

## Top 25+ fizzes

25 Nov 2011 by Jancis Robinson/FT but this is much longer

See also [Some fine sparklers](#) for more recommendations.

All of the first quarter of my top 100 wines really sparkle. These 25+ are listed upwards in price with selected UK stockists, often Lea & Sandeman because they have a particularly wide range, and this helps to indicate relative pricing. Please note that we have given Lea & Sandeman's price for single bottles but they offer much keener prices to those prepared to pay for a total of 12 assorted bottles. Many other merchants without a retail outlet, Vine Trail for instance, insist on orders of at least 12 assorted bottles - and of course the cost of delivery varies from merchant to merchant.

See [wine-searcher.com](#) for more stockists, both in the UK and elsewhere. All wines are 12 or 12.5%.

### Philippe Michel 2008 Crémant du Jura

From the Crançot co-op - an interesting choice for a mass-market supermarket. 'Bottle fermentation'. Very light but clean nose. Pretty dry and recognisably subalpine. Flirtatious. So light it is almost difficult to believe it is 12% alcohol. Very juicy and appetising. Admirable for the price. Quite frothy but very clean and bracing. Tastes Brut. Well bought!

£6.99 Aldi

### Dom de la Taille aux Loups, Triple Zéro Pétillant NV Montlouis-sur-Loire

Gently sparkling Loire Chenin Blanc. Jacky Blot explains the name of this cuvée on the back label: No chaptalisation, no liqueur de tirage, no liqueur d'expédition. Smart, very dark bottle and stylish label. Gosh this is interesting on the nose! Smells of a damp cellar, like a successful natural wine. Apple skins and enormous vibrancy. I would love to be served this at a party! Not aggressively tart and dry, just lots of fascinating flavour. Very racy and refreshing. Impossible to spit. Persistent rather than potent.

£55 for 6 in bond Justerini & Brooks

### Roche Lacour, Brut 2009 Crémant de Limoux

Not-too-frothy traditional-method blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Chenin Blanc from the Languedoc hills. Apparently 40% of the blend is fermented in barrel. Very fine mousse. Clean, fresh, light nose. Very youthful but well put together. Not aggressively callow; attractively balanced. You can (just) taste that this was grown in a hot year in the far south rather than the north east of France but it seems great value.

£11.99 Laithwaites, currently on special offer at £9.99

### Jean-Louis Denois, Méthode Traditionnelle Brut Chardonnay/Pinot Noir Vin Mousseux de Qualité NV France

Jean-Louis Denois is also from Limoux, and hugely skilled at making great-value, characterful fizz. Just a little fruitier, more opulent and less obviously lees-aged than the best champagnes but infinitely better than cheap champagne. His delicate **Classique Brut NV** is also excellent.

£12.95 Lea & Sandeman

### Graham Beck, Brut Pinot Noir/Chardonnay NV Western Cape

Very well balanced South African. Creamy texture, thanks to 18 months' bottle ageing on the lees. Hugely satisfying for the price even if not the driest.

£12.99 Waitrose

### Waitrose, Brut NV Champagne

From P & C Heidsieck, this has to be Britain's best-value champagne - certainly until 6 December and very possibly even at its full price of £19.99. This particular Pinot-dominated cuvée is the best I can remember, seems to have some age on it and quite a contrast to the much more delicate Waitrose **Blanc de Blancs NV** from Burtin (£22.99) - also excellent.

Reduced to £15.99 (£8.99 a half) Waitrose until 6 Dec

### Jansz 2005 Tasmania

Much cheaper than in Australia, this brisk, super-clean, bracing wine would make a great aperitif, and tastes younger than it is.

£18.95 Slurp, Tanners, House of Menzies, Noel Young

### Benedick, Grand Réserve Brut NV Champagne

Savoury nose suggests bone-dry wine. Mouthfilling fizz. Perfectly respectable and quite an impact on the palate. Quite long for the price.

£18.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

**Ridgeview, Bloomsbury Merret Brut 2009 England**

English fizz gets better and better and Ridgeview is leading the charge. Neutral nose but some real depth. Light hazelnut flavour. Tight texture. Very respectable. Ridgeview also makes a range of wines for Laithwaites and others.

£19 *Wine Society*, £21.99 *Waitrose and elsewhere*

**Barnaut, Blanc de Noirs Grand Cru NV champagne**

Much more refined than the Aube Blanc de Noirs from the local co-op with which the UK (mass) market is flooded. Very appetising and great value.

£22.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

**P&C Heidsieck, Les Pionniers 2004 champagne**

In Champagne, the even years of last decade have produced some particularly successful vintage champagnes and this attractive combination of zest and evolution from a specialist in own label champagnes is particularly well priced.

