

100 sure-fire reds

3 Dec 2010 by Jancis Robinson/FT

Below is a selection of favourites for current drinking from the thousands of wines I taste each year. Pinot Noir and burgundy feature strongly as I think they go so well with celebratory meals and their often sweet accompaniments. I have also focused on the exceptional Beaujolais 2009s, some of the best red bordeaux bargains, relatively obscure Italians and Iberians and some underpriced offerings from the Languedoc.

UK stockists where known are given but do please check with wine-searcher.com for more, especially if you are outside the UK. Prices stated are for single bottles but 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.

See also my [40+ sure-fire fizzes](#).

Rio Pinot Noir 2009 Bío Bío

From the far south of Chile and a company that is staking its future on the red burgundy grape there. Pure flavours - quite a steal. A beginning, middle and end to this. 13%

£6.99 Tesco

Haras de Pirque, Pirque Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 Maipo

Another great-value Chilean. Fully ripe, succulent fruit and the stuffing to develop. 15%

£6.99 Marks & Spencer

Villa Taurini Barbera 2009 Piemonte

Good price for a wine that demonstrates the fruity charm of Barbera without tartness. Think of it as a Piemontese Beaujolais with a hint of the region's trademark autumn undergrowth. 13.5%

£6.99 Tesco

Château Le Barrail, Tesco Finest* 2009 Médoc

Round and fresh and satisfying. Very embryonic and not intense but a great-value way to get a taste of the amiable 2009 vintage. 13%

£6.99 Tesco

Palais des Anciens 2008 Côtes du Roussillon-Villages

Rather more polished and less artisanal than Roussillon's best but a well-priced, co-op-produced blend of Syrah, Grenache and Carignan from France's far south. 13%

£6.99 Tesco

Quinta do Rigodeira Baga 2005 Bairrada

Unusual intensity for the price. Lovely stuff - not too austere - based on Baga, the usually tough grape of this northern Portuguese region. Admirably healthy fruit. 13.5%

£7.25 The Wine Society (limited stock)

Camillo de Lellis Riserva 2004 Biferno

Full and sweet and with masses of oomph and personality - not to mention fruit, and evolution. Sure there are bargains like this to be sniffed out all over Italy? There is ripeness and acidity and a certain raspberry sort of fruit in this unusual wine from Molise. 13%

£7.25 The Wine Society

Ch Bouissel 2008 Fronton

Rare to find wine from Toulouse's own wine district, and its own Negrette grape scented with ferns and violets, on a supermarket shelf. Bravo, The Wine Society and Waitrose! Firm and dry. 13%

£7.50 The Wine Society, £8.99 Waitrose (146 branches)

Torre Scalza 2007 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo

Like the Villa Taurini Barbera, made by French-born Gaetane Carron and a wine with real personality. Lightly oaked with a hint of both prunes and burnt aromas but much fresher than many wines from this DOC. 13.5%
£7.99 Marks & Spencer

Universo Austral, Calafate Reserva Malbec 2008 Neuquén

Rich fruit and then the minerally lift of Argentine Patagonia. Very satisfying and rich - and only a little bit raisiny...
£8 House of Menzies

Willunga 100 Grenache 2007 McLaren Vale

Lots of sumptuous fruit from the Châteauneuf grape. Big and alcoholic and as Australian as a hot afternoon but very well done. Slightly tarry but with lots of broad strawberry fruit too. 14.5%
£8.49 Sainsbury's

Matthias Gaul, Palataia Pinot Noir 2009 Pfalz

Proof of Germany's increasing prowess with the red burgundy grape. Savoury nose - light but not too simple. Good value. 13.5%
£8.49 Marks & Spencer

Ch de Ricaud 2005 Bordeaux Supérieur

Drink this great-value claret from Cadillac sooner rather than later but you can really wallow in it. Well balanced, satisfying and persistent. Graceful finish. 13%
£8.50 The Wine Society

