



STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS



Focus on Alsace

Great Value Red Bordeaux

The Loire versus the Cape: Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc

Trophy-winning Solà Fred from Catalonia

Focus on Alsace

The vineyards of Alsace run in a long, thin north-south strip protected by the Vosges Mountains; here the multitude of soil types produce a fascinating selection of wines. The range of grape varieties offers some welcome relief in a world seemingly awash with Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. These wines are an ideal match with a huge variety of food, not just the Asian and fusion dishes promoted enthusiastically by the region's professional body.

Here are the fruits of my visit to Alsace in the summer. As the region has enjoyed a string of excellent vintages we felt it was time to feature these wines, so admired within France yet all too often ignored here.

Gordon Coates
October 2011

In the list below, the numbers after the alcohol level offer a guide to sweetness: 1 being bone dry; 2 off-dry; 3 showing noticeable sweetness; 4 medium to sweet; and 5 luscious.

Mixed Cases Each with a discount of 10% on bottle prices.

ALS111 Alsace Varieties £126.50

Two bottles each of six white wines

Bernhard & Reibel, Riesling, Coup de Foudre, 2009

Jean-Marie Haag, Imagine All The Wine, 2010

Jean-Marie Haag, Pinot Gris, Vallée Noble, 2010

André Kientzler, Muscat, 2009

Mader, Pinot Blanc, 2010

Jean-Luc & Bruno Meyer, Gewurztraminer, 2009

ALS211 Grand Cru Case £181.00

Three bottles each of four white wines

François Braun, Riesling, Grand Cru Pfingstberg, 2007

André Kientzler, Riesling, Grand Cru Osterberg, 2007

Mader, Gewurztraminer, Grand Cru Rosacker, 2009

Jean-Luc & Bruno Meyer, Gewurztraminer, Grand Cru Eichberg, 2009

Domaine Bernhard & Reibel, Châtenois

While the elegant Cecile Bernhard is the head of this family owned domaine, her energetic son Pierre is driving progress both in the vineyard and the cellar. On each visit he has had to break off from work in the field to make an eloquent and passionate presentation of his wines. Whilst the Bernhards produce the usual range of Alsace varieties, their land is best suited to Riesling, and it is this variety that excels here. The wines are certified organic, and the Weingarten vineyard is worked bio-dynamically.

Bernhard & Reibel, Riesling, Coup de Foudre, 2009, 13° 1

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code BEP109

Named after the large, old, oval barrels in which it ages. Vibrant green apple nose, touch of stone. Clean attack opening to a delicious ripe lime and pink grapefruit cocktail. Youthful and already entrancing; this will develop well. Now-2015

Bernhard & Reibel, Riesling Weingarten, 2008, 12.5° 1

Bottle £17.50 Case £199.50 Code BEP408

The Weingarten vineyard, consisting of decomposed pink granite, isn't a Grand Cru, though it fits every criteria: it's an historic site once owned by the Bishops of Strasbourg, lying in the mid-slope on a steep pitch. Open, focused and showing a flinty complexity. Intense ripe apple and citrus fruit. Classic style and a wonderful finish. Now-2015

François Braun, Orschwihr

Pascale Braun is now in charge of this 21 hectare, family-owned estate. He explains that his father looked at his mixed farm over thirty years ago, decided he had the right land to make good wine, and focussed solely on growing grapes. Here they aim at making wines which are 'précis', i.e. true to their grape variety.

François Braun, Riesling, Grand Cru Pfingsberg, 2007, 13.5° 2

Bottle £14.25 Case £162.45 Code BRB307

Braun's Riesling is acknowledged as one of the finest and most consistent wines produced from the pebbly sandstone Grand Cru of Pfingsberg. Open nose with a touch of honeyed complexity. Superb depth and concentration of flavour, yet so elegantly balanced. Delicious and well developed. Now-2013

Jean-Marie Haag, Soultzmatt

After a successful buying trip five years ago, we somewhat lost track of Jean-Marie and Myriam Haag, but on a recent visit they were very much on form. As with several of our other suppliers in Alsace, the cellar is below the family home in the centre of one of the many unfeasibly attractive villages nestled into the lower slopes of the Vosges mountains. The estate covers about 6 hectares, half of which is planted to Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer, followed by Riesling, Pinot Noir and smaller amounts of the other authorised varieties.

