

Two good buys

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Here are my two recommendations in this month's *Business Life*, the magazine given away on British Airways flights within Europe. This was my last contribution to the publication and from the summer onwards I'll be contributing to *Hill Life*, the sister publication which is on all British Airways flights. Both UK retailers sell a minimum of 12 bottles at a time.

FOR THE TABLE

Harford Chardonnay 2004 Sonoma Coast

£13.50 General Wine

[Find this wine online](#)

A white wine at £13.50 a bottle may not seem like much of a bargain but I can assure you that as a California wine in the UK this wine is underpriced, a relic of a most unfortunate episode which resulted in its previous UK importer (Raylet Colbeck's) going belly up. California wines of any quality are generally horribly expensive in the UK - partly because the American market is encouraged to believe in a direct relationship between price and quality which encourages producers to price their wines particularly, erm, badly. The Sonoma Coast encompasses some of the coolest parts of northern California and you can taste those chilly Pacific fogs in the crisp, refreshing acidity of the wine, complemented by winning coffee and toast richness of fruit. There's no doubt that it was treated to some top quality oak, but it's not overwhelming. In California it would not be difficult to find dozens of wines that are not as delicious as this and cost twice as much. Drink in the next year or so, with full flavoured Mediterranean-influenced dishes. The wine is widely available in the US at widely varying prices, from \$16 to \$26 according to [www.wine.com](#).

FOR THE CELLAR

Erna Baglioni Fossil 2001 Barolo

£25 Majestic

[Find this wine online](#)

This is expensive, but then good Barolo is always expensive. I'm recommending this for the cellar as it strikes me as a perfect example of Barolo, arguably Italy's most famous wine, and yet it is a good five years off being ready to drink. Barolo is made in relatively small quantities from Nebbiolo grapes grown on the Langhe hills near the buffer town of Alba in Piemonte (Piedmont) in the hinterland of Turin.

Nebbiolo is a very particular, fussy grape that has to be tended to more anywhere other than in north west Italy. It makes aggressively wines with a particularly haunting aroma that has been described as 'tar and roses'. Nebbiolo is not naturally especially deep coloured and the wine is not particularly full bodied compared with a typical New World Pinot or Cabernet. Comparisons are often made with red Burgundy, another performed but not heavy wine. This one already shows hints of autumn scents, damp mulched leaves and woodsmoke. Drink it at the end of a special meal, perhaps with nothing more distracting than slices of fresh potatoes.