Ch de la Rolière, Brézème 2007 Côtes du Rhône

Exciting, artisanal, spicy Syrah from a village in the mid Rhône Valley. 13%
£8.95 The Wine Society

Bear Creek, Zamora Zinfandel 2008 California

From 40-year-old bushvines, apparently. I wonder why they give it only the California AVA? Warmth and tar on the nose. Quite sweet and alcoholic but not out of balance. Lots of rich personality. 14.5%
£8.99 Marks & Spencer

Dom des Terres Falmet, L'Ivresse des Cimes 2006 St-Chinian

Scented and heady. Lovely ripeness and polish. This liquorice-scented juice of the Languedoc just washes over the palate.
£9.40 Vine Trail

Lemos & Van Zeller, Baronesa de Vilar 2008 Douro

20% Touriga Nacional, 25% Touriga Franca and 55% traditional port varieties. Racy yet rich and polished too with some minerality and real drinkability. Great now. 13.5%
£9.49 Laithwaites

Trenel 2009 Côte de Brouilly

A thoroughly satisfying, even quite rich, top Beaujolais. Drinkable now but should take on flesh and be at its peak from next year. Racy but not thin. 13%
£9.50 The Wine Society

Ch Pesquié, Les Terrasses 2008 Ventoux

Unusually rich for this combination of appellation and vintage. Solid artisanal wine for less than a tenner is not to be sniffed at.
£9.50 Flint Wines

Marmesa, Cerro Romauldo Syrah 2006 Central Coast

Good price for a pretty creditable California copy of Côte Rôtie. A delicate touch. Central Coast without the usual dollar tariff. Label owned by UK importer Bibendum and made by Larry Brooks.
£9.75 Bibendum, House of Fraser, Slurp, Caviste, Whole Foods (limited stock)

Barberani, Foresco 2007 Umbria

Supertuscan from Umbria? 50% Sangiovese with 25% each Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon and 12 months in French oak barriques. Luscious stuff - very international, suave and open but very well done. 14.5%
£9.95 *The Wine Society (limited stock)*

Ch de Lancyre, Coste d'Aleyrac 2008 Languedoc, Pic-St Loup

Ripe fruit and lots of round, easy pleasure but with an undertow of *garrigue*. Juicy. Though fine tannins on the finish suggest this Languedoc bargain has potential too.
£9.95 *Berry Bros*

Wirra Wirra, Church Block 2008 McLaren Vale

Cabernet Sauvignon with 37% Shiraz and 15% Merlot, all aged for 15 months in oak barrels. Rich and lip-smacking with lots of fruit. Very mellow but not sweet. Why can't all Australian reds have such tamed tannins and well-integrated acidity? 14.5%
£9.95 *The Wine Society*

Ch d'Aussières, Blason d'Aussières 2007 Corbières

40% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, 10% Carignan. From the Lafite stable - so why isn't it being shipped straight out to China? A hint of top-quality oak in here and a grown-up dry finish. Bordeaux build. I'd wait a year or two but it's pretty smart - provided you want a Médoc from the Languedoc. 13.5%
£9.99 *Majestic*

Ch Prieuré-les-Tours 2006 Graves

Fragrant, bone-dry classic claret with even a bit of bottle maturation. Good value. 12.5%
£9.99 (£8.99 when 2 bottles are bought) *Majestic*

Ch de Montfaucon 2008 Côtes du Rhône

Very rich, sun baked and alluring, this tastes like an essence rather than a wine - impressive for a 2008. 13.5%
£10.67 *OW Loeb*

Dom de la Chapelle des Bois 2009 Chiroubles

From Coudert Appert of Fleurie. Minerals on the nose and real raciness. Super-juicy start and already bumptious and very appealing. Quite sweet on the front palate and then some fine tannin on the finish. So drinkable. 13%
£10.75 *Stone, Vine & Sun*

