



Occitania

Provence, Languedoc-Roussillon and south-west France

We realise few English people will understand the geographical concept of Occitania today. To explain (and over-simplify): in the early Middle Ages the greater part of the land which we now call France was divided roughly into two bands: the north, where people said "yes" with *oeil* (later *oui*), which was therefore known as the Languedoeil, literally the tongue of *oeil*; and the south, where assent was *oc* - the Languedoc. Occitania was the name of this region, which stretched roughly from the Atlantic France to a few Piedmontese valleys, encompassing Gascony, the Auvergne, Languedoc-Roussillon and Provence. This territory, based on a common language and identified as one of three

administrative divisions of Charlemagne's empire, later became divided between numerous feudal powers, developed its own cultural traits (for example Troubadour music and literature) and even its own variant of Christianity (see page 10). Whilst its centre was brought, violently, under the control of the French crown long before other areas such as Brittany and Burgundy, the south retains a spirit of independence - it feels a long way from Paris in the mountains of the Corbières - and despite efforts over the centuries to eradicate it, Occitan is still spoken to this day, especially as Catalan is a variant.

To our usual annual selection from Languedoc-Roussillon, in our celebration of Occitania this year we also highlight wines from south-west France. These offer similarly good value, whilst, with an Atlantic-influenced climate, the wines are fresher and of lower alcohol. Now there really are wines in this list for all tastes, seasons and wallets!

Simon Taylor
May 2017

STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS

Mixed Cases

All of the cases below are discounted by 10% against the bottle prices in the list - we do this to encourage you to try new wines.

OC117 The Occitania Case **£110.90** (five whites, one rosé and six reds)

One bottle of each of the twelve wines listed below

La Combe Saint-Paul, Viognier, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016 (p.3)

Tariquet, Chenin-Chardonnay, Côtes de Gascogne 2016 (p.6)

Laballe, Sables Fauves, IGP Les Landes, 2016 (p.6)

Creyssels, Languedoc, Picpoul de Pinet, 2016 (p.8)

La Combe Saint-Paul, Calcaires d'Ensérune, Languedoc, 2016 (p.8)

Preignes Le Vieux, Reserve Rosé, IGP Coteaux de Béziers, 2016 (p.5)

Les Hauts de Median, Petit Verdot, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015 (p.4)

Météore, Les Léonides, Faugères, 2013 (p.10)

Mas des Brousses, Chasseur des Brousses, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015 (p.12)

Fontanel, IGP Côtes Catalanes, 2016 (p.13)

Grand Arc, Reserve Grand Arc, Corbières Rouge, 2014 (p.14)

Begude, Pinot Noir, IGP Haute Vallée de l'Aude, 2016 (p.14)

The following mixed cases include two bottles of each of the six wines listed, with a discount of at least 10%

OC217 Fruit of the South **£90.50** (three whites and three reds)

Preignes Le Vieux, Reserve Blanc, IGP Coteaux de Béziers, 2016 (p.3)

La Combe Saint-Paul, Chardonnay, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016 (p.3)

Les Chapelières, IGP Comté Tolosan, 2015 (p.6)

Comtesse de Marion, Merlot, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015 (p.4)

Montcharme Pinot Noir, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015 (p.4)

La Salette, Côtes de Gascogne Rouge, 2015 (p.7)

OC317 Palette of Pink **£102.50** (six rosés)

Le Petit Pont, Rosé, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016 (p.5)

Preignes Le Vieux, Reserve Rosé, IGP Coteaux de Béziers, 2016 (p.5)

La Salette, Côtes de Gascogne, Rosé, 2016 (p.5)

Château La Grave, Expression, Minervois Rosé, 2016 (p.5)

Météore, Les Léonides, Faugères Rosé, 2016 (p.5)

Les Quatre Tours, Signature, Coteaux d'Aix en Provence Rosé (p.5)

OC417 Occitan Reds **£120.40** (six reds)

Château Barrejat, Madiran, Tradition, 2014 (p.7)

Cazalet, Raisin Volé, Tursan, 2015 (p.7)

La Combe Saint Paul, Grés Rouges, La Clape, 2015 (p.10)

Mas des Brousses, Chasseur des Brousses, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015 (p.12)

Fontanel, IGP Côtes Catalanes, 2016 (p.13)

Begude, Pinot Noir, IGP Haute Vallée de l'Aude, 2016 (p.14)

OC517 Cathar Case **£152.80** (three whites and three reds)

Grand Arc, Corbières Blanc, Veillée d'Equinoxe, 2016 (p.8)

Fontanel, Côtes de Roussillon Blanc, 2015 (p.9)

Begude, Chardonnay, L'Etoile, Limoux, 2015 (p.9)

Grand Arc, Cuvée de Quarante, Corbières Rouge, 2014 (p.14)

Depeyre, Côtes du Roussillon Villages Rouge, 2013 (p.14)

Traginer, Collioure, 2012 (p.14)

OC617 Arc of Appellations **£190.40** (six reds from top appellations)

Mas des Brousses, Coteaux du Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac, 2013 (p.11)

Domaine de la Ribotte, Bandol, 2010 (p.11)

Domaine du Météore, Les Perséides, Faugères, 2013 (p.11)

La Combe Saint Paul, L'Insoupçonné, Languedoc-La Clape, 2014 (p.11)

Domaine du Grand Arc, En Sol Majeure, Corbières, 2014 (p.14)

Domaine Depeyre, Rubia Tinctoria, Côtes du Roussillon Villages, 2013 (p.14)

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Languedoc Whites and Reds under £9.50 a bottle

As a region the Languedoc is perhaps best known for wines like these: fresh and fruity, full of sunshine and delivering immediate pleasure. Most of them are labelled Indication Géographique Protégée (IGP), formerly known as Vin de Pays; and none has seen the inside of an oak barrel.

Note - more wines in this price bracket from the south-west on pages 6 and 7.