£22.99 *Co-op*, selected branches (has been on promotion at £19.99)

**Laurent-Perrier NV champagne**

At the special price offered by Roberson, this may be the best-value grande marque champagne on the UK market. The current cuvée is particularly fresh and zesty. Racy and well balanced.

£24.95 *Roberson*

**Chartogne Taillet NV champagne**

Bravo to quality-conscious growers like this who give consumers maximum information on the back label such as exactly what went into the blend (80% from the 2006 vintage, 60% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir). Very fresh on the nose yet with deep flavours. Serious stuff from the village of Merey. Exceptionally persistent. Great value.

£25.15 *Vine Trail*, £27 *Wine Society* (£22.50 each if 6 bought), £38.99 *Selfridges*

**Agrapart, Les 7 Crus NV champagne**

Blend of 2008 and 2007 from seven different well-placed vineyards, made with some oak. Light and delicate. Really lively. Whisper -and yet satisfying. The dosage was a modest 7 g/l and the disgorgement date is given to help consumers and wine trade distinguish the bottling from others with the same name.

£27.50 *Vine Trail*, £29 *Wine Society* (£24.17 each if 6 bought) £39.99 *Selfridges*

**Pierre Peters, Cuvée de Reserve Blanc de Blancs NV champagne**

The base year here is 2006 but over 35% of the wine is, as the name suggests, from older reserves, maintained in a solera system and encompassing 16 vintages. The all-Chardonnay fruit is sourced mainly from top villages on the Côte des Blancs. Very complex and interesting for the money.

£28.95 *Berry Bros*

**Larmandier-Bernier, Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs Non Dosé Premier Cru NV champagne**

This grower does not put a foot wrong. This is their most delicate wine, balanced on a tightrope admittedly but with no sign of any wobble. Lovely. But I also admire their slightly more rustic [Tradition Extra Brut Premier Cru NV](#) (£28.50) and their very dry and demanding [Terre de Vertus Blanc de Blancs Non Dosé Premier Cru NV](#) (£34.50).

£29.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

**Tarlant, Brut Nature NV champagne**

The most satisfying of Marks & Spencer's admirable collection of growers' champagnes. Not aggressively dry, despite absence of dosage. Quite robustly textured (thanks to the oak casks).

£30 *M&S selected branches*

**Egly-Ouriet, Tradition Grand Cru NV champagne**

Long aged. Very 'natural' apple-peel aromas. Very pure and unadorned. All top Montagne de Reims villages. Extreme champagne with a very dry finish. Lots of potential.

£38.95 *Lea & Sandeman*

**André Roger, Vieilles Vignes NV champagne**

Very deep-flavoured, mature wine from venerable grand cru Pinot vines - the sort you could drink with food.

£40 *Jascots.co.uk*

**Gosset, Grand Réserve NV champagne**

Beautifully balanced blend based on 2005. I preferred it to Gosset's current vintage champagne. Very nervy and muscular. Not too sweet, not too tart.

£43.50 *Lea & Sandeman*, £54.99 *Selfridges*

**Pol Roger 2000 champagne**

Great energy on the nose, still very youthful with lots of potential. Explosive, and drier than some Pol blends. The **2002 Rosé** (£64.99 *Selfridges*) is one of the best pink champagnes.

£44.95 *Lea & Sandeman*, £45 *Wine Society*

**Vilmart, Cuvée Creation 1999 champagne**

Champagnes from the opulent last vintage of the twentieth century are at their peak now. This marvel from a much admired Montagne de Reims grower is oak aged and Chardonnay dominated.

£71.44 *Gauntleys of Nottingham*

**Bollinger, Grande Année 2002 champagne**

Good old Bollinger pioneered giving useful information on the back label. This wine, made from the produce of 16 premier and, especially, grand cru villages is especially intense and savoury.

£65 *Wine Society*, £74.95 *Lea & Sandeman and elsewhere*

**Dom Pérignon 2002 champagne**

I can't remember a vintage of this famous wine that showed better on release. Sumptuous.

£112.90 *Noel Young*, £119.95 *Lea & Sandeman*, £140 *Selfridges*

**Krug, Grande Cuvée NV champagne**

I recently tasted two (remarkably different) bottlings of this celebrated, intellectual champagne blind alongside various vintage-dated Krugs and preferred them to some of the latter.

£131.50 *Lea & Sandeman*

**Louis Roederer, Cristal 2004 champagne**

Very intellectual and dense, but playful and dancing too. You can enjoy it already, although it clearly has great potential. Grows on the finish. Very luxurious.

£140 *Wine Society*, £161.95 *Lea & Sandeman*, £180 *Selfridges*