Jonc Blanc, Les Sens de Fruit 2007 Bergerac Rouge

Very solid, sensible and classic - proper wine (not tarted up)! Chock full of life and somehow so healthy-tasting that I couldn't imagine a hangover from this. Lots of potential for ageing. Just 12.5%.
£10.75 *Butlers Wine Cellar, Wadebridge Wine*

La Ferme du Mont, Le Ponnant 2007 Côtes du Rhône-Villages

Serious stuff indeed. Like a Châteauneuf with the fast-forward button depressed... Great tension and excitement. Really excellent. 14.5%
£10.85 *The Real Wine Co*

Nicosia, Fondo Filara 2008 Etna

Naughty heavy bottle but it's not expensive for fashionable Nerello Mascalese from Sicily's volcano. Racy and rich on the nose with some really grainy minerality. Chewy. 13.5%
£10.95 *The Wine Society*

Dom Charvin 2008 Côtes du Rhône

Lovely light touch from a lovely winemaker with a light touch. Really, why do you need Châteauneuf when you can get this at such a great price? Admittedly 2008 was a lesser vintage but Charvin clearly made the best of it. 14%
£10.95 (*magnums £23.95*) *Jeroboams*

Pulenta Estate, La Flor Malbec 2009 Mendoza

Very powerful and rich, velvety and floral but kept in check. Really rather good. The name is apt. Gentle texture. 13.5%
£10.95 *Berry Bros*

Tour Trecavel 2007 Minervois-La Livinière

Really lively and complex, with great balance and juiciness. Minerally finish. Based on Mourvèdre but no sign of its usual reduction. Poor man's Bandol?

£11 Real Wine Co

Falernia, Reserva Syrah 2007 Elqui Valley

Bright crimson. Spicy, peppery, sweet Syrah from Chile's pisco country. Round, sweet and mellow. Just a little bit of polished leather on the finish characterises this as Syrah. Lots of pleasure. Fresh finish. 14%

£11.25 Field & Fawcett of York, Great Western Wine

Ch Lezongars 2005 Premières Côtes de Bordeaux

Merlot dominated. Good price... We need more red bordeaux like this. Lots of ripe fruit with a kick of oak. Sweet start and very nice balance. Nothing forced

£11.50 Bibendum, DJ Foodfare, Village Wines

Daniel Bouland 2009 Chiroubles

Deep crimson. Very vibrant, fresh and zesty. Great stuff.

£11.50 Vine Trail

Ch Les Gravières de la Brandille 2005 Bordeaux Supérieur

Atypical Bordeaux - so intense and dramatic that it almost tastes more like Priorat than Bordeaux. Very dramatic with a very fresh, dry finish. Worth cellaring. 14%

£11.95 Stone, Vine & Sun

Gérard Charvet, La Réserve d'Amélie 2009 Moulin-à-Vent

Top Beaujolais for drinking now or later. Extremely substantial, almost burgundian. Perfumed and round with a skein of minerality on the finish. 13%

£12.49 (£9.99 if 2 bottles are bought) Majestic

Avignonesi 2007 IGT Toscana

Lively, correct and so easy to love this red. Very locally expressive. Just right for drinking rather than collecting.

£12.95 Jeroboams

Brazin, Old Vine Zinfandel 2007 Lodi

From Delicato, capitalising on what Lodi does best. Well balanced rich, raisiny tonic wine with a fresh finish. Well made.

£12.99 Waitrose (126 branches)

Solms, Wijn de Caab Hiervandaan 2005 Western Cape

Blend of four red and one white Rhône varieties. Sweet, transparent, cough medicine. Very aromatic and different. Racy and with nothing false about this wine from a fine historic-social project outside Franschoek. 13.5%

£13.25 Stone, Vine & Sun

Massaya, Silver Selection 2005 Bekaa Valley

Hébrard of St-Émilion and Brunier of Vieux Télégraphe are involved in this blend of Grenache, Cinsault, Cabernet Sauvignon and Mourvèdre. Rich and explosive. Powerful and different. A sort of cross between Ch Musar and St-Émilion.

