

A useful Champagne Club in London

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One of the best things about the Great Eastern Hotel, the Conran conversion of the old railway hotel at Liverpool Street station, is Frenchwoman sommelier Joelle Marti. She has assembled an excellent cellar there and is now running a Champagne Club, open to all, with special tasting evenings put on by various houses and some particularly good retail prices available to members.

To become a member you have to attend two of these champagne evenings (tough, I know) during which you also qualify for a 10 per cent discount if you adjourn afterwards to the hotel's Fishmarket Bar and a complimentary glass of champagne if you dine in the restaurant (though I would respectfully suggest that this is the last thing you will feel like after a champagne tasting - a glass of Mouton Cadet would be more likely to hit the spot).

Some of the most attractive prices on the current Champagne Club price list are Billecart Salmon NV at an unbeatable £16.50, Bollinger NV at £21, Dom Ruinart 1990 at £47 and Dom Pérignon 1995 at £52. But it's not all the big and famous. There have already been evenings presented by René Geoffroy and Henriot and the next event is a Gosset tasting in February.

For tickets, or to subscribe to the Champagne Club mailing list, contact Joelle Marti on 020 7618 7074 or joellemarti@great-eastern-hotel.co.uk.