

Brooks Wines

from McMinnville: Great Pinot Noir and Riesling

Brooks winery was founded by Portland-born Jimi Brooks, who trained in Beaujolais before working at Willakenzie and Maysara, whilst founding Brooks in 1998. His sudden death in 2004 might have ended the venture, but so highly regarded was he in the Oregon wine community that family and friends rallied round to keep it going. Since 2006 the wine has been made by tall, pony-tailed Chris Williams, with Jimi's sister Janie running the business as steward for Jimi's son Pascal, now 15. (As Pascal says, "I love seeing the expression on people's faces when I tell them I own a winery"!)

Jimi was an early convert to organic cultivation. The estate's own vineyards are all farmed bio-dynamically, and in addition bio-dynamically farmed fruit is bought in from Maysara, plus some other grapes. Jimi was also a lover of Riesling, and the two Rieslings, both dry and both of relatively low alcohol, are superb, richly textured and intensely flavoured. An earlier vintage of Ara Riesling has been served at a State Dinner in the White House itself! As for the terrific Pinots, Burgundy lovers should buy these wines and also consider laying them down – top Oregon Pinot ages superbly.

Note the relatively low alcohol levels here, testifying to the quality of Oregon as a top cool climate region for the Pinot varieties and Riesling.

2008 Amycas, Willamette Valley, 13.1°

Bottle £13.50 Case with 10% off £145.80 Code BRP608

30% Pinot Gris, 23% Pinot Blanc, 15% Gewurztraminer, 14% Chardonnay, 10% Muscat and 6% Riesling; an Alsace blend (with Chardonnay!) given time on the lees to gain weight. Scent dominated by Pinot Gris: floral and pears. Mildly exotic fruit palate with a fine thread of acidity; and finishes with a peck of white pepper and spice. Now-2012

2010 Runaway White, Pinot Blanc, Willamette Valley, 12.5°

Bottle £13.75 Case with 10% off £148.50 Code BRP710

Interesting scents: white flowers, citrus, with yeasty and liquorice notes. So well-textured, offering mouth-filling stone fruit and citrus. Crisp acidity balances a little residual sugar. A lovely aperitif wine. Now-2013

2007 Riesling, Willamette Valley, 11.1°

Bottle £16.50 Case with 10% off £178.20 Code BRP807

Hint of green. Overt lime and green apple character, very crisp and dry. Sherberty but also steely. Finishes with lime zest. Now-2013

Brooks Mixed Case

Six whites and six reds, including two bottles of each of: Amycas, Runaway White, Riesling, Runaway Red, Willamette Valley Pinot Noir and Janus Pinot Noir with a discount of just over 10%

£189.00 Code BRPDOZ

2008 Ara Riesling, Willamette Valley, 12.7°

Bottle £19.75 Case with 10% off £213.30 Code BRP908

Superb wine: Double Gold (the highest honor) at the 2011 Oregon Wine Awards; and so intense and full-bodied that it's difficult to believe that it's only 12.7 degrees of alcohol. Pungent, high-toned scent. Thrilling mouthful of ripe lime, pink grapefruit and white peach. Such breadth, almost creamy, but also focussed and layered with flavours. Now-2017

2009 Runaway Red, Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, Oregon, 13.3°

Bottle £16.50 Case with 10% off £178.20 Code BRP209

Pale raspberry tone. Gentle strawberry scent. A beautifully pure and light Pinot, showing berries, cranberry and the merest hint of rhubarb. Crisp, classic Pinot. If this behaves like the 2008 vintage it will take on flesh and be even more attractive in a few months. Now-2014

2007 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, 12.4°

Bottle £19.95 Case with 10% off £215.46 Code BRP107

Pale ruby. Classic young Pinot scents of summer pudding red fruits, and nutmeg and coffee hints from the oak. Beautifully light, silky and supple, with perfumed berried fruit, delicately spiced, delivering very Burgundian aromatics. Lots of volume. Very long. An Oregon Chambolle? *"Lovely toasted oak on the nose that integrates well with blueberry and strawberry fruits. A touch of farmyard and earth lifts the palate too. Lovely length and plenty of potential for more development. 17.5/20"*, Richard Hemming, on www.jancisrobinson.com, 12th October 2009. Now-2014. (The 2009 vintage follows at the same price).

2007 Janus Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, 12.4°

Bottle £24.95 Case with 10% off £269.46 Code BRP307

Mocha oak dominates on the nose. This is still pretty young, with fragrant red fruit buttressed by fine tannins, and refreshing acidity. Quite velvety, with the merest hints of game and sous bois (those earthy forest floor aromas) which suggest how it will develop. Double decant to open it out if you drink now. Now-2016. The 2008 vintage follows at the same price.