Jean-Marie Haag, Imagine All The Wine, 2010, 13° 2

Bottle £11.95 Case £136.23 Code HAA210

Myriam oversees all aspects of this wine, with its clear flute bottle and striking modern label. A blend of mainly Pinot Gris along with Riesling and Pinot Blanc. On the nose this is full yet zesty, while on the palate floral and grapey elements combine to make an attractive, uncomplicated whole. Now-2013

Jean-Marie Haag, Riesling, Vallée Noble, 2010, 13° 1

Bottle £12.50 Case £142.50 Code HAA410

From a vineyard on sandy limestone soils contiguous with the famous Zinnkoepfle Grand Cru. So bright, perfumed and open, with exuberant lemon and lime fruit checked by mineral depth. Mouthwatering. Now-2015



Jean-Marie Haag, Pinot Gris, Vallée Noble, 2010, 13° 2

Bottle £12.95 Case £147.63 Code HAA110

Vallée Noble is a favoured *terroir* in Soultzmat, protected by the Petit and Grand Ballon. This has that characteristic but indefinable varietal aroma, perhaps warm spiced dough. Good weight of ripe stone fruit, finishes clean and dry. Now-2014

André Kientzler, Ribeauvillé

Quiet and thoughtful Eric Kientzler maintains the distinct house style here. He picks early, and performs a rigorous sorting of the grapes so no poor or botrytis-affected grapes get into the vats. As a result, the wines are all startlingly clear in colour, offer up deliciously fresh scents, and are very pure and dry with moderate alcohol. It's all about understated grace and finesse here. There's a wide range of wines, as befits the matching of varieties to the complex and diverse soils in the vineyards on the rolling hills around Ribeauvillé.

André Kientzler, Muscat, 2009, 12.5° 1

Bottle £12.95 Case £147.63 Code KIE509

The Archetypal Alsatian aperitif, made from halves of Muscat d'Alsace and Muscat Ottonel. Engaging aromas of ripe table grapes and white flowers, then grape flavours dance across the palate to a refreshing finish. Now-2013

André Kientzler, Gewurztraminer, 2009, 13.5° 1

Bottle £13.50 Case £153.90 Code KIE209

Very pale gold. An almost explosive perfume leads to a palate that combines this variety's hallmark preserved fruit and floral characters with mineral complexity. So elegant and refined. Now-2015

André Kientzler, Riesling Grand Cru Osterberg, 2007, 14° 1

Bottle £20.95 Case £238.83 Code KIE607

Rising above the village of Ribeauvillé, steeply sloping and south-east facing, this is Riesling country *par excellence*. Explosive nose of citrus zest. On the palate this is so seamless and elegant it seems almost ethereal. So persistent, so promising, this will reward those with patience. Now-2015

Mader, Hunawihl

Young Jérôme Mader is extremely talented and growing in confidence with each vintage at the estate his father founded after leaving the co-op in this tiny village. We always admire the value at this small - under 9 hectares - domaine, and prices remain fair. The land is in conversion to organic viticulture here, and the fruit is picked early and given very gentle handling and low temperature fermentation in stainless steel tanks, so as to preserve clean, fresh, fruit flavours.

Mader, Pinot Blanc, 2010, 12.5° 1

Bottle £10.25 Case £116.85 Code MAD110

Jérôme bottled two cuvées of Pinot Blanc this vintage; we preferred this textbook early bottling. Very bright pale lemon. Attractively fresh with ripe apple fruit. Creamy, well balanced and drinkable. Now-2013

Mader, Gewurztraminer, Grand Cru Rosacker, 2009, 13.5° 3

Bottle £17.95 Case £204.63 Code MAD609

The Rosacker, east facing, with very pebbly soil over limestone, is one of the top vineyards in the whole of Alsace. Mid lemon. Delicate floral and cinnamon aromas. The powerful and spicy palate is enhanced by a sweet cherry nuance. Finishes with the complexity of a warm vintage. Now-2015

Mader, Riesling, Vendange Tardive, 2009, 12° 4

Bottle £32.95 Case £375.63 Code MAD709

Expansive nose of pure ripe apricot. Mouthfilling, silk textured, such clean tropical fruit flavours. This awesome late harvest wine has 90g/l residual sugar, yet maintains wonderful poise. Early days. Now-2019

Jean-Luc & Bruno Meyer, Eguisheim

In the narrow streets of Eguisheim the Meyer family run a cycle hire business and rent out holiday flats whilst also producing an extremely popular range of wines. Jean-Luc is now taking a back seat, leaving son, Bruno, firmly in charge. After a couple of years experimenting with organic practices on two small plots, Bruno is convinced of the benefits and is now converting the full 10 hectares of the estate.

