

Greatest buys - reds

5 Dec 2009 by Jancis Robinson/ FT

This week my top red recommendations and, as you can see, it is much easier to find value under £5 than for last week's [whites](#). My single best tip for red wine value is to head straight for the exceptional 2007 Rhônes which are still very much with us. And take advantage of the deals that have resulted from how difficult it is to sell less glamorous red bordeaux. This is very much a UK- based selection. Alas American wine is rarely a bargain on this side of the Atlantic. But you should be able to find international stockists at www.wine-searcher.com. If no alcoholic strength is stated, it is most likely to be 13 or 13.5%. Bear in mind that some merchants will not sell fewer than 12 mixed bottles, and delivery may cost extra.

Borsao, Gran Tesoro 2008 Campo de Borja 16 Drink 2009

Light, simple, super- clean Garnacha (the Grenache of Châteauneuf- du- Pape) over- delivers. Excellent value. 13.5%
£3.99 Tesco, Spar

Waitrose, Classic 2008 Côtes du Rhône 15.5 Drink 2009-10

Light but attractive young blend of Grenache with 20% Syrah. Great price. 12.8%
£3.99 Waitrose Wine Direct and 216 stores

Sainsbury's, Portuguese Red 2008 Vinho Regional Alentejano 15.5 Drink 2009-10

60% Aragóñez, 30% Trincadeira, 10% Alicante Bouschet from southern Portugal. Not a good label but a very good price. Lots of damson fruit and a kick of soft tannin on the finish. More character than you might think at the price.
£4.49 Sainsbury's 279 stores

Jacques Boyer, Lou Tribe 2007 Vin de Pays des Côtes de Thongue 16 Drink 2009-10

Pure, ripe and spicy. Easy but not simple. Warmish finish though the stated alcohol is 12.5%. His **Nogaredo, Cuvée Charles 2006** at £5.95 is almost as good value.
£5.50 Lea & Sandeman

Marqués de Meija 2007 Rioja 15.5 Drink 2009-10

Rich, round, very vibrant. Not necessarily like the Riojas of old but great over- delivery of brawny fruit for the money. 13%
£5.95 Wine Society

Grant Burge, Benchmark Shiraz 2008 South Australia 15.5 Drink 2009-10

Very sweet, almost syrupy palate entry. Then quite a bit of acid and tannin. Not specially harmonious but a great deal better than most wines at this price. 14.5%
£5.95 Wine Society

Vignerons de Roquemaure, Rocca Maura 2007 Vin de Pays du Gard 15.5 Drink 2009

Easy, fresh, lively blend of southern French grape varieties with 30% Bordeaux varieties, showing Oddbins' buyers' determination to provide something different. A particularly smooth texture from this superior co- op. 14.5%
£5.99 or £4.79 in a mixed case Oddbins

Bouchard Pinot Noir 2008 Vin de Pays d'Oc 15.5 Drink 2009-10

Drinkable inexpensive versions of the red burgundy grape are rare but this is very easy and gulpable. From Limoux? 13%
£5.99 Sainsbury's 346 stores

Symington, Altano 2007 Douro 16 Drink 2009-10

Port producers Symingtons' table wine, based on Tinta Roriz (Tempranillo) improves with every vintage. Sweet blackberry fruit laced with pepper and spice. Fine, dry texture. Even quite elegant. 13%
£5.99 Waitrose Wine Direct and 200 stores

Grandes Vinos y Viñedos, Raso de la Cruz 2008 Cariñena 16.5 Drink 2009

Ripe raspberry jam with a very pleasant spiciness and lots of layers. Some grip too. Good value. 13%
£5.99 M&S 500 stores

Chilcas, Organic Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 Maule Valley 16 Drink 2009-10

Lively, well balanced, fresh and smooth. While Chile develops new wine regions, the old vines of Maule are largely undiscovered treasure.
£6.49 Bibendum Wine

