

## 75 sure-fire whites

3 Dec 2010 by Jancis Robinson/FT

All the wines below have some real distinction to recommend them. We have given UK stockists where known but do please check with [wine-searcher.com](http://wine-searcher.com) for more, especially if you are outside the UK. Single-bottle prices are given. Some UK retailers, especially mail-order only ones and Majestic, insist on a minimum order of six or 12 bottles. Many others offer discounts if 12 (often mixed) bottles are ordered. Big retailers are always introducing special offers; check with [quaffersoffers.co.uk](http://quaffersoffers.co.uk).

See also my [100 sure-fire reds](#) and [40+ sure-fire fizzes](#). Next week - strong and/or sweet wines.

### **Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference 2009 Muscadet-Sèvre et Maine**

Much more concentration and character than Muscadets of old, from Dom Jean Douillard - good stuff for a supermarket wine with real lees-driven character. Like Beaujolais, Muscadet rides again. 12%  
£6.29 Sainsbury's

### **Argento, Reserva Chardonnay 2009 Mendoza**

Big and bold on the nose in California idiom. Round and slithery with some attractive stone fruit and mineral character. Argentina, unexpectedly, can be particularly good at Chardonnay if it's grown high enough.  
£6.50 Bibendum, [Slurp.co.uk](http://Slurp.co.uk), [Grape Sense](http://Grape Sense), [DJ Foodfare](http://DJ Foodfare)

### **Plaimont 2008 St-Mont**

In smart burgundy bottle. Very tangy nose - Gros Manseng, Arrufiac and Petit Courbu blend. Actually there is more minerality on the nose here than one would expect for the price. It really does taste like a cross between Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne and Jurançon! Which of course it is geographically. Pretty tart finish but much more fruit than a Vin de Pays would have. Good value. 12.5%  
£6.99 Marks & Spencer

### **Concha y Toro Pinot Grigio 2009 Limarí Valley**

Rather headier than the average - and much more fruit. Clever stuff from one of Chile's newer, cooler wine regions. 13%  
£6.99 Marks & Spencer

### **Viña Leyda, Secano Estate Sauvignon Gris 2009 Leyda Valley** 16.5 Drink 2010-2012

Cool, coastal Chilean from a grape that tastes like a cross between Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris. Quite perfumed and rich on the nose. Lots of crunchy fruit. 14%  
£7.49 Marks & Spencer

### **Léon Beyer Sylvaner 2009 Alsace**

Steely and lively. Very firm and dry. Real earthiness: proper Sylvaner character. 12%  
£7.95 *The Wine Society*

### **Vitvinicola del Ribeiro, Viña Costeira 2009 Ribeiro**

Made from Treixadura grown in the far north west of Spain. Mouthfilling, even rather peachy, and softer than such other Ribeiros I have tried, but sufficiently fresh and zesty. Much more flavour than most wines of 11.5% alcohol.  
£7.99 *Waitrose (137 branches)*

### **Fairview, La Capra Chardonnay 2009 Western Cape**

Fun, rich yet lime-juice soaked bottling with fairground-poster label and screwcap. Loads of personality.  
£7.99 *Waitrose (147 branches)*

### **M Chapoutier, La Ciboise 2009 Luberon**

Full, rich and smoky but with good tight herbal finish. Lots of southern French personality and a pleasing dry finish. Much more personality than their white Côtes du Rhône. Quite a bargain. 13.5%  
£8.25 *Butlers Wine Cellar and others*

### **Ch du Coing de St-Fiacre, Cuvée Excellence 2009 Muscadet-Sèvre et Maine**

The heaviest bottle of Muscadet I have ever encountered! Lots of character and masses of acidity - leaner than the average Muscadet but it does taste as though it has a future. Interesting. 12%  
£8.32 (£4.80 a half) OW Loeb

**Schloss Gobelsburg, Domäne Gobelsburg Grüner Veltliner 2009 Niederösterreich**

Light, racy Federspiel or even Steinfeder style - to use the ripeness descriptions used in Austrian wine region Wachau. Great refreshment and length. Versatile; with or without food. Well made. 12.5%  
£8.99 Waitrose (147 branches)

