

Red Nose Red and White

31 Jan 2009 by Jancis Robinson

£4.99 from most big UK retailers.

For the first time ever, [Wine Relief](#), the wine-related fundraising initiative in aid of Comic Relief that takes place every two years, has its very own wines. Nick and I have been closely involved in this since 1999 and generous people in the wine trade and their customers have managed to raise £2.7 million so far for the people in Africa and the UK that Comic Relief has done so much to help over the years. Until now, most of the money has been raised by retailers donating 10% of sales of selected Wine Relief wines to Comic Relief in the fundraising period leading up to Red Nose Day.

This year, that period has just started and culminates in Red Nose Day 2009 on Friday 13 Mar. But as well as selected Wine Relief wines with some retailers, we have our very own wine, a South African red and white retailing at £4.99, of which a full £1 goes straight to Comic Relief. Since this admirable organisation does so much good work in the most impoverished continent on earth, it seemed appropriate to look to Africa, and therefore South Africa, as the source of the very first Red Nose Red and Red Nose White.

The wines come from the SAAM Mountain project associated with the Pederberg co-op in Paarl and imported into the UK by Bibendum Wine. Tim Atkin MW and I were closely involved in the selection of the wines themselves. I was always very confident about the white **Red Nose White Chenin Blanc 2008 Paarl** as South African dry Chenin can be so very vibrant and full of fruit. Every time we tasted it, it is was stunning - and always tasted worth at least £5.99.

We had to put much more work into getting the **Red Nose Red Pinotage/Shiraz 2008 Paarl** right, and initially I was worried that it would be seriously outshone by the white. However, the final wine is a triumph - packed full of fruit but not disconcertingly sweet, with real brightness and even a bit of structure. I really do think these wines are superb value, and I was thrilled that our colleague Richard Hemming, not a man who is easy to please, did too (see [here](#)).

These wines have been very generously bought by all of the major UK retailers, except for ASDA, but, most unusually, including Marks & Spencer. They have committed their cash to them so please, for their sake and to encourage them to continue this thoroughly virtuous behaviour, make sure they run out of stock! Tesco have bought particularly generous quantities of it but you can also find Red Nose wines at Booths, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Somerfield and Waitrose.

The only reason these wines are as inexpensive as they are is because everyone involved has been particularly generous. Damien Hirst allowed us to use his Red Nose design for the label (no, it's not the Japanese flag). SAAM provided the wine at cost, JF Hillebrand shipped it at a reduced rate and Quinn Glass bottled it for a special price. Erbin and Multiprint provided capsules and labels respectively at cost and all of the retailers are working at reduced margins.

We wanted to say 'Buy a Damien Hirst for a fiver' but were, understandably perhaps, discouraged from this slogan.

Buy a good wine and a good conscience for a fiver then. And my apologies to all those of you who live outside the UK and are unable to take advantage of these bargains.

See [here](#) for how to get involved with Wine Relief – any fundraising activity will do – and how to donate.