From £13.50 Berry Bros, Corks of Cotham, DeFine Food & Wine, Harrods, James Nicholson, Christopher Piper, Tanners, Uncorked

Dom Murinais, Les Amandiers 2007 Crozes-Hermitage

Attractively developed and refreshingly leathery. Good price for such a mature wine.

£13.61 OW Loeb

Mas Franch Negre 2005 Montsant

Sweet, gamey Catalan blend of Bordeaux and Rhône grapes from a stunning landscape. Sweet start with some interesting minerality and a hint of treacle. An easy introduction to Priorat? 14.5%

£14.25 Berry Bros

Álvaro Palacios, Camins del Priorat 2008 Priorat

Unusually soft, perfumed, intriguing fruit on this introductory wine from Palacios's younger vines. Impressive finish on this new offering from the prince of Priorat. 14%

From £14.25 Berry Bros, Noel Young, Waitrose and others

Marmesa, Cabrillo Peak Pinot Noir 2007 Santa Lucia Highlands

Light, flattering. Excellent price for a California wine with this much character. Satisfying, juicy and neat.

£14.50 Bibendum, Slurp, Whole Foods, Caviste

Valdivieso, Eclat 2006 Maule

62% Carignan, 19% Mourvèdre, 19% Syrah. Particularly old Carignan vines from one of Chile's most interesting regions. Intriguing layers of flavour. Much mellower than the average French Carignan.

£14.95 The Wine Society

Dom Hudelot-Noëllat Pinot Noir 2006 Bourgogne

Mature burgundy at this price is a rare treat. Piercing bitter cherry aromas. Light and pure; a pleasure with lightweight food.

£14.95 Flint Wines

Clos Floridène 2006 Graves

Famed oenologist Denis Dubourdieu's home property. Energetic and seductive. Gorgeously polished fruit. 12.5%

£14.95 The Wine Society

Castell d'Encus, Susterris Negre 2008 Costers del Segre

Catalan blend of Bordeaux varieties with a perceptible hint of Syrah that leaps out of the glass with its ripe, fresh, direct appeal. 14.5%

£14.95 Caviste, Wadebridge Wines

Jean-Claude Lapalu, Vieilles Vignes 2009 Brouilly

Rich, satin smooth, very seductive. Sweeter and more polished than most Beaujolais. A wine to sweep an unbeliever off their feet. Very intense. 14%

£14.99 AG Wines

A to Z Pinot Noir 2008 Oregon

Good price. Light ruby. Lots of character here. Delicate but it delivers lots of fresh fruit, some subtlety and certainly pleasure for the money.

£15 Bibendum, House of Fraser, Goodrich Wines, Whole Foods

De Trafford, Blueprint Shiraz 2005 Stellenbosch

Serious, dense wine with real fruit integrity. Long with hints of treacle toffee. Contained and impressive.

£15 Bibendum

Trinity Hill, Gimblett Gravels Syrah 2008 Hawke's Bay

Some fruit from the much more expensive Homage bottling went into this New Zealander. Silky and polished with lovely toasty ripeness.

£15.25 AG Wines and others

Gudarra Bisceglia 2006 Aglianico del Vulture

Exciting, dry, firm explosive wine from Basilicata, southern Italy, offers lots of fun for the money. Aglianico is a great grape. 14%

£15.25 Bibendum, Bacchanalia, The Wine Shop

Von Buhl Spätburgunder 2008 Pfalz

Evidence of Germany's proficiency with the red burgundy grape. Pale ruby with very pure-yet-sweet mushroomy flavours. Pinot Noir at its most delicately succulent and with lovely freshness. But the opposite of a powerhouse. Best drunk as soon as it's opened. 13%

From £17 Bottle Apostle, Hennings, Jascots, The Sampler, Woodwinters

Ch Giscours, Le Haut-Médoc de Giscours 2005 Haut-Médoc

Something gamey/grouse-like on the nose. Good balance and attack in this relatively mature claret.
£15.50 Jeroboams