**Tahbilk Marsanne 2008 Nagambie Lakes**

Unusual full-bodied Australian classic from one of the oldest Victorian wineries. Rich start. Lots of gummy personality (Marsanne is a northern Rhône grape). Lots to get your teeth into. Taste history! 13.5%  
From £9.50 The Wine Society, Jeroboams

**Gilles Berlioz 2009 Chignin**

From Jacquère vines up to 80 years old. Very light and appetising with piercing acidity. (Sub)alpine zest indeed. Pretty and different. Great aperitif. 11.5%  
£9.95 Vine Trail, The Wine Society

**Jean-Fernand Thibault, Les Genêts Gris 2008 Coteaux du Giennois**

An upper-Loire Sauvignon Blanc that is much richer than a Sancerre - almost oily in fact. Exotically rich, tropical fruit aromas. Full and round. Pzazz. Just off dry and so much more fun than most Sancerres and Pouilly-Fumés. Not fat, but there is lots of flesh tightly corseted. Very persistent.  
£10.28 Domaine Direct

**Hessische Staatsweingüter Kloster Eberbach Riesling trocken 2008 Rheingau**

Tight nose but flamboyant white peppery fruit on the palate. Good to see the wines of this recently transformed historic Cistercian abbey in the UK. Kindly reward them by buying them. Very good balance.  
£10.50 Jeroboams

**Mitnacht, Cuvée Gytaku 2009 Alsace**

Interesting new cuvée devised by the Japanese chef married to Christophe Mitnacht to go with raw fish in the form of sushi and sashimi - with enough body to stand up to wasabi - a blend of 40% Pinot Blanc and 20% each of Riesling, Pinot Gris and Gewürztraminer. Very rich arresting nose yet it finishes bone dry. Assertive yet very crystalline and clean. Utterly convincing. Bring on the toro... Delicious and complete, even if probably not made to age. 13.5%  
£10.80 Wines of Interest

**Ontañon, Vetiver Crianza 2007 Rioja**

Sleek, sophisticated and unexpected. Viura aka Macabeo with six months in barrique. Interesting! Some strong vegetation notes. 12%  
£10.95 Jeroboams

**La Réméjeanne, Les Arbousiers 2009 Côtes du Rhône**

Very interesting nose - quite complex with medicinal herbs in the ascendant. Rich start and then layers with a certain oiliness but it's not, overall, heavy. Definitely a fair price for a handmade wine. 14%  
£10.95 The Wine Society

**Cave de la Vigne Blanche, La Porte du Caillou 2009 Sancerre**

Screwcapped, from the Chavignol co-op. Real tension with an attractively smoky finish. I'd be very happy to drink this. Good fruit in the middle. Minerals rather than Marlborough influence. Neat and dry but with firm fruit. 13.5%  
£10.99 Sainsbury's

**Anne Boecklin Chasselas 2008 Alsace**

Chasselas is far from the grape with the strongest personality but this wine shows that the producer can be more important than the grape. Interesting and wild-flavoured.  
£11.30 The Sampler

**André Kientzler Pinot Blanc 2007 Alsace**

Chock full of flavour. Lightly honeyed and really compact. I'd rather drink this than many producers' more noble varieties. Very assertive and well corseted.  
£11.50 *Flint Wines*

**Dom J & N Saumaize, En Crêches 2008 St-Véran**

One of those Mâconnais wines that producers of much more expensive white wines on the much smarter Côte d'Or should be forced to taste and marvel at.  
From £11.50 *The Wine Society, Montrachet, Earle Wines, Stone Vine & Sun*

**Dom Clos des Rocs 2009 Macon-Loché**

Well behaved stuff - good balance and not over-the-top ripeness. Attractive mineral whiff. Good stuff with some complexity.  
£11.95 *Flint Wines*

**Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Kabinett 2009 Mosel**

Great value for such a sophisticated wine that arrives somehow in a cloud of complexity and depth. Smoky and with real tingle. Full of Mosel fruit. Just 8.5%  
£12.50 *The Wine Society*

**Van Volxem Saar Riesling 2008 Mosel**

Superb dry German Riesling chock full of minerals - just the sort of wine we should all learn to love because it is great with food and there is no hurry to drink it.  
From £12.55 *Berry Bros, AG Wines, Corks of Cotham, Hanging Ditch, Howard Ripley*

**Pascal Pauget Chardonnay 2008 Mâcon**

Quite rich and beguiling. Easy to like with lots of energy under the surface. So much exuberant fruit...  
£12.85 *Vine Trail*

**Dog Point Sauvignon Blanc 2008 Marlborough**

Admirably dry, minerally and serious from two Cloudy Bay émigrés.  
From £12.94 *West Mount, James Nicholson, Berry Bros and many others*

**Millton, Te Arai Chenin Blanc 2007 Gisborne**

Biodynamic. Smells like the honey and damp straw of proper Chenin. Thrillingly authentic and buzzing with life. Super clean but really interesting off-dry stuff. 12%  
£12.95 *The Wine Society*

**Dom Bernard Defaix 2008 Chablis**

Very fine, classic bracing aroma and not a bad price at all. Racy, dry and terroir-sodden. Perfect for early drinking, from a great Chablis vintage.  
£12.95 *Flint Wines*

**Moss Wood Semillon 2009 Margaret River**

Delicate on the nose and not ridiculously priced. Sweet start but with good fruity core too. A very graceful and gracious Western Australian Semillon from a master of it. No tartness. No excess oak. Beautifully managed.  
£12.95 *Jeroboams*

**Albert Mann Muscat 2009 Alsace**

How about a wine that is really fun to drink? Grown up grape juice under screwcap that explodes in the mouth like a crushed Muscat grape but it's also quite delicate. No headaches here. 12.5%  
£12.99 *Waitrose (9 branches)*

**Dreissigacker Riesling 2009 Rheinhessen**

Stunningly concentrated dry Riesling from low-yielding grapes in ambitious young hands. As much personality as many a more exalted wine. 13.5%  
£12.99 *Noel Young, Secret Cellar, Flying Corkscrew*

**J M Brocard, Dom Pierre de Prehy 2008 Chablis**

Firm nose with real vitality. Classic stuff, and really revitalising and dry. You couldn't complain about this for it's a textbook 2008 Chablis. 12.5%  
£12.99 Marks & Spencer

**Forstmeister Geltz Zilliken Riesling 2008 Mosel**

Pure, cool and mountain-fresh. A bouquet of flowers that finishes dry. Light but crunchy and appetising. Mouthwash - so clean! QbA. 10%  
£13.31 OW Loeb

**Pewsey Vale, The Contours Riesling 2004 Eden Valley**

Great policy on the part of Yalumba to keep some of this back and release it with real bottle age at a fair price. Toast and lime marmalade with a dry finish. 13%  
From £13.49 AG Wines, Berry Bros and others

**Dom des Entrefaux 2009 Crozes-Hermitage**

Attractively dense, high-toned (nice) varnish nose. Lots of sometimes-fat Marsanne (80%), but lovely juicy raciness. A wine that sums up northern Rhône 2009's appeal. Lovely balance, juice and complexity. Great stuff. So much flavour without a lot of alcohol. 12.5%  
£13.50 Vine Trail

**Greywacke Sauvignon Blanc 2009 Marlborough**

Cloudy Bay's former winemaker's own wine, called after the local soil type. Very clean, dry and mineral. Racy and juicy fruited. Good stuff. Just what you want really. 13.5%  
£13.50 The Wine Society (NB The Wine Society advises that they are now out of stock of the Greywacke Sauvignon Blanc 2009. The 2010 (which they say is even better!) should be available from end December.