2010 Summer Whites from France and Italy



All newly arrived, and all with 13 degrees of alcohol or less, these whites make perfect summer drinking whether as aperitifs, over light lunches, or for parties.

Domaine des Creyssels, Picpoul de Pinet, France, 2010, 13°

Bottle £7.95 Case £90.63 Code CRE110

From vineyards within sight of the Med, and a real favourite here at SVS. The Picpoul (or Piquepoul grape) is the traditional accompaniment to the oysters from the local beds in the Bassin de Thau near Sète – and not just in the south but in smart Paris bistros too. In the old Occitan tongue Picpoul means “lip-stinger”, due to the grape’s natural acidity, but this wine is a lot friendlier than that!

Green-tinged. Light scent of flowers. Bright fruit - kiwi and lime - but as usual with a mildly herbal note. Does it show the merest hint of salt in this vintage? It’s possible given the estate’s proximity to the sea. As appealing as an aperitif as with shell-fish.

Château Ballan-Larquette, Bordeaux Blanc, France, 2010, 12.5°

Bottle £8.25 Case £94.05 Code BAN110

Bordeaux Blanc is such an out of fashion style – which is understandable given the often fruitless and tired abominations which passed for Bordeaux Blanc (or, even worse, Entre-deux-Mers) in the past. The result is that a wine such as this now represents excellent value. From an estate about 40 kms south-east of Bordeaux, owned by the Chaigne family for six generations, this is from halves of Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon.

Attractive ripe apple scents; and that ripe red apple character follows on to the palate. Zippily refreshing but with some custardy richness from the Sémillon too. A charming winner.

La Battistina, Gavi, Italy, 2010, 12°

Bottle £8.25 Case £94.05 Code BAT610

Though Piemonte is a region renowned for its reds, the local white, made from Cortese grapes, is a firm favourite.

Very pale. Ripe pear, citrus and crisp pineapple. Light and fresh, but with no lack of texture. One of those mildly neutral Italian whites which slip down so easily.

Domaine de l’Aumonier, Touraine Sauvignon, France, 2010, 12.5°

Bottle £9.25 Case £105.45 Code AUM110

Here is the new vintage of our perennially best-selling white, so often used (and winning friends each time) for weddings and parties. It’s as fruity and delicious as ever. This is the first vintage with full organic certification.

Like many 2010 Sauvignon Blancs from the Loire this successfully manages to combine real weight and concentration with a zesty freshness. Pale lemon. Scent of cut grass and citrus. Initial limey cut is followed by a weighty gush of tangerine, lime and even peach.

Summer Whites

A mixed dozen of three bottles of each of the four whites listed, with a discount of over 7.5%

£93.50 Code SUMWHITE11

Tip-Top French Rosés

Here are four of our finest French rosés, three from the south - from Aix in the east to near Perpignan in the west - and one from the Loire. These are all rosés of individual character, and whilst all can be enjoyed on their own, we have suggested food matches, as all are excellent with food.

Domaine du Grand Arc, Corbières Rosé, La Tour Fabienne, 2010, 14°

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code DGA510

35% Grenache, 25% Mourvèdre, 15% of each of Syrah and Carignan and 10% Cinsault. Bruno Schenk at Grand Arc is now making natural wine, that is to say using only wild yeasts and without using any sulphur (widely used in the wine industry to prevent spoilage and as a preservative) at the time of winemaking at all. In part this accounts for the electric hue of this wine.

Vivid (startling!) raspberry colour. Bright flavours of red cherries and redcurrants. Real fat - note the 14° of alcohol - but splendid crispness too. Intensely flavoured. Very correct dry finish, which makes it perfect for food. Grilled or barbecued prawns or strongly flavoured fish or chicken all come to mind.

Domaine du Météore, Faugères Rosé, Les Léonides, 2010, 13.5°

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code MET510

From Grenache with Cinsault and a little Syrah, a crisp and elegant rosé from grapes grown on the schistous soils of this mountainous region of the Languedoc.

Vibrant salmon pink. Fresh and mineral, with redcurrant, red cherry and strawberry fruit, allied to a finesse and perfume. Dry, and offering enough stuffing to accompany rich food well.

Les Quatre Tours, Coteaux d'Aix en Provence Rosé, Signature, 2010, 12.5°

Bottle £9.25 Case £105.45 Code QUA510

This fairly-priced Provençale blend of Grenache, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon, has become a firm favourite - with a lot of repeat orders - among those who like the characteristic Riviera style: pale colour, lowish alcohol and restrained elegance. The 2010 vintage is the best we have offered - and we also have magnums available at £19.50 (Code QUA910)

Pale salmon pink. Poised and smooth, delivering a fresh palate of peach, melon and plum, with satisfying weight and a fine dry finish. Nice length too. This is so complete and delicious. Perfect all-rounder, as delicious as an aperitif as with a salad lunch.