White

Petit Pont, Blanc, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 12.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £7.75 Case £88.35 Code PEP116

A *tutti frutti* blend of Vermentino with Chardonnay and spiced by other varieties. Citrus and lightly floral aroma. Fresh, easy drinking mouthful showing stone fruit and melon with zesty acidity. Now-2018

Wine boxes

5 litre boxes (the equivalent of 6 2/3 bottles), each with its own simple tap: perfect for parties, barbecues, cooking wine, or just keeping in the kitchen for the odd glass. They last well over a month. All come from the Vic family, and the wine is the same liquid as in the Petit Pont bottles listed: in a box the wine works out at £6.38 a bottle against £7.75 under screwcap, so a discount of over 17.5%

Note: a box can be included in a mixed case in place of 4 bottles

Le Petit Pont Blanc, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 12.5%

5 litre bag in box £42.50 Code BIB616

Drink this year

Le Petit Pont, Rosé, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 12.5%

5 litre bag in box £42.50 Code BIB516

Drink this year

Le Petit Pont, Rouge, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 12.5%

5 litre bag in box £42.50 Code BIB216

Drink this year

Preignes Le Vieux, Reserve Blanc, IGP Coteaux de Béziers, 2016, 12.5%

Bottle £8.50 Case £96.90 Code PRF816

Vermentino based, with Chardonnay, Colombard and Grenache Blanc. Peachy nose followed by a ripe palate of stone fruits. With some texture and length, this makes a good aperitif. Finishes fresh and citrusy. Now-2018

La Combe Saint-Paul, Chardonnay, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 13% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code CSP116

Everything one could want from simple, unoaked Chardonnay: juicy and refreshing, with notes of ripe pear and tangerine. Now-2018

Domaine La Croix Belle, Caringole Blanc, IGP Côtes de Thongue, 2015, 12.5%

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code CRO815

A clever blend of half Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, the latter bringing zest and freshness. Lovely fragrant citrus aromas prefaces a mouthful of melon and peach; and a long, fresh finish. Drink this year

La Combe Saint-Paul, Vermentino, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 13% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code CSP216

We were knocked out by this: a really open, stone fruited attack gives way to a more gentle, pine-scented, well-textured mid-palate. Fruity but finishes dry - a fine aperitif wine. Now-2018

La Combe Saint-Paul, Viognier, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 13%

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code CSP316

Such a pretty, aroma of blossom - this is more on the light, fresh, floral side of Viognier than more obviously stone-fruited examples. Hints of white peach and orange blossom. True Viognier body, and a good dry finish. A perfect accompaniment to a prawn or crab salad. Now-2018

Red

Petit Pont, Rouge, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015, 12.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £7.75 Case £88.35 Code PEP616

Largely from Grenache, Cinsault and a little Cabernet Sauvignon. Bramble fruited but with a lighter, raspberry accent and minimal tannin: a fruity, easy-drinking style. The 2016 vintage follows. Now-2018

Comtesse de Marion, Merlot, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015, 13% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.50 Case £96.90 Code VIC315

The Vic family's Merlot, now in a taller bottle and a smarter label, has won huge praise and many repeat orders from satisfied customers. It's a wine which always shows attractive typicity: aromas of sweet plum with a leafy touch, followed by a supple and lightly creamy, berried palate with barely discernible tannins. Now-2018



Montcharme Pinot Noir, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015, 13% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code AGW715

Languedoc Pinot is often a bit stewed - however the fruit for this is largely sourced from cool Limoux which produces premium Pinots, crisp and classy, blended with some grapes from the plains with riper, sunnier fruit. Clean, red fruited nose is consistent with the juicy palate, showing cherries with a touch of vanilla. Ripe and with some concentration, this has gone down very well over the last year. Now-2018

Domaine La Croix Belle, Caringole Rouge, IGP Côtes de Thongue, 2015, 13.5%

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code CRO115

From about 2/3 Syrah with Merlot and Carignan. Attractively open and inviting aromas of hedgerow fruit. Ripe and generous cherry and plum fruit and a hint of pepper with soft tannins and no rough edges at all. Honest wine which is easy to drink on its own or with food. Now-2018

"Deep cherry red. Invitingly dark and spicy on the nose. Smells rocky. Juicy and full fruited, balanced by dark, firm fruit and tannins on the palate. Elegant at this price; cool, long finish GV 16/20", Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com, 7th June 2016

Les Hauts de Median, Petit Verdot, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015, 13% [Screwcap]

Bottle £9.75 Case £111.15 Code VIC215

Petit Verdot ripens late even in the Languedoc: the grapes for this wine are always the last to be harvested from the vineyards near Beziers. Deeply hued. The nose is enticing: mingling deliciously ripe fruit, toast, pine, and floral notes. The palate lives up to that promise too, offering pure, classy layers of red and black fruits, subtle tannins, and vivacious acid. Such a good finish too. Now-2019

Château La Grave, Minervois Rouge, Tristan et Julien, 2015, 13%

Bottle £9.50 Case £108.30 Code GRV115

This, from halves of Syrah and Grenache, is even more of a bargain than usual, from a vintage hailed by the owners, the Orosquette family, as the best for reds they had ever seen. Expansive Syrah spice marks the aroma, whilst the palate shows bramble and raspberry over a light tannic structure. Uncomplicated and easy drinking country wine. Now-2019

Le Petit Pont, Rosé, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 12.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £7.75 Case £88.35 Code PEP516

The latest vintage of this best-selling rosé, from Grenache and Cinsaut, grown near Beziers, but crafted in the Provençale style, pale coloured, light and refreshing. Light scent of berries. A refreshing mouthful of strawberry and cranberry fruit, with a crisp finish. Nothing complicated, just a well-made, dry rosé perfect for regular consumption. Now-2018

Preignes Le Vieux, Reserve Rosé, IGP Coteaux de Béziers, 2016, 12.5%

Bottle £8.50 Case £96.90 Code PRF516

A blend of Cinsaut, Grenache and Syrah. Very pale salmon pink. Red fruited aromas and a hint of peach. Raspberry and strawberry, well rounded and fresh, this is a step up from the wine above. Now-2018

La Salette, Côtes de Gascogne, Rosé, 2016, 12.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code SAL516

A new wine from south-west France for us, a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc; the latter brings a little perfume to this bright example. Pale salmon pink. Light, towards the white wine end of the spectrum, not sweet, with a subtle sense of raspberries. Understated and refreshing. Now-2018

Château La Grave, Minervois, Rosé Expression, 2016, 13%

Bottle £9.50 Case £108.30 Code GRV416

From halves of Syrah and Grenache grown near the Aude river, this unfailingly delivers splendid ripeness and intensity - we have shipped every vintage since 2004. Pale pink. Lifted red fruit aromas. An appealing gush of strawberry and raspberry. This is gentle, a perfect all rounder, fruity enough to enjoy on its own but also dry enough for food. Now-2018

