable, through earlier or later ripening for example. It is here that we get to the meat of this month's 2-Pack: the grapes that go into a red Bordeaux blend. There are three primary grape varieties allowed in the blend: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot; Petit Verdot, Carménère, and Malbec are also allowed but are used in much smaller percentages, if at all. Bordeaux-blend wines have spread their tentacles across both Old- and New-World regions, most notably for our purpose, Tuscany and Washington State. While the classic blend has a longer history in Washington, thanks to the arrival of French Canadians in the 1800's, its iteration in Tuscany, i.e. the "Super Tuscan", has undoubtedly stolen the limelight!



Tenuta di Trinoro “Le Cupole” Tuscany Italy 2021 (regularly \$36)

Andrea Franchetti Founded Tenuta di Trinoro in the early 1990s. His property in southern Tuscany has clay-rich soils similar to those of Saint-Emilion in Bordeaux; it was these soils that influenced his vineyard plantings and winemaking. Throughout the years, Tenuta di Trinoro has established itself as one of the preeminent producers of Bordelaise-style "Super Tuscan" wines. Trinoro's second label, Le Cupole, was first produced in 1995. Though the four grape varieties in the blend – Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Petit Verdot – remain the same, the ratio changes with the dictates of each vintage. The 2021 cépage is 56% Merlot; Cabernet Franc 26%; Cabernet Sauvignon 11%; Petit Verdot 7%. The wine is fermented in stainless prior to being transferred to cement and neutral oak barriques to age. This vintage displays a youthful exuberance despite its depth of fruit, rich color, and extracted tannin structure. At our recent wine seminar with Franchetti, this was the darling of the line-up.

L'Ecole No. 41 “Frenchtown” Columbia Valley WA 2022 (regularly \$25)

The French Canadians came to the Walla Walla Valley in the early 1800's and founded an appropriately named settlement called Frenchtown. With them they brought vines and winemaking know-how; by the 1860's the valley had a thriving wine scene. The L'Ecole 41 Frenchtown is an homage to the hardy, grape-loving folks who brought viticulture to this beautiful valley. Now in its third generation of winemakers, L'Ecole was founded in 1983 – one of only three wineries in valley at the time – with the intent showcasing Columbia Valley terroir. The Baker and Clubb families have been instrumental in promoting Washington State wines and furthering the reach of sustainable wine production in the region. The 2022 is Merlot dominant; backed up with Cabernet Sauvignon and seasoned with Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec, it has a dash of some Rhone varieties thrown in for good measure (it was not just the Bordelaise that emigrated after all). The wine is rife with fresh flavors of dark cherry, plum, and blueberry, with hints of violets and a silky tannin structure.