**Dom Cheveau 2009 Mâcon-Solutré-Pouilly**

Minerally, really luscious and interesting. Lots of personality with a chalky finish. Impressively persistent. 13.5%  
£13.95 Caviste, Field & Fawcett

**Casa Silva, Paradones Cool Coast Sauvignon Blanc 2010 Colchagua Valley**

Very cool and pungent. Super refreshing. Smoky. Dry finish. Excellent Chilean from a new, ocean-cooled region. You could enjoy it now but I suspect it will be better in a few months... 13.5%  
From £12.99 Frank Stainton Wines, selected Wine Racks, Caviste, Averys, Field & Fawcett, The Naked Grape

**Paul Blanck Gewurztraminer 2009 Alsace**

More savoury and refreshing than many Gewurztes. Very natural nose. Lots of richness but it finishes dry. Food friendly. Heavy enough to serve with goose? 13.5%  
£13.99 Waitrose

**Ch des Vaults, La Jalousie 2009 Savennières**

Slightly muted nose and then lots of youthful Chenin ripeness. Lots of acidity. Like biting on an explosive soft fruit - an apple with a peach skin? 14%  
£13.99 Waitrose (37 branches)

**John Forrest, Collection Riesling 2006 Marlborough**

Lots of complexity with tingly fresh acidity - some grapefruit. Bone dry. Very delicate and light bodied with real interest. This stood up well in a blind tasting with some very smart German and Austrian Rieslings.  
£13.99 Adnams

**Ch Pierre Bise, Clos de Coulaine 2009 Savennières**

Deep gold. Spicy, energetic and bone dry. A real ramrod, thanks to its firm acidity. Still quite young - with lots of minerality. No hurry to drink this.  
£14.25 Bibendum, Ellis Wharton Wines

**Gran Lurton, Corte Friulano 2009 Valle de Uco**

Clever new name for Argentina's widely planted Sauvignon Vert, reminding us it's the same as the characteristic grape of Friuli in north east Italy (which used to be called Tocai Friulano until the Hungarians objected). Full bodied, lightly

honeyed with a green streak and an imposing bottle.  
*From £14.95 Robersons, Corney & Barrow, Harrods*

**Dom de Chevalier, Rosé de Chevalier 2009 Bordeaux**

Smart pink. Tiny production made from juice free run from the production of this great red Pessac-Léognan. Good texture, dry and would be lovely with cold turkey.  
*£15 The Sampler*

**Mullineux, White 2009 Swartland**

Stunningly subtle, complex full-bodied white from some of South Africa's older vines in a thoroughly recuperated region.  
13.5%  
*From £14.99 Hand Picked Burgundy, Berry Bros, Cambridge Wine Merchants*

**Ten Minutes by Tractor, 10X Chardonnay 2008 Mornington Peninsula**

Very grown up indeed with real grip and density. No sweetness nor obvious oak. Lovely freshness. Creamy texture. White peach fruit with a dry finish. Excellent at reduced price. 14%  
*£15.95 (usually £24.35) Bancroft*

**Dom Séguinot-Bordet, Fourchaume Premier Cru 2008 Chablis**

Very crunchy and appetising on the nose. Racy and mouthfilling. Would make a fine aperitif as well as a great wine for the table. 12.5%  
*From £15.95 Colchester Wine Co, Berry Bros and others*

**Cyril Fhal 2007 Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes**

Unusually light for a Roussillon white. Very fine and interesting and delicately skinned. Really filigree. Long and fine. Very well done. Lots of delicate interest with surely the potential for development. 12%  
*£16.30 Vine Trail*

**Dom Prunier-Bonheur 2006 St-Romain**

Fine, reductive, focused nose. Neat and tense with an undertow of liquorice. Sleek, good stuff.  
*£17.52 OW Loeb*

**Neudorf, Maggie's Block Pinot Gris 2009 Nelson**

Has 100 times more character than the average Pinot Grigio. New Zealand's top producers really have a way with these Alsace grape varieties – very crisp yet with real depth of fruit.  
*£17.89 Zelas.co.uk of London N6*