Domaine du Grand Arc, Corbières Rosé, La Tour Fabienne, 2016, 14%

Bottle £10.25 Case £116.85 Code DGA516

Based on Syrah and Mourvèdre, with Grenache, Cinsaut and Carignan, and always an electric pink hue (winemaker Bruno Schenk put this down to

his natural winemaking, eschewing the addition of sulphur). It's always a dry, intense rosé perfect for barbecues (especially seafood) or any food a bit weightier than just a light salad. Scent of peach and raspberries. Vibrant attack of red berries with peach and melon, strongly flavoured but not in the least heavy, and finishes dry and cleansing. Now-2018

Domaine du Météore, Faugères Rosé, Les Léonides, 2016, 13%

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code MET516

Superb this vintage, the Météore rosé (named, as all the wines from this estate, after meteor showers) expresses the pure schist soils of Faugères: with a lifted fragrance, bright acidity and stony minerality. Very pale salmon. Delicate and pretty red fruit - *fraises des bois* - in an understated style, crisp and refreshing. A fine dry rosé, better than a lot of Provençale examples. Now-2017

Les Quatre Tours, Coteaux d'Aix en Provence Rosé, Signature, 2016, 13%

Bottle £11.50 Case £131.10 Code QUA516

Magnum (2015 vintage) £23.95

Case (6 x 150cl.) £136.52 Code QUA915

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, generous fruit and restrained elegance. Very pale and clear. Light and fresh, offering generous flavours of white peach, melon and berries, with satisfying weight and a fine dry finish. This is so complete and delicious. Now-2018

Domaine de la Ribotte Bandol Rosé, Cuvée Anaïs, 2016, 13%

Bottle £16.95 Case £193.23 Code RIB516

Bandol produces the finest rosés in the world. This is the fourth vintage we have shipped of this example made by Laurence Desblache and her son Nicolas. Pale salmon robe. Amazing aromas of peach juice and pink grapefruit leap out of the glass; followed by delectable intensity of white peach and red berries. Really well-textured, with a characteristic long and mineral finish. We have lost count of the number of customers who have told us that this wine is the best rosé they have ever tasted. Now-2019

Atlantic Occitania: the south-west

Last year's fall in the value of the pound is pushing us harder to find value - so we focussed on south-west France as a possible source, and this year we introduce wines from two families: the Duffours of La Salette; and the Laudets, owners of Laballe and Cazalet.

White

Les Chapelières, IGP Comté Tolosan, 2015, 11.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £6.95 Case £79.23 Code AGW315

A best-seller, an easy drinking blend of Ugni Blanc and Colombard with lowish alcohol and refreshing bite. Clean and lemony, with a pleasing pear accent. Drink this year

Domaine du Tariquet, Classic, Côtes de Gascogne, 2016, 10.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.50 Case £96.90 Code TRR116

An old favourite, which deserves to be better known. Brightly delicious, Ugni Blanc and Colombard tweaked with ripe Sauvignon Blanc and waxy Gros Manseng to give a zesty palate, citrus flavoured with notes of passion-fruit and pineapple. Now-2018

La Salette, Côtes de Gascogne Blanc, 2016, 12% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code SAL116

This exemplifies the virtues of white Côtes de Gascogne: extravagant perfume, tropical fruit and refreshing bite. From Colombard and Gros Manseng (and only a little of the more neutral Ugni Blanc), it's very pale and clear but exotically scented, showing passionfruit and guava. Ripe, intense and fresh - but unlike many examples, not too crisp or mean. A zippy aperitif cum thirst quencher! Now-2018

Domaine du Tariquet, Chenin-Chardonnay, Côtes de Gascogne, 2016, 11.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £9.25 Case £105.45 Code TRR316

Another wine from the Grassa clan at Tariquet, a blend of 75% Chenin and 25% Chardonnay. Fresh, very melony, with accents of white flowers and pear, this makes excellent summer drinking. Now-2018

Domaine Laballe, Sables Fauves, IGP Les Landes, 2016, 11.5%

Bottle £9.50 Case £108.30 Code LAB116

The Sables Fauves is a terroir on the edge of the forest of Les Landes. From about 50% Gros Manseng and 30% Ugni Blanc with 10% each of Sauvignon Blanc and Colombard, this is a stunning wine at the price, delivering both great freshness and intense fruit. Lovely scent of white flowers, plus guava. This is surprisingly full flavoured for a wine of such levity (note - just 11.5%), delivering a spectrum of tangerine, kiwi fruit and guava, with even the merest hint of honey. Bright, juicy, and refined; and there's a detectable minerally sprinkle of white pepper on the finish, which the Laballe family say derives from the tawny coloured sandy soils. A perfect summer aperitif; and an excellent accompaniment to sushi or simply cooked white fish. Now-2018

Château Barrejat, Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh Sec, 2016, 13%

Bottle £10.25 Case £116.85 Code BAJ616

A little known but delicious aperitif white - from the same geographical area as Madiran, north of Pau - from Gros Manseng, showing exotic flavours of pineapple, apricot and yellow plums. Now-2018

Medium-Sweet

Château Barrejat, Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh, 2015, 13%

Bottle £12.95 Case £147.63 Code BAJ715

Not a dessert wine, rather a gloriously exotic aperitif or one of the best wines to accompany foie gras or any rich liver pâté, or indeed a wine to enjoy at the end of meal with cheese. Glorious scents of fresh pineapple, passion fruit and cooked oranges - and the palate is so consistent, showing a pure and weighty cocktail of passion fruit, pineapple, and sweet tangerines. Now-2019

Red

La Salette, Côtes de Gascogne Rouge, 2015, 12.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code SAL615

This is a light red which one could easily serve chilled in summer as a refreshing drink with lunch (at just 12.5%) or with spicy food: the French would call it “*frai*”, fresh. It wouldn't be bad with plain roast chicken either. There's a sense of juicy strawberries, a gentle fragrance and minimal tannins. From 40% of each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot and 10% of each of Cabernet Franc and Tannat, it delivers simple, juicy pleasure. Now-2018