Wilfrid Rousse, Chinon Rosé de Saignée, 2010, 12°

Bottle £9.75 Case £111.15 Code ROT510

We have introduced this summer Wilfrid Rousse's Chinon Rosé, which shows so well the perfume of Cabernet Franc. To capture the maximum fragrance Wilfrid starts the low temperature fermentation of the free run juice within hours of the harvest.

The colour of wild salmon. A bouquet of summer fruits, tomato leaf and sweet spice. Richly fruited and silky in the mouth, this is dry. Well-matched for ham and any type of charcuterie, as the freshness of the Cabernet Franc cuts the fat.



Fine French Rosés

A mixed dozen of three bottles of each of the four rosés listed, with a discount of over 7.5%

£101.50 Code SUMROS11

Light and Summery

One doesn't need complex, dense and overly alcoholic wines in summer, and certainly not for enjoying outside, at parties or barbecues. Here are six simple wines, none of them more than 13 degrees, three whites, a rosé and two reds; and a cheerful mixed dozen of two bottles of each of the six wines featured.

Ca' di Ponti, Grillo, IGT Sicily, Italy, 2010, 12.5° [Screwcap]

Bottle £5.50 Case with 7.5% discount £61.05 Code PON110

As a grape which retains freshness and character in Mediterranean heat, Grillo is perfectly suited to Sicily.

Gently floral aroma. Not an overtly fruity style - understated melons and pears - but subtly almondy, quite weighty, but with refreshing bite too.

Les Chapelières, IGP Comté de Tolosan, France, 2010, 11.5° [Screwcap]

Bottle £5.95 Case with 7.5% discount £66.05 Code AGW310

Blended largely from Ugni Blanc and Colombard by the wine-making team run by the charismatic Alain Grignon, this Vin de Pays from South-west France makes excellent party drinking, with its lowish alcohol and refreshing bite.

Light citrusy aromas. Clean and lemony, with pleasing accents of mildly tropical fruit. Attractively rounded.

Light and Summery Dozen

A mixed dozen of two bottles of each of the six wines listed, with a discount of over 7.5%

£68.00 Code LISUM11

Anakena, Sauvignon Blanc, Central Valley, Chile, 2010, 13° [Screwcap]

Bottle £6.95 Case with 7.5% discount £77.15 Code ANA110

Largely sourced from the vineyards around the Anakena winery in Alto Cachapoal, where the vineyards are cooled by down-draughts from the snow-capped Andes; but this also includes fruit from the Curico Valley, hence Central Valley on the label.

Showing an exotic perfume of fresh pineapple and passion fruit. That tropical character is dominant on the palate too, with guava too. So fruity and charming, but there's a bit of stoniness on the finish too.

Mas de Canal Rosé, IGP Pays d'Oc, France, 2010, 12.5° [Screwcap]

Bottle £5.95 Case with 7.5% discount £66.05 Code VIC510

From Grenache and Cinsaut, crafted in the Provençale style, pale coloured, light and refreshing.

Pale clear pink with a hint of onion skin. Light scent of berries. A refreshing mouthful of strawberry and cranberry. Nothing complicated, just a well-made, dry rosé perfect for parties or daily consumption all summer.

Bodegas Borsao, Garnacha, Joven, Campo de Borja, Spain, 2010, 13° [Screwcap]

Bottle £5.75 Case with 7.5% discount £63.83 Code BOR310

Borsao, based in Campo de Borja in the upper Ebro Valley, specialise in Grenache based wines. This offers such simple pleasure at a fair price.

Upfront, lifted in style with open raspberry palate and a rich, juicy finish. So ripe and enjoyable.

25 Lagunas, Cabernet/Syrah, Argentina, 2009, 12.4°

Bottle £6.75 Case with 7.5% discount £74.93 Code LAF309

About 60% Cabernet and 40% Syrah, part barrel-fermented, just rounding out the exuberant fruit with a little oak.

Bursting with fruit - blackcurrants, raspberries and redcurrants - and surprisingly creamy and voluptuous, it also benefits from an attractive smoky note. "Ripe, perfumed, punchy and bright, this is a good value for money red from South America made from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Syrah. While the nose is alive and exciting, the palate is soft and mellow with a good core of red fruit that's makes it an excellent everyday wine. 89/100. One of this month's Bunch of Five Best Value Wines", www.thewinegang.com, January 2011.

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