

Fine Wine for the Holidays

Once or twice customers have remarked that we rarely promote our more expensive wines. Well Christmas seemed a good time to do so! The key to the pleasure a lot of these wines deliver is maturity - a few years in bottle makes for more complexity and depth.

Top English Sparkling & Champagne

Exton Park, Bretagne, Blanc de Blancs, England, 2011, 11.5%

Bottle £39.95 Case £455.43 Code EXT311

Don't just reach for Champagne - this, amusingly named Bretagne, is a top English fizz, from the first release of just 2500 bottles, off the oldest Chardonnay vines planted in the Meon Valley in Hampshire in 2003, and given three years on the lees.

Intriguing nose - lime, a hint of exotic fruit and butter. Has a lovely key lime cheesecake quality, rounded, creamy and complex. Now-2020

"Pale. Almonds and pomelo and linden flowers. White and marble sculpted on the palate, turning herbal and creamy, tarragon and lovage. At the core, intensely lemon. Angles and piercing freshness, but with so much depth. A real beauty. 17/20", www.jancisrobinson.com, 28th February 2017

Pol Roger, Champagne, Vintage Brut, France, 2006, 12.5%

Bottle £57.50 Case of 6 with 5% discount £327.75 Code POL306

Pol Roger's vintage retains its rather retro black and gold label. The blend for this famously long-lived vintage wine is traditionally 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay from Grand and Premier Cru vineyards in the Montagne de Reims, the Vallée de la Marne and the Côte des Blancs.

Classic brioche aromas with spice notes. Pale colour and fine mousse lead to a richly textured palate. "Deep gold. Savoury, leathery nose. Then quite a bit of sweetness. This is certainly easy to love. Chalky, dry finish. Very racy and lively even though it's the opposite of a stereotypical grower's austere wine. This has massive charm. 17/20", Jancis Robinson MW, www.jancisrobinson.com, 14th September 2017. Now-2020

P.S. If you are feeling particularly prosperous, we also have a few bottles of the famed Pol Roger Winston Churchill 2004 at £140.00 a bottle



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White Burgundy

The hills south of Beaune remain the most consistent source of great white wine on the planet.

Joseph Faiveley, Meursault, 2013, 13%

Bottle £38.50 Case £438.90 Code FAJ213

It was the sheer polish and class of the Faiveley whites which first drew us to shipping from this illustrious, family-owned domaine.

Midweight, satiny, showing the textbook melted butter and oatmeal of the appellation with ripe pear and melon. Now-2021

Fourrey, Chablis Grand Cru, Vaudesir, 2012, 12.5%

Bottle £39.50 Case £450.30 Code FRR612

Grand Cru Chablis is an under-rated pleasure: from a great Chablis vintage, this is now coming into its own. Drink with the best white fish you can serve - John Dory or Dover Sole.

Gently oaked, concentrated and complex. Now-2023

René Lequin-Colin, Corton Charlemagne, Grand Cru, 2011, 13.5%

Bottle £60.00 Case £684.00 Code LEQ011

The marriage of the Lequin and Colin families produced a wine estate with just 9 hectares of vines - but 17 different wines, among them white Corton Charlemagne (and one small barrel of Bâtard-Montrachet!). This is from a south facing site, high on the hill overlooking Aloxe-Corton.

Already expressive, with floral and vanilla aromatics. Fresh cream and ripe pear heart; this is richly textured, yet at the same time focused. Now-2020



Four French Red Classics

One red from each of Burgundy, Bordeaux and the northern and southern Rhône

Faiveley, Blagny 1er Cru, Sous les Bois, 2013, 13%

Bottle £26.95 Case £307.23 Code FAJ613

Blagny is red wine produced within the Meursault appellation and as such often offers good value. When we tasted a wide range of Faiveley reds this was a standout for quality v. price

Clean and toasty oak notes; then a smooth, vibrant palate of black fruit, mildly savoury and appealingly fleshy: altogether excellent. Now-2021

Haut Faugères, Saint-Emilion Grand Cru, 2010, 14.5%

Bottle £30.50 Case £347.70 Code HAF110

This is a wine we have been following for years. It's the second wine - beautifully presented - of Château Faugères, which has benefited from major investment (the new cellar, designed by Mario Botta, is breathtaking) from parfumeur Silvio Denz. In 2012 Château Faugères was promoted from Grand Cru to Grand Cru Classé, in recognition of the dramatic improvement in the wines.

From 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is in a modern style, showing ripe cassis on the nose, alongside savoury notes and smart oak. There's splendid volume and richness, with a core of ripe, bittersweet black fruit enlivened by exotic spice, coffee and earthy depths. Now-2023



Domaine Pichat, Côte Rôtie, Champon's, 2011, 13%

Bottle £35.00 Case £399.00 Code PID311

Young Stéphane Pichat is viewed as one of the up-and-coming stars of Côte Rôtie. The vineyard of Champon's lies in the northern, schistous sector of the appellation; and the wine is from about 98% Syrah with a little Viognier.