Château Barrejat, Madiran, Tradition, 2014, 12.5%

Bottle £9.50 Case £108.30 Code BAJ114
Magnums £19.50 Case (6 x 150cl.) £111.15
Code BAJ914
Jeroboam - 5 litres £75.00 Code BAJ514

Deeply hued and concentrated blend of local grape Tannat with Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, honest, juicy and rustic. The 2015 vintage follows at £9.95. Now-2018

Domaine Cazalet, Raisin Volé, Tursan, 2015, 12.5%

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code CAZ116

We are always on the hunt for fresh reds, and this light and fragrant wine from Tursan, south of Bordeaux, answers that call. Fairly pale purple and with only the lightest nibble of tannin, it recalls juicy black fruits - blackcurrant with even a hint of menthol. This is from Cabernet Franc blended with the butch Tannat grape: we suspect the grapes are given very gentle treatment - “low extraction” in winemaking terms - just to release that fresh fruit and avoid any harsh tannins or phenolics. Light and aromatic, this reminds one of country wines consumed a generation ago - before climate change. Now-2019

Château Barrejat, Madiran, Vieux Céps, 2014, 13.5%

Bottle £13.50 Case £153.90 Code BAJ314

Old vines indeed - over 80 years old: 80% Tannat plus the Cabernets, a splendid, traditionally framed and ageworthy example. Inky purple. Liqueur-tinged aromas of brambly fruit and cassis. As ever, very concentrated, and much more black fruited than the unoaked Madiran above. Dense blackcurrant heart with grainy tannins. Plenty of oak to keep it going - a really well-structured wine which can be enjoyed now or kept for years: the 2005 vintage was absolutely superb in the autumn of 2016. The 2015 vintage follows at £14.50. Now-2022



Top Mediterranean Whites

Most of these wines are from appellations, which can be for single varieties (Picpoul or Limoux Chardonnay), or, more often, blends of Rhône and Mediterranean varieties: Viognier, Roussanne, Rolle (Vermentino), Marsanne, Grenache Blanc and Gris and Macabeu. The latter accompany Mediterranean food - based on olive oil, tomatoes, peppers, onions, etc. - very well.

Creysseles, Languedoc, Picpoul de Pinet, 2016, 13.5%

Bottle £9.95 Case £113.43 Code CRE116

Picpoul de Pinet, an appellation south-west of Montpellier for the Picquepoul grape, has now become so popular that, annoyingly, prices have risen. Our example comes from vineyards just inland, where some clay and limestone give body and flavour (as opposed to the light sandy soils near the Med.). Always a simple and generous wine, with citrus and herbal aromas, good weight and texture and the expected stony finish. As appealing as an aperitif as with all types of seafood. Now-2018

Les Quatre Tours, Coteaux d'Aix en Provence Blanc, Classique, 2016, 13%

Bottle £10.50 Case £119.70 Code QUA616

A clever unoaked blend of Rolle and Grenache Blanc with some Ugni Blanc and Sauvignon. Pretty scent of lavender and thyme - and a lovely perfume balances the juicy, tangerine fruit. Now-2018

Domaine du Grand Arc, Corbières Blanc, Veillée d'Equinoxe, 2016, 13.5%

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code DGA616

An unoaked blend of 60% Roussanne, plus 20% each of Grenache Blanc and Macabeu, this is always a subtly flavoured wine (which belies its alcohol level), with a growing fan base. Showing pears, lime and herbal notes, it's surprisingly fresh and pretty. Now-2018

La Combe Saint-Paul, Calcaires d'Ensérune, Languedoc, 2016, 12.5%

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code CSP416

This is the sort of white the Languedoc is beginning to win friends with; from halves of Roussanne and Vermentino / Rolle, grown on limestone soils, and about 10% aged in old barrels. It has an attractive white peach character - both in aroma and on the palate - with the slightest accent of marzipan. There's a dry, chalky character too, making this excellent accompaniment to even strongly flavoured dishes. Now-2018



Domaine du Météore, Les Léonides, Faugères Blanc, 2016, 14%

Bottle £13.50 Case £153.90 Code MET716

Over the years the blend has changed - to the benefit of the wine - so now it's from 50% Roussanne with 40% Rolle (Vermentino) and 10% Clairette has been added to give a little fresh lift. We all thought it was superb this year: a scent of exotic fruit (glacé pineapple?) anticipates a wonderful cocktail of tropical flavours - pineapple, passionfruit and peach. Concentrated, fresh and complete, a stunner. Now-2019

Domaine du Météore, Viognier, IGP Pays de l'Hérault, 2016, 13.5%

Bottle £13.75 Case £156.75 Code MET616

We always advise that if one can't afford Condrieu (also often grown on schist soils) then try this, from the estate's highest and coolest vineyards up against the plateau of the Cevennes. Permeated - aroma and palate - by fresh apricots, this light golden wine is seductive and weighty, but with that fruit successfully complemented by just a little dry pithiness on the finish. Now-2018

Belles Pierres, Les Clauzes de Jo, Languedoc Blanc, 2015, 14%

Bottle £13.95 Case £159.03 Code BEL615

We have just heard that this wine has been purchased for the cellars of the Elysée Palace in Paris - drink like a President! From 60% Roussanne with equal proportions of Viognier and Grenache, in old barrels, this is a rare example of a white influenced by the *garrigue*. One can often detect bay leaf amongst the exotic fruit aromas. Very concentrated and textured, almost voluptuous, this shows flavours of Seville oranges, honey and almonds. Now-2018

Domaine Fontanel, Côtes du Roussillon Blanc, 14%

Bottle £14.50 Case £165.30 Code FON715

From old vines of Grenache Blanc and Malvoisie, the oldest planted in 1908, well-oaked. We have been shipping this since the 2004 vintage. It's always a powerful white, with generous flavours, but the oak is always well-integrated. As ever, a lovely honeyed nose, with a hint of kumquats. This is a creamy and luscious wine, offering exotic fruit and hints of sandalwood and spice. Super this vintage. Now-2019

Begude, Chardonnay, L'Etoile, Limoux, 2015, 13.5%

Bottle £15.50 Case £176.70 Code BEG215

This is a star barrel-fermented Chardonnay: the previous vintage was lauded by Jancis Robinson in the FT before Christmas. From very low yields (half those in Burgundy!), into 500 litre *demi-muids*, about half new, right now it's pretty oaky upfront, but we know that in a few months it will develop beautifully, with ripe citrus and buttery notes coming to the fore. Lots of volume and grip. Equivalent quality to a £25 wine from the Côte de Beaune. Now-2020