Jean-Luc & Bruno Meyer, Pinot Blanc, 2009, 12.5° 1

Bottle £9.75 Case £111.15 Code MEY109

This is a perennial favourite, but the 2009 vintage is really superb. An open and attractive scent of peach blossom, melon and honey. Such lovely weight of fruit; pears and cream, with crisp balance. This makes a delicious aperitif. Now-2012

Jean-Luc & Bruno Meyer, Pinot Gris, 2010, 13.8° 2

Bottle £11.75 Case £133.95 Code MEY210

The honeyed, smoky nose leaps out of the glass, while the palate of dried apricot is given richness by the low yields in 2010. Balanced and long. Now-2014

Jean-Luc & Bruno Meyer, Gewurztraminer, 2009, 13.5° 2

Bottle £11.25 Case £128.25 Code MEY309

Mid lemon. Bright nose with textbook rose petal notes. Harmonious mouthful of lychees and Turkish delight, honey textured, with a long peppery finish. Now-2013

Jean-Luc & Bruno Meyer, Gewurztraminer, Grand Cru Eichberg, 2009, 13.6° 3

Bottle £13.95 Case £159.03 Code MEY509

Mid gold. Exotic tropical fruit married with the smoky, caramel flavours so typical of the terroir of the south-facing Eichberg vineyard. Powerful and concentrated, rich rather than overtly sweet. Now-2015



Great Value Red Bordeaux

As written up by **The Wine Gang**
(www.thewinegang.com)

We tend to be modest when it comes to our Bordeaux selection: we don't pretend to be lifelong experts in the wines of this huge region, and (to be honest), if we are buying reds from the stock for our own drinking, then our hands tend to reach for wines from the Rhône or the Languedoc before Bordeaux.

However, we reckon our mildly critical approach to Bordeaux might work to make us fairly shrewd buyers. We can't abide the sort of lean, stalky, slightly musty wine which has all too often marred the reputation of the region. By contrast, in a great vintage like 2009 - when a hot summer and perfect harvest conditions meant that a large crop of beautifully ripe grapes was picked - even modestly priced wines can be really excellent. These two, equally Merlot dominated, have gone down well at customer tastings, and both caught the eye of the experienced journalistic palates

of the Wine Gang (www.thewinegang.com) at our summer press tasting, hence their quotes and scores appended, and hence the more expensive wine being listed first. You can buy unsplit cases of either for 7.5% off the bottle prices, but to encourage you to try both there's 10% off a mixed case of six of each.



Château Les Petits Moines, Blaye, Côtes de Bordeaux, France, 2009, 14.5°

Bottle £8.75 Case with 7.5% discount £97.13 Code LPM109

Awarded a gold medal in the Bordeaux *Challenge International du Vin* in May 2011, Frederic Heraud's youthful and vigorous Bordeaux is so impressive, showing the great ripeness of this grand vintage. Very deep and solid hue. Attractive cassis and oak aromas. Weighty, silkily textured, this delivers powerful red and black fruit heightened with notes of mint and clove. This has the intensity and correct tannic structure of a much more expensive Bordeaux. Now-2014

"What a brilliant value for money claret. For starters, it's mind-blowingly herbal in aroma thank to its very seductive streak of rosemary. Then on the palate it has a satisfying tight structure of well-defined tannins and a good balance of blackcurrant fruit and cloves to finish. Another French triumph. 90/100", www.thewinegang.com, August 2011.

Château Haut Moulinat, Bordeaux, France, 2009, 13.5°

Bottle £7.25 Case with 7.5% discount £80.48 Code HAM109

Produced by Jean Marc Rambaud in Saint-Pey-d'Armens, just east of St. Emilion. Scents of cherries, cream and a touch of vanilla. Light, fresh and juicy red fruit - fraises de bois - backed by a little well-integrated tannin. Smooth and elegant at this price. Surprisingly intense and lengthy finish, displaying fruit and spice. Now-2013

"As if last month's incredible value for money claret (Ch Les Petits Moines) from SVS wasn't enough, here's yet another. A soft, easy-going but ripe, strawberry and vanilla-flavoured wine with a nutty, savoury palate and a long finish. Great stuff. 89/100", www.thewinegang.com, September 2011.

A mixed dozen, including six bottles of each, with a 10% discount

£86.40 Code: BORDOZ11

The Loire versus the Cape:

Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc

An intriguing contrast: Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc from what one considers the natural home of these white grapes, the Loire, against examples of the same grapes in the Cape. Although South Africa has a much warmer climate, both these grapes thrive there. Sauvignon Blanc enjoys patches of calcareous soils. As for Chenin, there is more planted in the Cape than in the Loire, and when these two wine regions go head to head it's usually the South Africans who win the dry Chenin Blanc prizes, whereas the Loire win on sweeter styles. Both the Chenin Blancs here have just a tiny, barely noticeable, hint of residual sugar, making them very appealing apéritifs.

We open with South Africa. All wines are available by the case at 7.5% off, with a mixed dozen including three of each available below.

