

## D&D slash wine prices

3 Feb 2011 by Jancis Robinson

One of the most significant restaurant groups in London sends a valentine to wine lovers today in the form of a welcome dramatic reduction in mark-ups on the more expensive wines on its wine lists.

D&D London includes such establishments as Avenue, Bluebird, Blueprint Café, Coq d'Argent, Kensington Place, Launceston Place, Le Pont de la Tour, Orrery, Quaglino's, Sartoria and Skylon. Chairman and chief executive Des Gunewardena explains the new initiative thus: 'The more a bottle of wine costs us, the lower the percentage mark-up in the restaurants. The new pricing will apply to wines listed from around £50 and above - about 2,000 wines in total. By reducing the mark-ups on fine wine we are making them far more accessible to customers for whom they may previously have been out of reach, as well as offering exceptional value for money to wine connoisseurs.'

To celebrate the launch of the initiative, a Top 100 list of fine wines will be available, subject to stock, until 14 March - a selection of them available in all 20 of D&D's London restaurants. These four sommeliers will be offering the greatest concentration of Top 100 wines: Nicolas Clerc at Le Pont de la Tour, Shana Dilworth at Orrery, Olivier Marie at Coq d'Argent and Mickey Narea at Launceston Place. The Top 100 wines will apparently be listed separately from the main wine lists and a full list of them can be seen [here](#).

Some examples of the new prices:

François Cotat, Les Caillottes 2008 Sancerre £38  
Henri Bourgeois, Cuvée d'Antan 2008 Sancerre £40  
Vincent Dancer, Les Corbins 2008 Meursault £42  
Dom Leflaive, Les Pucelles Premier Cru 1990 Puligny-Montrachet £166

Robert Chevillon, Vieilles Vignes 2001 Nuits-St-Georges £40  
Ch Talbot 2003 St-Julien £46  
Ch de Beaucastel 1990 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge £190  
Ch Pétrus 1995 Pomerol £1,450

D&D claim that they will continue their 'commitment to make fine wine accessible' throughout 2011 and intend to establish a wine club, offer wine 'producer dinners, wine classes for customers and training for staff'. I would hope they would fast track that final one.

Nick suggests that best current bets for food in the D&D group are Launceston Place in Kensington, where Tristan Welch and his brigade are cooking up a storm in modern British idiom, and Skylon in the Festival Hall, South Bank Centre, where Helena Puolakka brings some of her Scandinavian influences to bear, and where the views are better than ever now that the trees between the airy restaurant and the Thames have been pollarded.

So it looks as though Launceston Place is the best overall bet for lovers of both food and wine.