O Fournier, Urban Malbec 2007 Mendoza 16.5 Drink 2009-12

Scented, nutty Argentine with real interest. Lots of pure fruit and attractive bite on the finish (not astringency but appetising structure). This is real wine! Excellent value. 14.5%
£6.99 or £5.59 in a mixed case Oddbins

Tesco Finest 2007 Vacqueyras 16.5 Drink 2009-11

From Jean- Paul Selles. A particularly good- value example from this great southern Rhône vintage, a spicy cocktail of 60% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre and 10% Syrah. Liqueurice and brambles. 14%
£6.99 Tesco

Gayda Syrah 2007 Vin de Pays d'Oc 16.5 Drink 2009-11

One of only nine French gold medals in 'Syrah du Monde 2009'. Winemaker Vincent Chansault is a big fan of the Rhône and has been buying Midi plots that are like the northern Rhône: cool, north facing. Tastes very fresh and un- Languedoc! Great value. 13.7%
From £7.25 Noel Young, James Nicholson, Cambridge Wine Merchants, Vine King

Anakena, Single Vineyard Pinot Noir 2008 Rapel Valley 16+ Drink 2010-11

Intense Chilean bargain with a pure nose and some cappuccino richness on the palate.
£7.49 Noel Young, Halifax Wine, Hawkshead Wines

Gracia de Chile, Reserva Superior Pinot Noir 2008 Bio Bio Valley 16.5 Drink 2010-13

Frenchman Louis Ballet made this aromatic, racy, refreshing, keenly priced answer to burgundy from the cool far south of Chile.
£7.49 Bibendum Wine

Warwick, The First Lady 2007 Stellenbosch 16.5 Drink 2009-12

In a South African context this is super subtle. Terrific price for such a gentle texture with nothing out of place. 14%
£7.95 Wine Society, Waitrose?? *

Christian Moueix 2005 Bordeaux 16 Drink 2008-10

Lots of lush fruit and an attractive dry finish. This tastes like real wine! Excellent value for claret traditionalists. 13%
£7.95 Wine Society

Matthias Gaul, Palataia Pinot Noir 2008 Pfalz 16.5 Drink 2009-10

Very pure, flattering Pinot aromas from globally warmed Germany. Opulent fruit and some sweetness but it's not sickly. Much easier to drink than most Pinots at this price. Relatively delicate. Excellent value. 13.5%
£7.99 M&S 250 stores

Tyrrell's Shiraz 2007 Hunter Valley 16 Drink 2008-10

Transparent and lively acid and minerals. Very true to Hunter. Not too alcoholic and absolutely ready to drink. 13.5%
£7.99 M&S 150 stores

Dom de Cassan 2007 Beaumes- de- Venise 16.5+ Drink 2009-12

Another 2007 southern Rhône bargain made within sight of the Dentelles de Montmirail. Attractively fragrant. Rich but elegant too. 14.5%
£7.99 Waitrose Wine Direct and 122 stores

Ch Rousseau de Sipian, Les Tourelles de Sipian 2006 Médoc 16 Drink 2009-11

Some new oak and a bit of evolution evident on this red bordeaux. Real Médoc character. Good value. 12.5%
£7.99 or £6.39 in a mixed case Oddbins

Ch de la Grave 2005 Côtes de Bourg 16 Drink 2010-14

Very polished right- bank claret with lots of ripe tannin. No hurry to drink this (serve with a steak or roast in 2009) but the Wine Society buyers have saved you tasting your way

through hundreds of alternatives. 13%
£8.50 Wine Society

Dom Clavel, Les Garrigues 2007 Coteaux du Languedoc 16.5 Drink 2009-12
Very dark vibrant purple. Gamey and attention grabbing with a sweet start to the palate. Tarry but refreshing on the finish. Over- delivers even if not in terms of subtlety. 14%
£8.95 Wine Society

La Collina, Don Guido 2008 Chianti 16.5 Drink 2009-11
Fragrant, mouthfilling cherry fruit as only Sangiovese can deliver. 13.5%
£8.95 Lea & Sandeman

