

## My Business Life Dec 2006 recommendations

11 Dec 2006 by Business Life

Stephen Jones sends the following email: "Please let me know what your recommendation is from the December *Business Life* (BA) magazine. I particularly liked the sound of the port. Rather than tear out the page in-flight, I thought I'd check it on your website but it isn't published here yet." I herewith oblige.

### For the table

**Clos d'Yvigne, Le Petit Prince 2003 Côtes de Bergerac**  
£7.99 Majestic

You may have read about Patricia Atkinson, the plucky Englishwoman who took over an ailing vineyard in south west France and personally transformed it into a going concern making stunning sweet wine, Clos d'Yvigne Saussignac which posh wine merchant Justerini & Brooks sells for £20 a half-litre. She has written two books, *The Ripening Sun* and *La Belle Saison*, about her adventures.

This is the first of her dry wines I tasted and it hit me between the eyes with its wonderfully vibrant, deep-flavoured fruit positively vibrating with life and health. It doesn't suffer from the common fault of so many European wines made in the heatwave vintage of 2003, heat on the finish, hollowness in the middle and raisined, dead fruit flavours. It's made of the two less famous Bordeaux grape varieties, Merlot with Cabernet Franc rather than Cabernet Sauvignon, and actually tastes almost more like a super-ripe Loire red made from Cabernet Franc than like a wine from the neighbouring Bordeaux region.

Delicious now, it should drink well over the next two or three years. Ridiculously underpriced.

### For the cellar

**Graham's Malvedos 1996 port**  
£22.50 Tanners of Shrewsbury, also at Fareham Wine Cellar, The Vintage House and Four Walls Wine Company  
[Find this wine](#)

Stunning value, this single quinta wine from Quinta dos Malvedos, the isolated estate in the Douro Valley in northern Portugal that provides most of the best grapes for Graham's vintage port, is well up to the standard of most vintage port. It is widely acknowledged that 1996 would have been 'declared' a year in which full-blown vintage port was made if it hadn't been for the fact that 1994 had been declared and it was felt the market couldn't bear another vintage so soon.

This wine is looking gorgeous now – just right for winter sipping. Wonderfully mellow yet refreshing super-ripe fruit too. Stand the bottle upright for a quarter of an hour and then, ideally, pour the wine off the thick sediment into a jug or decanter before serving. This and some good farmhouse cheddar would make a great end to any December dinner, or Christmas lunch. This port should also continue to develop in bottle for another 10 years at least.

*Dec 11: I heard from Paul Symington that, partly as a result of my comments in [Reflections on significant ports past and present](#), they have decided to abandon the potentially confusing tradition of calling this single quinta wine just 'Malvedos' and it will in future be labelled 'Quinta dos Malvedos'. Apologies to nostalgics.*