Domaine Depeyre, Symphonie, IGP Côtes Catalanes, 2015, 14.5%

Bottle £17.50 Case £199.50 Code DEP615

Whites from top sites in the Roussillon are arguably the finest whites in all of Occitania: concentrated, usually subtly fruited, complex and stony / mineral. Symphonie, a blend of 2/3 Grenache Gris and 1/3 Grenache Blanc grown in a classic *argilo-calcaire* terroir near Vingrau and just rounded by some aging in *demi-muids*, 600 litre barrels, is very much in that vein, but without the level of oxidation which we think can mar some examples. Understated stone fruit and hints of herbs. Satiny finesse. Lightly honeyed but finishes bone dry. Thought-provoking. Now-2019



Reds from Great Terroirs

Here is a selection of splendid reds from great terroirs: two coastal sites - Bandol near Marseilles and the remarkable klippen of La Clape, east of Narbonne; and the rest from the appellations which lie in the hillside arc from west of Montpellier via the now highly rated Terrasses du Larzac and Montpeyroux to Faugères, north of Béziers.

The top reds in this region tend to be based on the higher regarded grapes of the Rhône: Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre, with very little Cinsault or Carignan.

Domaine du Météore, Les Léonides, Faugères, 2013, 14%

Bottle £11.50 Case £131.10 Code MET113

About 30% each of Syrah and Grenache, and 20% of Mourvèdre and Carignan, unoaked, a joyous wine which is drinking perfectly. Lovely, lifted nose - with even an appealing hint of cassis. Lively and refreshing, with ripe blackberry and blackcurrant flavours and plenty of schist character. Lovely with simple grilled meat. Now-2018

La Combe Saint Paul, Grés Rouges, La Clape, 2015, 14%

Bottle £12.50 Case £142.50 Code CSP615

Wines from Languedoc-La Clape have been upgraded so can be labelled La Clape AOP from the 2015 vintage, testament to the quality of wines coming off this sunny and windswept hump on the shores of the Med. (La Clape means a "heap of pebbles" in the old Occitan language). The Maurys' vineyard near the sea is surrounded by pine and oak trees and the soil is characterised by *grés rouges* (red sandstone) hence the name. From 70% Syrah with 30% Mourvèdre, and only 10% raised in barrels, this is an excitingly fruity wine, all juicy raspberry and blackberry, lively and enticing. Pure, silky and fresh with just a savoury edge. Will get even better with a few more months in bottle. Now- 2020

Domaine du Météore, Les Orionides, Faugères, 2012, 14%

Bottle £13.95 Case £159.03 Code MET312

An old favourite here, about 55% Syrah with 30% Mourvèdre and 15% Grenache, well-oaked, a powerful, flamboyant wine, based on a marriage of chocolatey oak and lush, damsony black fruit. Now-2019 Limited stock

Domaine des Belles Pierres, Les Clauzes de Jo, Languedoc, 2014, 14%

Bottle £13.95 Case £159.03 Code BEL314

From pockets of vines on classic *argilo-calcaire* soils set amongst the *garrigue*, the herby scrub, near St. Georges d'Orques: a blend of about half Syrah, a third Grenache with Mourvèdre, all in old barrel. Good youthful tone. Ripe and brambly fruit, crunchy, and slightly wild and spicy. Splendid blackberry liqueur finish. Decant to serve now - this is going to develop beautifully. As with its white pair, this wine has been purchased for the presidential cellars of the Elysée Palace in Paris. Now-2021

Mas d'Amile, Languedoc-Montpeyroux, 2014, 13.5%

Bottle £14.95 Case £170.43 Code MDA314

The vineyards at Montpeyroux face south and are protected by the Causse du Larzac and Mont Baudile (850m) to the north and the hills of St Guilhem-le-Désert to the east. The cooling wind coming from the Causse du Larzac brings dramatic temperature variation between night and day, allowing full ripeness while retaining freshness and acidity. Montpeyroux is widely expected to become an AOP in the next few years, so highly regarded is the area.

Old vines, between 40 and 60 years old. 60% Grenache with Carignan, Syrah and the new addition of Mourvèdre, raised in a mix of old Burgundy barrels and in 600l. *demi-muids*, traditionally used in the Rhône valley. Intense nose of ripe red fruit with sweet spices. Cherry and blackberry, super ripe fruit with a hint of liquorice. Such a silky texture with a refreshing acidity. Supple, fresh and very long; fine wine. Now-2020

Plan de l'Homme, Habilis, Terrasses du Larzac, 2013, 14.5%

Bottle £15.95 Case £181.83 Code PDH213

55% Grenache with Syrah and Carignan, raised in vat for 18 months and in a concrete egg for the Carignan. The garrigue surrounding the vines expresses itself with herbs along a black fruited nose. Good mouthful of blackberry and cherry spiced with pepper and a lovely texture. The tannins are soft and the final impression is fresh. Impressive. Now-2019

"Dark greyish crimson. Smokily reductive, savoury, peppery and rocky. I'd have thought this was majority Syrah if I had tasted it blind. The Carignan kicks in on the palate with firm, dry texture. Deliciously withheld and refined in texture, subtle and elegant and GV. 17/20", Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com, 7th June 2016

Mas des Brousses, Coteaux du Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac, 2013, 14%

Bottle £16.50 Case £188.10 Code MAB213

Mourvèdre grown from cuttings from the famed Domaine Tempier in Bandol, with Syrah and Grenache. Scents of cassis and blackberry with hints of black olive. Black fruited at heart, dense and supple and with just the correct grip on the finish. A classy bottle which is built to age. Now-2020 The 2015 vintage follows at £17.50.