Domaine les Bruyères 2009 Crozes-Hermitage

David Reynaud has taken his family domaine out of the local co-op and farms biodynamically, since 2007. Unoaked, luscious, rather salty northern Rhône Syrah that is full of life and remarkably supple. Flint Wines have another bottling.
£17.95 Ballantynes, *The Vineking (limited stock)*

Marcel Lapierre 2009 Morgon

Lovely fluidity from the late, great and much missed leader of authentic Beaujolais. Round and flirtatious. Fresh and racy. This should slip down. 13%
£17.99 Noel Young

Stonier, Reserve Pinot Noir 2007 Mornington Peninsula

No fake sweetness, no oak in evidence. Most appetising. Possibly the best Stonier wine I can remember even if it's not concentrated.
£18.75 Bibendum, Noel Young

Sijnn Red 2007 Swellendam

Maiden vintage for this ground-breaking vineyard, growing warm-climate varieties in a cool-climate location at the mouth of the Breede River. Sweet with the merest hint of coffee toasted barrels. Attractively complex, very gentle at first, though it finishes firm, sinewy and very polished.
From £18.75 Bibendum and others

Dom Bernard Coillot, Grasses Têtes 2008 Marsannay

Very fresh, pure, unadorned Côte d'Or wine somewhere between 'serious' red burgundy and basic Bourgogne but earnest and admirable. Bone dry.
£18.95 Flint Wines

Brooks Pinot Noir 2007 Willamette Valley

Extremely fresh, delicate Oregonian. So lively and pure! Model Pinot that shows why the grape revels in cooler years.
£19.95 Stone, Vine & Sun

Tempier 2007 Bandol

Full and spicy but clean from the best-known Provençal wine producer. Lip-smacking - hot and almost baked but it has life and lift too. 14.5%
£20 The Wine Society

Dom de la Solitude 2006 Pessac-Léognan

Unusual to have the assemblage (60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc) spelt out on the back label of a bordeaux - even if it fails to add up to 100%. Made by Olivier Bernard of Dom de Chevalier and with a rather similar label. Light, extremely discreet nose but very emphatic and fresh on the palate. For those who like their claret classic.
£20.40 Mill Hill Wines, Wilks & Co, Noel Young

Ch de Puligny-Montrachet 2007 Monthelie

Well-integrated spice and fruit - very alluring if lightweight, fresh and crystalline. For cold turkey?
£20.56 OW Loeb

Two Paddocks Pinot Noir 2008 Central Otago

Actor Sam Neill's Kiwi Pinot was taken for burgundy at this year's Pol Roger business-school alumni blind-tasting competition.
£20.60 Haynes Hanson & Clark

Dom de Montcalmès 2007 Coteaux du Languedoc

Very serious wine from one of many fine addresses in the higher reaches of the Languedoc. The best of them stand

comparison with what Bordeaux generally produces at this price.

£20.95 *Trenchermans of Dorset*

Dom de la Noblaie, Pierre de Tuf 2007 Chinon

Hand-picked grapes. Correct, fully ripe Cabernet Franc from its homeland. Juicy start with a mineral finish. Lovely stuff.

£21.40 *The Sampler*

Mount Edward Pinot Noir 2008 Central Otago

Pale cherry red. Strong herbal Central Otago influence on the nose. Very juicy and fresh and easy to like. Sweet but lively.

From £21.75 *James Nicholson, Jeroboams*

Bosquet des Papes 2005 Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Spice, transparency and enormous richness without too much chewiness. Already charming but it needs food to counteract the tannins on the finish. 14.5%

£21.95 *Flint Wines*

Castello del Terriccio, Tassinaia 2005 IGT Toscana

Harmonious and concentrated. This was the first year this Maremma producer switched from 225- to 500-litre barrels. Very mellow, polished Bordeaux blend with Italian verve. 13.5%

£22.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

Ch La Louvière 2004 Pessac-Léognan

Mature red Graves from André (father of Jacques and François) Lurton. Very easy and mellifluous - drinking beautifully now.