Cave St- Désirat 2007 St- Joseph 17 Drink 2009-13
Wonderfully pure north Rhône Syrah. The St- Désirat co- op seems to be on top form at present, with the 2006 as impressive as the 2007. Very good value at this special offer price. 12.5%
£8.99 Waitrose

Henry Fessy 2008 Brouilly 16 Drink 2009-10
Very sweet and mellifluous with real lightness of touch - even if not much Brouilly texture. But a light, soft, fruity drink with a great label. 13%
£9.49 Waitrose

Dom Le Réméjeanne, Les Arbousiers 2007 Côtes du Rhône 16.5 Drink 2009-14
Rich, sweet and dense with masses of appeal for the strong- hearted. Pretty good tannin management though the tannins are certainly there. This should have a surprisingly long life. 15%
£9.50 Wine Society

The Wine Society, Exhibition Malbec 2007 Mendoza 16.5 Drink 2009-12
Made by Catena Zapata. Extraordinarily blackish purplish crimson. Very rich and satisfying. Lots of sweetness. Lots of tannins but this is real wine! 13.5%
£9.95 Wine Society

El Escocés Volante, Manga del Brujo 2007 Calatayud 16.5 Drink 2010-13
Norrel Robertson MW's joint venture with San Gregorio, taking advantage of old Garnacha vines. Sweet and rich and flattering. His **3000 Años 2006 Bullas Monastrell (\$35-40)** is even more stunning, and imported into the US by Well Oiled Wine Co.
£9.99 Cambridge Wine Merchants, Highbury Vintners, Planet of the Grapes...

Quebrada de Macul, Peñalolen Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 Maipo Valley 16 Drink 2010-13
From the property that makes Domus Aurea on relatively high ground south east of Santiago. Fancy bottle. Attractively ripe cassis aromas. Obviously serious stuff. Much more fruit and structure than a red bordeaux at the same price is likely to have. 14%
£9.99 or £7.99 in a mixed case Oddbins

Dom du Joncier, Le Classique 2007 Lirac 16.5 Drink 2009-12
From arguably Lirac's leading domaine - another great 2007 from the southern Rhône that has smoky savoury spice. 14.5%
£9.99 Waitrose Wine Direct and 216 stores

Ch Fonréaud 2004 Lustrac- Médoc 16 Drink 2009-14
Smart cru bourgeois reduced from £14.99. Relatively plump for a Lustrac 2004.
£10.99 Co- op superstores

Dom de Boissan 2007 Côtes du Rhône- Villages, Sablet 16.5 Drink 2009-11
Sweet, round, dark blackcurrant pastille sort of flavours. There is SO much here! From a good address and a great vintage - and 30- year- old vines apparently. 13.5%
£10.99 or £8.79 in a mixed case Oddbins

Mas Cristine, Rouge 2007 Côtes du Roussillon 17 Drink 2009-13
Very vibrant and exciting and rather thrilling if you can take the alcohol. Good, dry finish. 14%
About £11 Noel Young, Theatre of Wine

Viña do Campo Mencia 2008 Ribeiro 17 Drink 2009-12
Aromatic and lingering raspberry fruit from this fashionable grape native to north- west Spain. Far from a blockbuster. 12.5%
£11.95 Lea & Sandeman

Ch Tour du Pas St- Georges 2004 St- Émilion 16.5 Drink 2010-14
From Pascal Delbeck, ex Ausone winemaker. Satisfying mouthful - especially at this price - with quite a bit of evolution. Not enormously concentrated but comforting and well balanced.
£11.95 Jeroboams

Moraia, Pietracupa 2007 Bolgheri 16.5+ Drink 2009-12
Posh provenance. Posh wine for Sainsbury's. Very attractive warm claret. Mediterranean but very French in structure. Pretty good buy. Potential for improvement in bottle. 13.5%
£11.99 Sainsbury's 220 stores

Dominio del Plata, Ben Marco Malbec 2007 Mendoza 17 Drink 2009-12
Pretty closed on the nose at the moment, though there's just a hint of Malbec's dark floral side. Elegant though rich and long. 14%
£11.99 Majestic (or 2 for £10.99 each)