"Deep cherry red. Lifted dark-red and peppery fruit alongside a more savoury black-olive character. That savoury Mourvèdre flavour deliciously present on the palate, with some smokiness. Lightly chewy tannins and lots more complexity to come. Refined even at this young stage. Smooth and compact. Great stuff and GV. 16.5/20", Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com, 7th June 2016

Domaine de la Ribotte, Bandol, 2010, 13.5%

Bottle £16.95 Case £193.23 Code RIB810

From clay-heavy terraces, and based on Mourvèdre, a grape which is supposed to like its feet in water and its head in the sun. Spice-box aromas, along with that savoury note which marks Mourvèdre. Plum and berried flavours, just on the turn to more savoury complexity. This has a clear structure based on both acid and tannin, but it's not over-extracted at all, opening out aromatically with grace, and finishing with surprising fragrance. Drink this with rich lamb or pork dishes - that tannin and acid gives the wine real cut. Now-2020

Domaine du Météore, Les Perséides, Faugères, 2013, 14%

Bottle £17.95 Case £204.63 Code MET413

From equal halves of old vine Syrah and Mourvèdre, aged 18 months in barriques, this is a grand wine, of very deep purple. Cassis and cedar aromas. This has the blackcurranty and mocha flavours of a fine, well-oaked wine, but with excellent vitality and freshness: it's both darkly concentrated and juicy. Perfect with roast beef. Now-2022

La Combe Saint Paul, L'Insoupçonné, Languedoc-La Clape, 2014, 14.5%

Bottle £18.95 Case £216.03 Code CSP714

85% Syrah with Mourvèdre, given 10 months ageing in a mix of new and 2nd fill barrels - and a very limited production wine: we take 10% of production. Very deeply hued and glossy. The perfume is inspiring - fresh crushed berries with a cassis note. Bittersweet blackcurranty flavours are tinged with hints of black chocolate and coffee. With great suavity and length, this brilliantly combines power and finesse, and shows how the best wines of the region can stand against any competition. Now-2024



Offbeat Occitania

Across this enormous vineyard area are fascinating curiosities: odd pockets of unusual grapes ((anyone for Grüner Veltliner?) and clever blends of Rhône varieties with parcels of Merlot or Cabernet.

White

Domaine Begude, Le Secret du Sud Gewurztraminer, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2016, 13.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £11.95 Case £136.23 Code BEG416

Low cropped, from just 0.7 ha of vines on chalky soil in the Domaine's coolest vineyard, and a properly dry example of this aromatic grape. Distinctive rose petal perfume. Well textured with flavours of rose water, lychee and citrus. Cool acid spine. Perfect summer aperitif. Now-2019

"...decidedly superior", Jancis Robinson MW, jancisrobinson.com, 21st April 2017.

Domaine Begude, Exotique, IGP Haute Vallée de l'Aude, 2016, 12.5% [Screwcap]

Bottle £11.95 Case £136.23 Code BEG316

Exotic indeed - an interloper (and strictly illegal in the region) grape, artfully indicated by discreet GV lettering, for the Austrian Grüner Veltliner. This has all the pear and lentil flavours and dense texture of the grape. Dry and lightly savoury. Now-2019

Red

Plan de L'Homme, Flores Rouge, Languedoc, 2014, 14%

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code PDH114

Largely made from Cinsault (although owner Remi Dujardin argues that we should probably call it *Oeillade*, a local variant of Cinsault), with 20% Grenache and 10% Syrah, unoaked. Intense red fruited aromas; fresh, and the dense berry fruit follows on the palate, plus spice and just the correct grip of tannins with a fresh finish. Lovely summery food wine. The 2015 vintage follows at the same price. Now-2018

Mas des Brousses, Chasseur des Brousses, IGP Pays d'Oc, 2015, 13.5%

Bottle £11.50 Case £131.10 Code MAB115

From 50% Merlot, 30% Grenache with some Syrah; and a surprisingly successful marriage of Bordeaux and the Rhône. Over the years this wine has become classier and classier: honestly, if you decanted it, you would struggle to say where this refined and highly aromatic red originated. Glossy deep blackberry hue. Friendly blackcurrant scent; consistent with a supple mouthful of black plums, damsons and brambly fruit, spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg. Sumptuously deep and warm but with fresh acidity and grip, it is so generous and expansive. Dinner party wine at a very fair price. Now-2021

Mas d'Amile, Vieux Carignan, IGP St. Guilhem le Désert, 2014, 13%

Bottle £12.95 Case £147.63 Code MDA114

Carignan is the much maligned workhorse grape of the Midi - but from old vines on hillside sites it often gives splendid wine. This modestly has "*vin de garage*" on the label - though this term is often used for fancily priced boutique wines, here it really does refer to its source! From 70 year old Carignan vines on south facing slopes; about two thirds goes into old wooden vats. Lovely red fruited nose. Blackcurrant and ripe brambly fruit, with a tad of grip and lovely aromatics. Delicate, with a touch of savouriness and a fresh finish. Now-2019

"Deep crimson. Fine combination of smoke, spice and roasted meat but with a hint of something floral too - really expressive Carignan. Peppery too. On the palate, a little chewy but not at all astringent, firm, dry and persistent. Nicely dusty finish in a wine to win over Carignan sceptics. 16/20", Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com, 7th June 2016

Reds from Cathar Country: the soul of Occitania

As one drives around the heart of Occitania, one comes across road signs celebrating *Pays Cathare* - Cathar Country. No country of such a name ever existed, but this area, which stretches roughly from Toulouse east to the Med, and from around Carcassonne south to the Pyrenees, witnessed an extraordinary blossoming of a variant of Christianity in the 12th century, which became known as Catharism. The Cathars, like many who strayed from orthodox Christian doctrine before and during the middle ages, were dualists, believing in the equal existence of good and evil in the world. Furthermore, they believed that spiritual authority lay with the individual, not with the established church. They also exhibited qualities which resound positively to this day: they were tolerant of other religious faiths such as Judaism, believers in the equality of women, mildly pacifist and egalitarian; and their religious leaders, known as Perfects, lived exemplary lives based on poverty and restraint.