**Luc Percher 2007 Cour-Cheverny**

Linear Touraine, very crisp dry white with a lovely subtext of green fruits. The rare Romorantin grape is responsible.  
*£17.90 The Sampler*

**Dom Jean-Baptiste Ponsot, Molesme Premier Cru 2007 Rully**

Much sleeker and more sophisticated than most Côte Chalonnaise wines and then real freshness and compactness. Well done.  
*£17.95 Flint Wines*

**Kurt Hain, Piesporter Goldtröpfchen \*\*\* Riesling trocken 2009 Mosel**

New style dry German with real intensity. Very vibrant and broad with a hint of passion fruit – quite explosive in terms of impact. Good balance and no shortage of fruit. Super refreshing. 13%  
*£17.95 Tanners*

**Mas de la Devèze, La Devèze Blanc 2007 Vin de Pays des Pyrénées-Orientales**

Olivier Bernstein of Gevrey-Chambertin's original Roussillon property. Lovely old-vine bottling that I much prefer to the red version. Exciting, rich, complex fruit but with good acidity underneath. 13%  
*£17.95 Berry Bros*

**Julien Labet, Les Varrons 2007 Côtes du Jura**

Low-yielding Chardonnay from an under-appreciated region. Deep-flavoured and subtle with the majesty found in the contained, dry finish of old-fashioned burgundy. Worth a look. Real quality.  
*£18.45 Vine Trail*

**Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese 2007 Mosel**

Really very interesting with the fruit completely integrated. Almost impossible to spit. Lovely texture. Featherlight but very precise. 7.5%  
*£18.50 OW Loeb*

**Dom Roux Père et Fils, La Pucelle 2008 St-Aubin**

One of Burgundy's rare sources of bargains. Very dense and heady - lots of flavour packed in here. Labelled as domaine bottled. Broad start and then attractive lemon oil on the end.  
*£18.75 Bibendum, Tivoli Wines, The Wine Chamber*

**Naudé, White 2008 Stellenbosch**

Struck-match aromas and then far more flavour than one would expect for 11.5% alcohol. Sophisticated blend of Chenin, Sauvignon and Sémillon.  
*£18.95 Berry Bros*

**Jean-Paul & Benoit Droin, Montée de Tonnerre Premier Cru 2008 Chablis**

Wonderfully correct and taut yet with lots of green fruit juice. Very pure and correct and exciting. Real poise and focus. Pretty good value really for a wine that is great already but clearly has a long way to go. No showing off. Just real purity.  
*£19.68 Domaine Direct*

**Patrick Piuze, Premier Cru Fourneaux 2008 Chablis**

Exciting combination of (new) producer and vintage. Great purity. Any leftovers should be lovely next Christmas too.  
*From £20 Butlers Wine Cellar, Le Caviste*

**Gérard Boulay, Clos de Beaujeu 2008 Sancerre**

Twice the price of most Sancerres, but twice as good. Much richer and more interesting. Boulay's Les Monts Damnés 2006 was a previous [Wine of the Week](#).  
*£20.50 Vine Trail*

**Dom Patrick Javillier, Cuvée Oligocène 2007 Bourgogne**

Very rich yet lime-zested nose. Lots of depth - real excitement. And I think it has more to give. 13%  
*£20.50 Bennetts of Chipping Campden and others*

**Grosset, Springvale Watervale Riesling 2009 Clare Valley**

Herbs and grass on the nose - much more open than the 2010 (see my review in the database). Open and easy and more relaxed than the Polish Hill 2009. A good choice for current drinking. Lemon and lime on the end. 12.5%  
*£21 The Wine Society*

**Dom Jean-Marc Pillot, Les Gouresses Premier Cru 2007 Montagny**

Tight and savoury classic white burgundy that doesn't know it's not Côte d'Or. Fine and introvert. Long and tingly.  
*£21.95 Flint Wines*

