Lavenue Ros□ NV Champagne

13 Apr 2010 by Jancis Robinson

£14.99

Good to see UK posh supermarket Marks & Spencer getting into the champagne discounting mood with such an attractive pink champagne as this one.

Actually, I think in general the quality of rosé champagne is rather better at the moment than it was when I published a set of tasting notes on them last year, and is *much* better than it was back when the rosé revival really got underway as described here in 2004. I plan to publish a set of notes on current pink champagne releases tasted earlier this year in the near future - and Purple pagers can find very recent, enthusiastic notes on **Dom Pérignon Rosé 2000** and **1998** in our tasting notes database - or just chose Tasting notes in the dropdown menu under the search box top right and key in Dom Pérignon. Remember, you can sort all tasting notes by clicking on the headings of the columns that come up in the results.

M&S may be celebrating their recent better-than-expected financial results, or welcoming the new replacement for wine lover Sir Stuart Rose at the head of the organisation. Whatever the reason, they have two 'half price' champagnes on special offer at the moment. (Apologies to the many of you who live outside the UK; we virtually ignored Brits last week with our Moscophileros.)

Abel Charlot NV Champagne is a white champagne sold for a while at £27.99 so can justifiably be described as half price at £13.99, which it is until 3 May. It's a fairly neutral, innocuous wine from CRVC co-op, based on the 2004 vintage apparently, that was disgorged last October and has a dosage of 12 g/l. There is absolutely nothing wrong with it but it does look a bit like a special offer from a supermarket and is unlikely to make anyone's heart beat faster.

I think the **Lavenue Rosé NV Champagne** reduced from £29.99 to £14.99 is a better deal. It not only looks more attractive, it seems to have rather fresher fruit (it is based on the 2006 vintage apparently - not the controversial 2005 one) and, although 85% of the grapes were Chardonnay, the 15% Pinot component seems to have perfumed the blend rather nicely. I found an attractive soft texture and lots of refreshing acidity in this blend that is not bone dry (dosae 11 g/l) but is sufficiently dry. There is quite impressive persistence of both flavour and fizz too.

All in all this wine, another co-op product, made in Vertus by SEDI of Chalons this time, looks and tastes as though it is worth a lot more than £14.99. Not £29.99 perhaps, but certainly over £20. It was disgorged in January and bursts with freshness. M&S claim it is available in all stores, but I took what looked like the last bottle off the shelf in my local branch last night.

Apologies for the usual appalling photography. The colour of the wine is actually paler and prettier than, say, current Moët rosé.