Silky cherry and raspberry flavours, with very supple tannins. There's a finesse to this which is immediately appealing, but it has taken on lovely mass too. Superb example, drinking perfectly from now. Now-2024

Clos des Papes, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, 2011, 15%

Bottle £55.00 Case £627.00 Code CDP111

Paul Avril has taken Clos des Papes to the very top of the appellation in Châteauneuf.

Using a blend of around 65% Grenache, 20% Mourvedre, 10% Syrah and some Vaccarese, Counoise and Muscardin, all organically cultivated, and eschewing new oak barrels, this is wonderfully suave and concentrated. Now-2025

"One of the stars of the vintage and coming from absurdly low yields of 18 hectoliters per hectare, the 2011 Chateauneuf du Pape is a full-bodied, seamless effort that exhibits copious kirsch, ground pepper, dried flowers and underbrush as well as incredibly fine tannin, great mid-palate concentration and ample length on the finish. Relatively forward by this estate's standards, it will be approachable at an earlier age than normal. Nevertheless, it will have 20+ years of evolution and is an awesome effort in the vintage. Drink 2015-2030". *Jeb Dunnock, Wine Advocate, October 2013.*



Two Top Italian Reds

Examples of the most famed wines of Piedmont and Tuscany - and both represent such good value.

Boasso, Barolo, Serralunga d'Alba, 2012, 14%

Bottle £30.50 Case £347.70 Code BOA312

The Boasso cellar - tiny but spotless and beautifully equipped - sits on a ridge looking across to the small but famed Barolo village of Serralunga. This wine is sourced from several sites near the village in the commune.

This shows the correct pale hue; a delightfully open perfume of raspberries and roses; and a plush, concentrated but svelte palate. Lush strawberries underpinned by crunchy acidity and good tannins. Textbook example, vital and with a long finish. Now-2025

Col di Lamo, Brunello di Montalcino, 2011, 14%

Bottle £31.50 Case £359.10 Code CDL311

Gianna Neri's 2011 Brunello showed beautifully at a tasting recently: powerful, to be sure, but also so expressive - and very meat-friendly too, with the natural *umami* savouriness of Sangiovese emerging.

Splendid aromatics: cassis with dried fruit. This builds beautifully on the palate, offering cooked red fruits and figs, plus a savoury dimension. Ripe tannins there for keeping too. Now-2023



Three powerful but smooth Reds from the New World

Chamonix, Pinot Noir Reserve, Franschhoek, South Africa, 2014, 13.5 %

Bottle £21.95 Case £250.23 Code CHX314

The Reserve Pinot Noir is from the higher vineyards, at 500-600 metres of altitude and facing south-south west, so cooler. Fermented with a proportion of the stalks in open top concrete fermenters, as in Burgundy, and then into Allier oak, 60% new. This was the last vintage wholly overseen by Gottfried Mocke and he really went out on a cracker, recognized by **Decanter** magazine - see below - as one of the 75 "most exciting wines of 2016".

Red fruits - almost fresh strawberry - with coffee and hint of mint on the nose; and then a much more intense, beautifully ripe attack of strawberry, raspberry and blackberry. All perfectly in balance, this is silky and delicious. Now-2021

"A lighter style of Pinot, with classic ripe plum and sweet strawberry fruit but also a hint of vegetal allure. Excellent purity of crunchy fruit flavours and finishing with a savoury touch from well-integrated oak. A fantastic food wine. Drink 2017-2022", **Decanter**, January 2017

Carinae, Prestige, Mendoza, Argentina, 2009, 15 %

Bottle £26.50 Case £302.10 Code CAE509

About 70% Malbec, with 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, a selection of all the best parcels of the vintage, aged in new barrels for 18 months.

Hugely powerful and concentrated, yet balanced. Very lush cherry and cassis core, spiced with cinnamon. Mature and velvety, this is drinking perfectly now. Now-2019

Ridge, Geyserville, California, USA, 2014, 14.5 %

Bottle £36.00 Case £410.40 Code RID114

Our favourite of the great wines created by legendary winemaker Paul Draper at Ridge: 60% Zinfandel, 24% Carignan, 12% Petite Sirah and 4% Mourvèdre, the Zin from a single site.

So exciting young - all cassis, berries, lively spice and perfumed with cedar, but Geyserville also ages extremely well. This is dramatically vibrant and succulent. Now-2025



ALL CASE PRICES INCLUDE A 5% DISCOUNT

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