Joostenberg, Little J White, Western Cape, South Africa, 2010, 13.5° [Screwcap]

Bottle £7.95 Case with 7.5% discount £88.25 Code JOO110

95% Chenin Blanc from the Agter-Paarl area, enlivened with 5% Viognier, bottled by young Tyrrel Myburgh at his ancient family farm near Paarl. This is made in a bright and breezy style.

Scent of ripe pears. Bright attack, a real fruit salad of ripe red apples, pears and even mango. Juicy, fleshy, and rather joyous - just a few grams of residual sugar add to its appeal, especially as an aperitif. Now-2012

Bon Cap, The Ruins Sauvignon Blanc, Eilandia, South Africa, 2010, 13° [Screwcap]

Bottle £7.95 Case with 7.5% discount £88.25 Code BON610

This Sauvignon Blanc is from organically farmed (certified) grapes grown in a pale-soiled limestone-based vineyard near the Breede river.

Crisply green-fruited - lemon and lime - with a hint of smokiness. Excellent value for this bright and mineral example. Now-2012

Château de Putille, Anjou Blanc Sec, France, 2010, 12.5°

Bottle £8.50 Case with 7.5% discount £94.35 Code PUT710

This wine has a mildly old fashioned label and is in a traditional tall Anjou bottle - but what's in the bottle is wholly *de nos jours*, with surprising concentration.

Ripe pears and a touch of honey on the nose. Attractive weight and rich texture, with bright, pure flavours of apple and pear: a lovely example of young Chenin Blanc, and it finishes really well. Now-2013

"Another cracking Chenin Blanc wine here, this time from its spiritual home, the Loire. This has a mineral, almost earthy character on the nose but the palate launches into full-on juicy, crunchy, chewy apple freshness. 91/100", www.thewinegang.com, August 2011.

Domaine des Corbillières, Touraine, Fabel Barbou, France, 2009, 13.5°

Bottle £9.95 Case with 7.5% discount £110.45 Code COR209

This has long been a favourite here, as the smoky intensity of this old vine Sauvignon Blanc rivals many wines from Pouilly-Fumé. It's named after Dominique Barbou's great-grandfather, who was one of the pioneers of Sauvignon Blanc in Touraine.

Green-tinged. Open, inviting nose. On the palate: ripe yet elegant, displaying cut grass and citrus notes, with an attractive mineral edge. Very fine in this vintage. Now-2012

A mixed dozen, including three bottles of each of the four wines, with a 7.5% discount

£95.32 Code: LCDOZ11

Trophy for Solà Fred

We tasted this wine from the relatively new D.O. of Montsant (which adjoins the better known Priorat) in Catalonia in July and were immediately bowled over by its vibrancy and character. When we turned to the back label we weren't then wholly surprised to see that it's made from 90% Carignan (with 10% Grenache), as we have long been fans of this oft-derided grape. From 20-40 year old vines, grown on a mix of chalk, clay and schist soils, this shows so clearly Carignan's fragrant wildness and charm. Wild boar springs to mind as a great food match, but if you can't shoot one of these in your back garden it would be just as enjoyable with pork or indeed any robust meat dish.

Our selection has just been vindicated by the recent announcement of this wine winning a top Trophy, that for **Best Red Under £10** in the **New Wave Spanish Wine** awards. In June over 1000 wines were tasted by a very experienced British judging panel headed by Tim Atkin for these awards, and this came out top in a large field in this category.

Celler El Masroig, Montsant, Solà Fred, Spain, 2009, 14°

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code ELM109

Scent of blueberries and sour cherries. Bright and juicy raspberry and blueberry flavours, peppery and with a hint of leather. Stimulating. Now-2013



Delivery Charges* to one address are as follows:

1-5 bottles - £8.50 6-11 bottles - £6.95 1 case of 12 bottles - £5.50
13-24 bottles - £8.50 > 25 bottles - £10.00

Please note: free delivery for orders of £250 or more (to one address), or over £75 in the Winchester area. (*Delivery prices vary for delivery to the highlands, islands and Northern Ireland - please ask us for a quote).

For orders and all enquiries, please contact:

Simon Taylor: simon@stonevine.co.uk
Gordon Coates: gordon@stonevine.co.uk
François Dupont: francois@stonevine.co.uk
Camilla Sellars: camilla@stonevine.co.uk
Phil Hughes: phil@stonevine.co.uk

Telephone: 01962 712351 Fax: 01962 717545
Email: sales@stonevine.co.uk Website: www.stonevine.co.uk

No. 13 Humphrey Farms, Hazeley Road, Twyford, Winchester, SO21 1QA

Opening times: Weekdays: 9.00am-6.00pm Saturdays: 9.30am-4.00pm

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