Had Catharism been just a minor sect, adopted by a few ragged peasant followers, the Catholic church might have ignored it. But in the heart of the Languedoc the Cathar faith attracted support at every level of society, from the greatest barons downwards. As such the Cathar movement appeared to the church authorities as unusually threatening. Unable to suppress the Cathars with theological argument alone, on March 10th 1208 Pope Innocent III called for a crusade against the heretics; and this incited the feudal barons of northern France, led by Simon de Montfort, to assemble an army and invade the Languedoc the following year. Internal religious wars tend to be particularly violent, and the Albigensian crusade, as it became known, was no exception. The invaders made a brutal assault on Béziers in July 1209, leading to the massacre of most of the city's 20,000 inhabitants. Effectively the last act - bar subsequent persecution by the Inquisition - was the siege of the remote Château de Montségur, in the foothills of the Pyrenees southwest of Limoux. This ended on March 16th 1244 as some two hundred and twenty of the half-starved Cathars chose to march out of the keep to mount their own funeral pyre rather than renounce their beliefs. Today the only solid legacy of the Cathars lies in the ruined castles which punctuate the ridges and peaks of the Minervois, Corbières and Limoux, mysterious, inaccessible and near impregnable. But their history is not forgotten: so much more real than Arthurian legend, it shares aspects of Camelot's romance and idealism. You can stand in the vineyards of Domaine du Grand Arc, overlooked by two of those Cathar holds, Peyrepertuse and Quéribus (see photograph on page 8), and remember the brief and remarkable flowering of this unique aspect of Occitan culture.

Do the wines on these pages show any specific "Cathar" quality? The landscape, from the wooded hills of the Corbières to the arid valleys and windswept peaks of Roussillon, is harsh and uncompromising. With the exception of the Begude Pinot below, all these wines do have a wild side. Bruno Schenk's wines at Grand Arc, naturally made (with only a tiny addition of sulphur at the point of bottling to guarantee stability), are intense and striking; and keep really well - even the Reserve Grand Arc will be drinking beautifully about six years after the vintage. As for the wines from the Roussillon, the hottest and driest region in France, the wines often show a distinctive roasted flavour to the fruit.

Domaine du Grand Arc, Nature d'Orée, Corbières, 2015, 14.5%

Bottle £9.95 Case £113.43 Code DGA115

20% Grenache, 35% Syrah, 20% Carignan and 25% Mourvèdre. Such an expressive nose, red fruits leaping out of the glass. The palate is lush and the concentration of red fruit is sensational for the price. Silky texture and very soft tannins brings immediate pleasure. Now-2019

Domaine Fontanel, IGP Côtes Catalanes, 2016, 14.5%

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code FON416

This great value wine comes from young vines of Syrah and Grenache growing within the prestigious Côtes du Roussillon Villages appellation - so it could actually be sold as such. Very youthful purple. Gorgeously juicy and vital wine, lacking any bite of tannin. This shows a new world lusciousness and vibrancy of fruit - blackberry tinged, unusually, with peach - but in an authentically Roussillon idiom. If you like dramatic young wine look no further. Now-2020

**Domaine du Grand Arc,
Reserve Grand Arc, Corbières,
2014, 14%**

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code DGA214

One of our staples at SVS, this blend of about 50% Carignan, with 35% Grenache and 15 % Mourvèdre, is a splendid barrel-aged wine which can be drunk young or kept for a few years. Very deep hue. This opens out beautifully in the mouth, delivering a gush of brambly fruit with spicy notes and fresh acidity. Rather Malbec-like, so excellent with a steak. Now-2019

**Domaine Begude, Pinot Noir,
IGP Haute Vallée de l'Aude, 2016, 13%**

Bottle £11.50 Case £131.10 Code BEG616

We always like this wine, but it really is superb this year: it compares favourably with many, more expensive, 2015 Bourgogne Pinot Noirs. A pretty scent of red berries and cherries almost sells it short; because the palate is riper and fatter than usual, offering ripe red and black cherries and blackberries. Splendidly long finish. Owner James Kinglake recommends drinking this with duck - but frankly it's so delicious you could drink it on its own, or it's perfect cool with a plate of charcuterie. Now-2020

**Domaine du Grand Arc,
Cuvée de Quarante, Corbières,
2014, 14%**

Bottle £12.50 Case £142.50 Code DGA314

Based on 45% Carignan with 35% Grenache and 20% Syrah, all in barrel, about 20% new. Deep purple. Strong aromas of raspberry coulis. Dense, old-viney feel. Vibrant red fruit, elegant and intense. Coffee notes from the oak. Drinking well and will keep. Now-2020

**Domaine Depeyre,
Côtes du Roussillon Villages,
2013, 14.5%**

Bottle £12.95 Case £147.63 Code DEP113

From about 50% Syrah, 25% Grenache and 25% Carignan, grown on black schist vineyards near the village of Cases-de-Pène. Deep purple. Slightly roasted nose, with hints of cassis and leather. Consistent on the palate: a really smooth and rich mouthful of black fruit - mainly blackcurrant with a fresh bite of acidity. Concentrated, not in the least jammy, a very typical and rewarding Roussillon red. The 2015 vintage will follow at £13.95. Now-2019

**Domaine Fontanel, Cistes,
Côtes du Roussillon Villages Tautavel,
2013, 14.5%**

Bottle £14.50 Case £165.30 Code FON214

Named after Cistus, the spring-flowering rock roses growing wild in the scrub. 60% Syrah with Grenache and Mourvèdre, from very rocky land in the north of the appellation, raised in oak. Intense sweet black fruit aromas. The palate is consistent with blackberry and a touch of chocolate backed by soft tannins and a long spicy finish. Powerful and smooth, an iron hand in a velvet glove. Now-2021

**Domaine du Grand Arc, En Sol Majeure,
Corbières, 2014, 14.5%**

Bottle £15.50 Case £176.70 Code DGA414

60% Grenache and 40% Syrah, all in barrel, 50% new. This hedonistic wine is marked by extravagant aromas and flavours. Enticing scent of cassis. Luxuriant, fleshy black fruit, blackcurrants and blueberries, is lent depth by glossy vanilla and fleeting notes of herbs. Full bodied and powerful, this is already excitingly approachable but can be kept for years. Cellar this bargain. Now-2023

"Black cherry colour with black core, hence the name. Intensely sweet and almost minty in its vibrant black fruit - cassis and a hint of cassis leaf. Soft, rich and utterly caressing on the palate. Deep and velvety. Rich and generous and long. 17/20", Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com, 7th June 2016

**Domaine du Traginer, Collioure,
2012, 14.9%**

Bottle £18.50 Case £210.90 Code TRG112

From Grenache, Carignan, Mourvèdre and Syrah, farmed organically on steep slopes plunging down to the Med near the Spanish border. Deep and opaque, this unoaked cuvée shows all the purity of the fruit with a real tension and minerality. Blackberry, blackcurrant and liquorice with notes of coffee; powerful and very silky but perfectly balanced with acidity. Châteauneuf-like grandeur. Now-2019