O Fournier, Centauri Red Blend 2007/8 Maule Valley 17 Drink 2009-13
45% old Carignan, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot. Tastes like the most delicious medicine. Both vintages sophisticated. 14%
From £12.39 D Byrne, also Butlers Wine Cellar

Achaval Ferrer Malbec 2007 Mendoza 17 Drink 2009-13
Tremendous clarity of fruit - really finely honed red fruits. Very versatile and moreish from an admired producer. 13.5%
£149.88 a dozen, equivalent to £12.49 a bottle, Corney & Barrow

Tenuta di Capezzana, Barco Reale 2007 Carmignano 17 Drink 2009-12
This bargain ticks all the boxes: real lift with lovely fragrance, freshness and balance. Super- appetising blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Tuscany's own Canaiolo. 13.5%
£12.50 (halves £7.50) Jeroboams

Teso La Monja, Amirez 2007 Toro 16 Drink 2009-11
Very dark and rich and blackberry. Sweet and head on. Nothing subtle about this! But then it's very much the new Spain.
£115 a dozen in bond, equivalent to £12.87 per bottle duty paid Justerini's

Yves Cuilleron, Signé Syrah 2007 Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes 17 Drink 2008-10
Very polished and savoury from a Condrieu king - very suave indeed! Racy, bone dry, luscious, polished and sinewy. Already lots of pleasure. Too light to have a very long life, I suspect. 12.5%
£12.95 Wine Society

Clos Ste- Anne 2000 Premières Côtes de Bordeaux 16 Drink 2009-12
Good price for a nine- year- old wine. Bloody, aged- Merlot sort of nose. Maybe just a tad too much new oak? But awfully good value for anyone who understands red bordeaux and is not looking for sweetness. 12.5%
£12.95 Wine Society

Krutzler Blaufränkisch 2007 Südburgenland 17 Drink 2009-09
From Eisenberg, expected to be Austria's next new DAC region. Heady, rich, like crushed elderberries. Very supple and velvety with real appeal. Ready too! 13%
£12.95 Wine Society

Luciano Sandrone 2007 Dolcetto d'Alba 17 Drink 2008-11
Bursting with fruit and the perfume of Piemonte in north- west Italy. Almost irresistible.
£12.99 Noel Young

Domaine Santa Duc, Les Aubes 2007 Vacqueyras 16.5 Drink 2010-16

Smooth, easy and super flattering yet with great allure and density. 14%
£13.95 *Berry Bros*

Gilles Robin, Cuvée Papillon 2007 Crozes- Hermitage 17.5 Drink 2009-15
Wonderfully perfumed autumnal fruit. Complex with a mineral aftertaste. Proof of the great value to be found in Crozes. 13.5%
£14.75 *Lea & Sandeman*

Cordoliani 2004 Patrimonio 17 Drink 2008-12
Pale rose colour from Corsica's own grape, Niellucciu. Very gentle, floral and mellifluous - lovely stuff! Exciting and persistent. 14.5%
£14.90 *Theatre of Wine*

Dom Ballorin, Le Village 2007 Côte de Nuits- Villages 16.5 Drink 2009-12
Very low yields in a Comblanchien vineyard from a new producer on the Gevrey/ Morey border. Light, fresh and pure. 12.5%
£14.95 *Roberson*

Colomé Malbec 2007 Salta 17 Drink 2009-12
An almost black wine from the highest vines in the world in the Calchaquíes Valley in the Argentine Andes. Super- pure, unpolluted flavours. Power and elegance somehow.
14%
£14.99 *Waitrose Wine Direct and 6 stores*

Philip Shaw, No 17 Merlot/ Cabernet Franc/ Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 Orange 16.5 Drink 2009-12
Cool- climate Australian. Fresh, delicate, appetising, gently made with a delightfully light touch. Just the sort of wine that the uninformed think that Australia does not produce.
14%
£14.99 or £11.99 in a mixed case *Oddbins*