£24 *Bibendum (£129 for case of 6), Philglas & Swiggot*

Marchand & Burch, Mount Barrow Pinot Noir 2009 Great Southern

Interesting joint venture between French Canadian Pascal Marchand (ex Comte Armand) and Jeff Burch on gravel in Western Australia. Round and even richer than the 2008 - pretty satisfying! Lots of interest here and a very well priced alternative to Marchand's top burgundies. Excellent vitality.

£24.75 *Bibendum, Bacchus Wines*

Cristom, Mount Jefferson Pinot Noir 2007 Willamette Valley

Racy. Violets and a hint of mushrooms - more satisfying than 60% of red burgundy! Very well done even if it lacks the delicacy of the very finest red burgundy. Complete. Another successful Oregon 2007. 13.5%

£24.95 *Flint Wines*

Joseph Swan, Cuvée de Trois Pinot Noir 2007 Russian River Valley

Very distinctive indeed. This is no burgundy copy - nor a copy of any other California Pinot - just a one-off funky California red with lots of strawberry ripeness. The wine tastes as though it has spent a long time in old oak. No rough edges whatsoever. Perfumed. 13%

£25 *The Wine Society*

Yalumba, The Menzies Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 Coonawarra

An Australian classic. Very rich and ripe on the nose with a strongly medicinal streak and still lots of tannin. Quite an ambitious wine that very much expresses the minerality of Coonawarra but has sufficient fruit and weight. 14.5%

£25 *The Wine Society*

Ch Gloria 2003 St-Julien

Lovely fruit in the middle - juicier than most 2003s with great St-Julien balance and some mineral quality.

From £25.99 *House of Townend, also Playford Ros, Four Walls*

Ch Plince 2002 Pomerol

Quite rich, gamey and polished and full of pleasure - albeit slightly oaky pleasure. But this definitely tastes like Pomerol.

£26.34 *OW Loeb*

Dom Alain Burguet, En Billard 2005 Gevrey-Chambertin

Very fresh, direct fruit and then a little tight on the finish. Lots of spice. Easy to like even if it is not the subtlest burgundy ever. Attractively transparent but with sweetness. No one could object to this. 13%
£27 *The Wine Society*

Catena Alta Malbec 2006 Mendoza

A thoroughly reliable wine, whatever the vintage. Heady. Dense. Very fresh, glossy fruit - much more refined than most Argentine Malbecs. No hurry to drink this.
£27.25 *Bibendum, Harrods, Highbury Vintners, Whole Foods*

Dom Henri Germain, Bressandes Premier Cru 2006 Beaune

Fully mature, fragrant, well balanced, light, gentle red burgundy. Very charming and ready. Attractively appetising.
From £27.50 *Lea & Sandeman, Tanners*

Louis Latour, Les Chaillots Premier Cru 2006 Aloxe-Corton

Very pale ruby. Light and sweet and fun. Nice balance and some structure. Lots of flattering sweet fruit with sufficient refreshment.
£27.99 *Waitrose*

Mark Haisma 2007 Gevrey-Chambertin

Light, fresh, supple and very pure - much fresher than most red burgundy but not tart.
£29 *The Sampler*

Emmanuel Houillon 2005 Arbois-Pupillin

Deliciously light but ripe and intriguing Ploussard from the Jura. Most unusual and a great vintage.
£29.99 *Smiling Grape Co, Caves de Pyrène*

Dom Simon Bize, Aux Grands Liards 2003 Savigny-lès-Beaune

Slightly warm and roasted on the nose, sweet and easy on the palate. Low on purity but high on delivery. Drink this minute.
£30.84 *OW Loeb*