**J J Prüm, Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett 2004 Mosel**

Pretty good price for a six-year-old classic from one of the world's great producers. Hint of '[spontaneous fermentation aroma](#)'. The acidity is so high, the wine tastes almost bone dry. So delicate yet with the currant undertow of pure Wehlen fruit (now overlooked by trees felled preparatory to building [That Bridge](#)). Such tingle and clarity. 8.5%  
*£23.01 OW Loeb*

**Rochioli Chardonnay 2008 Russian River Valley**

Lots of terroir and tingle here! So much livelier than the average California Chardonnay. Very round and dangerous with lots of sweetness underneath. Not at all burgundian with just a hint of popcorn but well made and not flabby. A welcome addition to the range of flavours available. I could imagine this partnering very happily with a richly sauced fish dishes. Not a bad price. 14.5%  
*From £24.75 James Nicholson, Slurp, Flint Wines*

**Dom René Lequin-Colin, Les Charrières 2007 Chassagne-Montrachet**

Mint and liquorice on the nose - very taut - not at all like the more typically gentle 2007 style.  
£24.95 Stone, Vine & Sun

**Dom Bernard Moreau 2008 Chassagne-Montrachet**

Quite rich and then transparent pure fruit - much more satisfying and delineated than his 2009 Bourgogne. Pretty good for now and the next year so. Really quite fine, bone dry and no obvious oakiness.  
£24.95 Flint Wines

**Bouchard Père et Fils, Beaune du Château, Premier Cru 2006 Beaune**

Correct, savoury start and nice refinement. Very refreshing and fully open and ready. Well chosen and not a bad price.  
13.5%  
£25.49 Waitrose (46 branches)

**Dom de la Solitude 2009 Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

Pungent nose and then very tightly wound. Lemon and interest. No excess of alcohol. This should be one of the longer term 2009 white Châteauneufs.  
£26.99 Great Wine Direct

**Dom Hubert Lamy, En Remilly Premier Cru 2008 St-Aubin**

Rich green fruit aromas. Full and broad and open. Satisfying. Lots of acidity and still slightly austere.  
From £28.95 Flint Wine, Lea & Sandeman

**Dom Ballot-Millot, Narvaux 2008 Meursault**

Full-on struck-match whiff with vibrant, rich fruit underneath. A very satisfying cocktail. Lots of give here.  
£31.95 Flint Wines

**Dom Hubert Lamy, Clos de la Chatenière Premier Cru 2008 St-Aubin**

Tight and focused and very impressive. This has taken on a bit more fat than when I first tasted it. No compromises. Very pure and exciting. Lamy is very much a force to be reckoned with. Really pure and much more convincing than many Meursaults, Pulignys and Chassagnes. Long. But not cheap...  
£32.30 Domaine Direct, Lea & Sandeman and others

**Dom Marc Morey, Virondot Premier Cru 2004 Chassagne-Montrachet**

Light and surprisingly floral on the nose. Polished texture. Some evolution - savoury/toasty. Lots there. Good to find such a mature wine on sale.  
£33.80 Bibendum

**Dom Boyer-Martenot, Perrières Premier Cru 2004 Meursault**

Good, rich yet savoury on the finish. Classic mature Meursault. Great for now.  
£35 The Sampler

**Dom Jean Pascal, Les Chalumeaux Premier Cru 2007 Puligny-Montrachet**

International Wine Challenge white wine of the year. Hint of popcorn but very agreeable green-fruited, fine, lightly toasted white burgundy. Fine and fresh.  
£40 top Marks & Spencer branches

**Vincent Girardin, Folatières Premier Cru 2005 Puligny-Montrachet**

Almond nose Round, satisfying and fills all corners of the palate. Unusually for commercially available white burgundy, it seems at the peak of its powers now.  
£41.61 OW Loeb

**Franz Hirtzberger, Singerriedel Riesling Smaragd 2009 Wachau**

Excellent dry Austrian packed full of flavour. Light and peppery with real sparkle. Fresh, off dry. Racy and beautifully balanced. Great texture. Long and lip-smacking.  
£65.95 Berry Bros

Next week - strong and/or sweet wines