Dom de l'Espigouette 2007 Vacqueyras 16+ Drink 2009-14
Lots of luscious fruit. A bit tight and tarry on the end and very slightly medicinal but proper wine. Needs food! 14.5%
£15 *Reserve Wines of Manchester, Partridges, also Bottle Apostle, The Vineyard of Dorking, Lake Wines of Henley, Charrington Cellars*

Setanta, Cuchulain Shiraz 2007 Adelaide Hills 16.5 Drink 2009-12
From one of South Australia's cooler wine regions, this wine is plump rather than bloated with good natural acidity to keep it lively. 13.5%
£15.50 *Novum*

Ventolera Pinot Noir 2008 Leyda 16.5 Drink 2009-11
Lovely blend of Burgundy clones of Pinot with real freshness and broad fruit. The oak is only just kept in check, but this Chilean is really appealing for early drinking. Serve at cellar temperature.
£16.99 *Novum*

Mt Difficulty, Roaring Meg Pinot Noir 2008 Central Otago 17 Drink 2009-10
Second label from this excellent NZ producer that invites you to gobble it up this minute. 14%
£17.49 (or 2 for £13.99 each) *Majestic*

Dom St- Gayan 2001 Gigondas 17 Drink 2009-12
Rare to find a wine with such bottle age on the market, from a great southern Rhône vintage. Surprisingly elegant for a Gigondas. 14%
£17.50 *Yapp Bros*

Berrys' Pomerol 16.5 Drink 2009-11
A 2007 from Ch Feytit- Clinet and definitely the best of these own- label Bordeaux generics. Lovely and lush for current drinking. Well bought! 13.5%
£17.95 *Berry Bros*

Domaine de la Bouissière 2007 Gigondas 17.5 Drink 2009-12
Remarkable intensity and reach without any heaviness or brawn. Long, spicy finish. 14.5%
£18.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

CVNE, Imperial Reserva 2001 Rioja 17 Drink 2009-15
A rare classic from Spain's answer to the Bordeaux region, and a great vintage. Still youthful too. 13.5%
£18.99 *Majestic (or 2 bottles for £13.99 each)*

Ch Tour du Haut- Moulin 2000 Haut- Médoc 17 Drink 2007-15
Subtle nose with very fine texture and real succulence. Like so many 2000s, lovely claret for current drinking. 12.5%
£19 *Wine Society*

Gemtree, White Lees Shiraz 2006 McLaren Vale 17 Drink 2009-12
Ground- breaking Shiraz aged on Chardonnay lees seems extra luscious and interesting but only limited availability. 14.5%
From £19.99 *Hailsham Cellars, Imbibros, Cambridge Wine Merchants*

Pavillon de Poyferré 2005 St- Julien 17 Drink 2009-15
Produced by Ch Léoville Poyferré in this stunning vintage and much more forward than the grand vin. A restrained take on 2005 with taut fruit purity and length. 13%
£19.99 *Majestic*

Ch Cantemerle 2000 Haut- Médoc 17 Drink 2009-17
Well priced classic claret from an excellent vintage just starting to drink well now.
£20.50 *Lay & Wheeler*

Dom Nicolas Rossignol, Les Reversées Premier Cru 2004 Beaune 17 Drink 2010-15
The 2004 burgundies, both red and white, are just coming round now. Here's a nice, delicate one to savour over the next five years. 13%
£21.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

Yalumba, The Signature 2004 Barossa Valley 17.5 Drink 2008-18
56% Cabernet Sauvignon (35- year- old vines) and 46% Shiraz (50-70- year- old vines). Sweet and spicy.
£21.95 *Hailsham Cellars, Slurp.co.uk, Nidderdale Fine Wines and others*

A A Badenhorst, Red Blend 2006 Coastal Region 18 Drink 2010-15
Shiraz 92%, Mourvèdre 5%, Cinsault 3%. Seriously good South African red with real confidence and complexity. 14.5%
£22.95 *Handford, also www.eWine.eu*