**Domaine Depeyre, Rubia Tinctoria,
Côtes du Roussillon Villages,
2013, 14.5%**

Bottle £19.95 Case £227.43 Code DEP413

From 90% Syrah, based on one south facing plot, plus 10% Grenache, picked relatively early in late August, and then simply fermented in fibreglass tanks. This is a great unoaked red. It's named

after the Latin name for the Common Madder, a Mediterranean plant whose root traditionally supplied a red dye, and when one sees the amazingly deep colour one can see why. Cassis-like perfume: instantly one thinks of Hermitage. The merest taste is so striking: this is a totally wonderful, energetic, velvety wine. Whilst there is a heart of bittersweet blackcurrants, and hints of liquorice and umami savouriness, the wine also exhibits profound mineral depths. Truly captivating. Now-2020+

"Black cherry colour with black core, hence the name. Intensely sweet and almost minty in its vibrant black fruit - cassis and a hint of cassis leaf. Soft, rich and utterly caressing on the palate. Deep and velvety. Rich and generous and long. 17/20", Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com, 7th June 2016.

Domaine Fontanel, Prieuré, Côtes du Roussillon Villages Tautavel, 2014, 14.5%

Bottle £19.95 Case £227.43 Code FON314

We have not shipped the Fontanel's top red for a few years: from one parcel on a high, windswept, north facing *argilo-calcaire* slope, this blend of 2/3 Syrah, with Grenache, and a little Mourvèdre is given 18 months in new oak casks. It's always a dramatic wine: at the moment a little closed - so do double decant to drink this now - and then revealing layers of black fruit, spice and mocha flavours. Intensely blackcurranty in youth, it ages like a top northern Rhône, becoming more complex, meaty and savoury. Now-2022

Sparkling Wine and Vin Doux Naturel

Just to show that Occitania can supply all your needs, here is sparkling wine from Limoux - where there is a very long tradition of making such wine in the Champagne method, with a secondary fermentation in the bottle; and luscious Vin Doux Naturel. The latter is made by stopping the fermentation of very ripe grapes, part way through its course, by the addition of alcohol (a process known as *mutage*); thereby preventing the yeasts from working, and leaving a fortified wine with plentiful natural grape sugar and between 15 and 17 degrees of alcohol.

Sparkling

Domaine J. Laurens, Le Moulin, Blanquette de Limoux Brut, NV, 12%

Bottle £12.95 Case £147.63 Code LAU1NV

From 90% Mauzac, the traditional variety of Limoux, with 10% Chardonnay. Pale lemon with a fine mousse. Aromas of ripe pear and white flowers with the notes of warm nuts and cinnamon characteristic of Mauzac. Crisp and elegant citrus and stone fruit flavours meld seamlessly and lead to a finely focused finish. A perfect aperitif. Now-2018

"Fresh green apple with a sort of rhubarb and custard character too. Loads of personality! A real charmer. I can't think of a better sparkler at the price. 16.5/20" Richard Hemming MW on jancisrobinson.com, 14th May 2015.

Domaine J. Laurens, Les Graimenous, Crémant de Limoux Brut, 2015, 12%

Bottle £13.95 Case £159.03 Code LAU315

A blend of 60% Chardonnay with 30% Chenin, 5% Pinot Noir and 5% Mauzac. The mousse is persistent, with a very fine bead. Such a refined nose with citrus and green apple scents, breadth and complexity. This is delightfully racy and vital, with ripe orchard fruits and a refined hint of toast. Such a versatile wine, an ideal accompaniment to seafood, even sushi and tempura, and a lot more fun to drink than cheap Champagne. Now-2019

Vin Doux Naturel

Domaine Fontanel, Rivesaltes Ambré, 2003, 16%

Bottle £17.95 Case £204.63 Code FON903

One of the most distinctive and exciting wines in our entire stock. From late-picked, 60 year-old vines of Grenache Blanc, with 10% Muscat à Petits Grains, the Ambré - literally amber - tone develops after at least five years of mildly oxidative ageing in barrel. Very even mid tawny hue. This smells quite like old Cognac, with fumes of cooked plums, and a hint of sherry-like oxidation. Dates and toffee dominate, with accompanying subtleties, including marmalade and hazelnut. Such a lingering finish. Terrific alternative to tawny port to accompany cheese, dried fruit and nuts. Now-2021 Very limited stock

Domaine Fontanel, Rivesaltes Ambré, 2007, 16%

Bottle £18.95 Case £216.03 Code FON907

This younger vintage includes a little more Muscat, so is a little more floral and less sweet than usual. Colour of polished copper: and pure flavours of dates, figs and buttery toffee. Now-2022



Domaine Fontanel, Maury, 2014, 16%

Bottle £18.95 Case £216.03 Code FON614

From one plot of 60 year old vines of Grenache Noir. This style is well-known for matching chocolate, but it's equally good with cheese, especially blue cheese, in a manner akin to a very fruity and forward port. Deep ruby colour. Really inviting nose of rich cherry fruits, cedar and sweet spices. Very pure, cherryish Grenache flavours (a little reminiscent of Bonne Maman cherry jam), woven with notes of mocha, spice and cream. Really superb; and perfect with chocolate desserts (Black Forest gâteau?). Now-2022

Domaine du Tragner, Banyuls Grand Cru, 2006, 17%

50cl Bottle £22.95 Case (12 x 50cl.) £261.63 Code TRG806

The top of the quality pyramid in the appellation, Grand Cru Banyuls is made in exceptional years and must spend at least 30 months in oak. From 60% Grenache Noir, 30% Grenache Gris and 10% Carignan, this has spent nearly 7 years in old demi-muids, losing part of its colour to become amber with dark tones. Complex nose: cooked fruits, prune, honey and toffee with a touch of oxidative notes. Silky and layered, the texture is lovely and sweet but fresh as well. Now-2018 Very limited stock

"Deep tawny, a little cloudy. Fabulous aromas of nutty toffee, dried apricots (the brown-looking unsulphured kind), prunes and lots more, spicy too. Tangy and with a sour freshness on the finish, finely textured and although it is sweet, it is the complexity of flavour not the sweetness that stands out. Great freshness to balance. 17.5/20", Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com, 7th June 2016.

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