Assorted wine bargains

4 Jun 2009 by Jancis Robinson

Purple pager bargain hunters beat me to the announcement of the current 25% off all wines and champagnes at Waitrose Wine plus free delivery until midnight next Tuesday 9 Jun. Already they have been discussing on members' forum what are the best buys and using the following links, kindly assembled by Andy MacFaul, to help them choose.

Waitrose bargains
(Julia, 19 May 09)

Waitrose - 187 tasting notes
(Jancis, Julia, Victoria 30 Oct 08)

Serious stuff from Waitrose
(Jancis, 23 July 08)

I would also draw champagne lovers' attention to the current offer on **Taittinger Prelude** at Majestic: £19.99 a bottle provided at least two are bought. You may remember that this blended, multi vintage Grand Cru bottling showed very well a few years ago, slightly less well in the blind tasting reported on in First class champagne at the end of last year. But it's still pretty good for less than £20, even if less individual than the 65 wines reported on in yesterday's Great growers' champagnes.

And on Saturday night, at a tasting held at Mirehouse in the Lake District for the excellent Calvert Trust which organises adventures in Lakeland for the disabled, the favourite wine of the assembled 120 wine lovers was one of the cheapest: the warm, spicy **Chapoutier, Bila Haut 2007 Côtes du Roussillon** which Booths are selling for just £6.99, much less than some other retailers. No excess of alcohol and an appetising dry finish but oozing integrity and personality. Cape Mentelle Cabernet/Merlot 2006 Margaret River and Catena Malbec 2006 Mendoza were worthy runners up at £11.99 each.

I was going back to my Cumbrian roots and particularly relished this stunning view from our tasting, and a succession of small, carefully matched dishes based on Cumbrian ingredients provided by Margaret Brough of Food & Co www.foodandcompany.co.uk. Perhaps what swung the votes in favour of the Roussillon red was the exceptional shoulder of flavourful Herdwick mutton cooked in Margaret's Aga overnight with tomatoes, black olives, anchovies, garlic and tiny, sweet dried haricot beans.