Paullac de Pichon Lalande 2004 Pauillac 16.5 Drink 2008-12
Third wine of the famous second growth, Réserve de la Comtesse being the one between this and Ch Pichon Lalande itself. Very snazzy oak used here of course. Gentle and flattering. Who wouldn't love this? Only someone with the grand vin itself to hand. Seems soft and Merlot dominated. Great class.
£23.95 *Jeroboams*

Dujac Fils et Père 2006 Morey- St- Denis 16.5 Drink 2009-13
Subtle but profound - ranging from red fruit to floral to spice to meat to earth, with a light medicinal hint. Quality fruit flavours, enough guts to age well. Impressive and delicious.
13%
£24.50 *winedirect.co.uk*

Renato Ratti, Marcenasco 2005 Barolo 17 Drink 2009-14
This wine, available in relatively limited quantities, would be great with Christmas dinner. Very lively and refreshing and punchy and clean. Really quite heartening to find this in mass distribution - in theory. 14%
£25 *larger M&S stores*

Killikanoon, Duke Grenache 2006 Clare Valley 17.5 Drink 2010-16
Sweet, fresh and juicy with excellent balance. The best Australian Grenache to have come my way.
£27.95 *winedirect.co.uk*

Uccelliera, Rapace 2006 IGT Toscana 17 Drink 2009-15

Scented and seductive. Polished and lively. Very fine and well balanced.
About £28 Planet of the Grapes, Vinology of Stratford-upon-Avon

Dom Daniel Bocquenet, Aux St-Julien 2006 Nuits-St-Georges 17 Drink 2009-12
Luscious, racy and complete with lots of energy and not too much tannin. Nuits 2006s seem special.
£33 Jeroboams

Umathum, Ried Hallebuhl 2004 Burgenland 17.5 Drink 2008-12
Proof that Austria's reds are catching up with the whites. Mainly Zweigelt grapes. Polished and super-smooth. Very winning. What a treat to be offered this at such a mature stage. 13%
About £33 Huntsworth Wine, Winebear.com

Ch Marbuzet 2003 St-Estèphe 17 Drink 2008-14
Many 2003 red bordeaux are uncomfortably overripe and tough but this, from Ch Cos d'Estournel, is a delicious exception just starting to drink well now. Serious stuff.
£34.13 chateauonline.co.uk

Ch Lagrange 2001 St-Julien 18 Drink 2008-25
Very rich and glorious. Lovely any time over the next 20 years.
£34.99 Ballantynes and others

Ch Gruaud Larose 2001 St-Julien 17 Drink 2009-19
A rather plump take on red bordeaux, drinking well now.
£38.95 House of Townend and others

Dom Sylvain Cathiard, Clos de l'Orme 2004 Chambolle-Musigny 17.5 Drink 2009-15
50+ year-old vines. Real delicacy and lovely now. Great precision. Dry finish. But very delicate. Great balance. 13%
£43.50 Stone, Vine & Sun, £54 Roberson

Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 Margaret River 17.5 Drink 2009-19
Western Australia's first growth. Good to see it has shed its Pichon Lalande lookalike label and now stands on its own two extremely accomplished feet. Spicy, lively with real integrity and persistence. Such intelligent winemaking. Knockers of Australian wine should be force-fed this, lucky things. It's not given away though. 14%
£44.95 Jeroboams

Dom des Comtes Lafon, Santenots du Milieu Premier Cru 2006 Volnay 17.5 Drink 2009-16
The best Côte de Beaune red in a recent extensive blind tasting. Lip-smackingly satisfying and ready to enjoy.
£59.95 Noel Young

Dom Sylvain Cathiard, En Orveaux Premier Cru 2002 Vosne-Romanée 17.5 Drink 2008-18
Gorgeous shades of red fruits with a dry, yet rich, finish. Layers of opulence without its being at all gratuitously sweet. Lushissimo! 13.5%
£60 Wine Society

Ch Lynch Bages 1990 Pauillac 17.5 Drink 2004-14
An old favourite at the peak of its powers. Or go for the gorgeous **Ch Cheval Blanc 1990** if the budget can stand £700 a bottle.
£160 Nicholls & Perks and others