Dom L et A Lignier, Les Bussières 2007 Chambolle-Musigny

Rather dusty nose. Very sweet start and then both pleasure and refinement. Bone-dry finish.
£31.95 *Flint Wines*

Ata Rangji Pinot Noir 2009 Martinborough

Very fresh and succulent and burgundian Kiwi. Delicate cherry fruit - like the sweetest Beaune? Very fine and velvety. 14%
£31.95 *Slurp.co.uk*

Snowden Vineyards, The Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 Napa Valley

Made by Diana, daughter in law at Domaine Dujac in Burgundy. Lots of minerals and ripeness but great balance. Dense and so un-Burgundian! Very well done. Carries its alcohol well. 15.4%
£32.95 *Flint Wines*

Dom Lejeune, Les Poutures Premier Cru 2007 Pommard

Round, charming and very fruity. No rough edges Long and robust.
£33.40 *The Sampler*

Ch Langoa Barton 2001 St-Julien

Léoville Barton's sister property generally evolves faster. Very fragrant, well integrated and developed. Everything in its place and no excess of tannins. Clever to snap this up - a great property and vintage that is currently undervalued. Great stuff for classicists while the rest will wonder what the heck the fuss is all about... 13%
£32.95 *Jeroboams*, £35 *Majestic*, *The Wine Society*

Dom Confuron-Cotetidot 2007 Vosne-Romanée

Very fine, tight, convincing nose. Smooth, sleek and ripe but with Vosne's freshness and integrity. Complete and approachable.

£33.95 *Flint Wines*

Dom Geantet-Pansiot, Vieilles Vignes 2007 Gevrey-Chambertin

Pale crimson. Evolved, luscious and easy to like even though without absolutely clinical structure. Reminds me a bit of Terry's Turkish Delight. Drink sooner rather than later.

£35.25 *Domaine Direct*

Fuligni 2005 Brunello di Montalcino

Tuscany's most famous wine - lusciously ripe Sangiovese - from a very respectable producer in a vintage in which all Riserva ingredients went into this regular bottling. Great stuff! Wonderfully appetising. 14%

£35.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

Monte dei Ragni 2006 Valpolicella Classico Superiore

Big and dramatic and a bit cheesy. Lots there - much more concentrated than most Valpolicella. Quite hot on the end! An interesting new name to me. Worth including if you wanted to assemble a selection of superior Valpolicella. Really vibrates with life. 14% 17 09-13

£38.95 *Berry Bros*

Dom Arlaud, Ruchots Premier Cru 2006 Morey-St-Denis

Attractively sweet, perfumed and so flattering! Charm in a bottle. Good balance. Confident stuff with very good persistence.

£43.08 *OW Loeb*

Dom Sylvain Cathiard 2007 Vosne-Romanée

Very flattering at the moment. Lovely sweetness plus Vosne's energy.

£45 *Berry Bros*

Dom Font de Michelle 1990 Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Fully ripe and tamed. No heat or tannin - just the warming spice and complexity of Châteauneuf. Great to find such a mature wine still on sale.

£45 *The Sampler*

CVNE, Viña Real Reserva 1985 Rioja

Complex, satisfying. Beautifully balanced, fully mature wine - long and reverberant.

£46 *The Sampler*

Dom Féry-Meunier, Grand Cru 1999 Charmes-Chambertin

Very rich and round and sweet with a hint of game. Maybe not the purest but lots of fun. A great red burgundy vintage to drink now.

£65 *The Sampler*

Ch Grand-Puy Lacoste 1996 Pauillac

Still dark crimson. Very gravelly nose with really suave ripe fruit on the palate. Polished, satisfying and nuanced. A dependable mature and maturing claret.

£99.50 *Lea & Sandeman*

Ch Latour 2001 Pauillac

One of the better value top-quality examples of a first-growth bordeaux. This shone more brightly than the 2000 (£800 a bottle) at a recent tasting.

From £300 Food and Fine Wine and elsewhere

Next week - 75 sure-fire dry whites