This year's top 100+ - fizz

30 Nov 2012 by Jancis Robinson/FT but this is longer

This is the first of four articles to be published over the first four Saturdays in December on my top selections in various styles of wine. The Financial Times *will be publishing 25 each of fizz, reds, whites and strong/sweet wines but here I have the room to include a few more favourites. Next Saturday - reds. There are magnums of Berry Bros Grand Cru Champagne to be won by those who collect passwords from each* FT.

Sparkling wine is presenting champagne with more and more of a challenge. If price is no object, Selfridge's have a particularly good range, but for value plus quality, Lea & Sandeman is difficult to beat. They can offer even better prices than those below for larger orders, which can be of mixed bottles. Vine Trail specialise in the glory of champagnes from small growers rather than big houses. Use wine-searcher.com to find other stockists all over the world - because although I have given the most obvious UK stockist below, most of these wines are available internationally. See also our tasting articles on champagne, including some quite recent additions.

Philippe Michel 2009 Crémant du Jura

Jura makes very fine fizz. Smart Krug-like bottle. Pale greenish straw. You can taste the dosage (sweetness added just before final corking) and it's a little astringent but it's very clean and fresh and light - and is almost given away. But please note that most branches of Aldi have moved on to the 2010, which I have not been able to taste. 12.5%

£6.99 Aldi

Valli Unite, Brut & The Beast 2011 Piemonte

Pale honey colour for this unusual, very lightly sparkling north-west Italian. Appley and then so powerfully umami that I was transported to Japan. Very light and refreshing, this is a wine you could drink any time. Fades fast but such fun! 13%

£11 Aubert & Mascoli

Berry's NV Crémant de Limoux

Blend of Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Mauzac and Pinot Noir from Antech in the Pyrenean foothills. Low-key, lightly appley nose. Nice texture. Some real satisfaction and interest. Good balance. Not too tart. Gentle. 12%

£11.95 Berry Bros

Poulet NV Clairette de Die

75% Muscat with Clairette Blanche. Grapey nose and light, medium-sweet palate with lower acidity than, for example, a typical Moscato d'Asti. An entertaining mouthful of lively grape juice and nicely refined mousse. An afternoon wine? 8%

£12 The Sampler

Vitteaut-Alberti, Blanc de Blancs NV Crémant de Bourgogne

Light, fresh, very delicate. Not bad at all for the money. Simple with a fairly fast fade but not aggressively anything. 12%

£13.50 Stone Vine & Sun

J Laurens, Les Graimenous 2010 Crémant de Limoux

Attractive typographical label. Very pure, clean, direct. Quite simple - as one would expect for such a young wine - but it seems great value to me. Mountain stream stuff. 12%

£13.95 Roberson

Ch Rives-Blanques 2010 Blanquette de Limoux

Mainly local Mauzac grapes that taste of cooking apples. Quite explosive and a tad frothy but an excellent example of this characterful grape. Slight chew on the end. 12.5%

About £14 Cambridge Wine Merchants, Great Western Wine, James Nicholson

Domaine de la Taille aux Loups, Triple Zéro 2009 Montlouis

Essence of Loire Chenin Blanc, hints of honey and toast but no added sugar at any stage. Lovely texture and gentle mousse. 12.5%

£14.95 Slurp

Benoit Badoz, Rosé NV Crémant du Jura

Fresh, lightly perfumed Pinot Noir nose. Very fine bead, like all good Jura fizzes. A gentle caress. Dry but not demanding in terms of high acidity. Surely one of the best-value pink fizzes around. For drinking not keeping though. 12%

£16.50 The Sampler

Sainsbury's Blanc de Blancs NV Champagne

Who could resist a winemaker called Sandrine Logette-Jardin? This all-Chardonnay wine is from Duval-Leroy, is not the

driest but has lots of green-apple freshness. Delicate and piercing without excess sugar, astringency or froth. 12%

£22.49 Sainsbury's

Ridgeview, Merret Bloomsbury 2010 England

From the most garlanded Sussex fizz producer and a particularly good year. Much subtler and fresher on the nose than

the Graham Beck Cape fizz tasted alongside it. Good acidity (never an English failing). Not complex but the wine is

beautifully balanced.

£22.99 Waitrose

Veuve Fourny, Blanc de Blancs, Premier Cru NV Champagne

Full and round with some complexity thanks to generous bottle age. The fruit comes from Vertus at the southern end of the Côte des Blancs. This wine from a négociant shows some attractive bottle age. Very tight texture. Bone dry. Not

luscious by any means but a real appetite stimulant. 12%

£23 The Wine Society

Barnaut, Grande Réserve Grand Cru Bouzy NV Champagne

As soon as I poured this I could smell a most agreeable light biscuity perfume. Certainly not bone dry, nor especially tart

but beautifully balanced. Absolutely nothing to object to. Just £22.95 if a mixed dozen bottles are bought. 12.5%

£24.95 Lea & Sandeman

Ridgeview, South Ridge Blanc de Noirs 2009 England

Lovely development on the nose. Nice roundness on the palate (lower acid than most English fizz). Just very slightly hard on the finish but overall quite good enough to serve a visiting Frenchman.

£24.99 Laithwaites

Chartogne-Taillet, Sainte Anne NV Champagne

Archetypal 'small grower' based in Merfy. A good, informative back label tells us this blend is mainly 2008 and Pinot Noir predominates. This tastes open, somehow sensitive, almost fragile but a champagne you want to nurture. Very clean and brisk. But it also has some palate weight. Some length too. And a rather smart label to boot. Geat value. 12%

£25 The Wine Society

Larmandier-Bernier, Tradition Extra Brut Premier Cru NV Champagne

Restrained nose that suggests great delicacy. Real race, spine, and structure. Very grown up champagne. Some Extra

Brut champagnes are aggressively dry, but not this one. A very fair price. See also L&S's great-value mixed cases from

this fine producer. 12.5%

£29.95 Lea & Sandeman

Nyetimber, Classic Cuvée 2008 England

First vintage to have Canadian winemaker Cherie Spriggs in charge and first since 1998 to be treated to 100% softening malolactic fermentation, which is A Good Thing. Lighter nose than the Nyetimber Merret 2010 but very refreshing. Tastes like a Blanc de Blancs, although there is less than 80% Chardonnay in the blend. 12%

£29.99 Waitrose

Larmandier-Bernier, Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut Premier Cru NV Champagne

Actually this tastes a little broader than the Tradition Extra Brut and has very obvious filigree Chardonnay flavours and

lots of acidity. 12.5%

£31.95 Lea & Sandeman

Herbert Beaufort NV Champagne

Heavily Pinot Noir-dominated and from a grower in Bouzy. Split equally between 2007 and 2008 vintages and disgorged

a year ago. Perfumed, seductive nose. Quite aggressive fizz but there's lots of explosive personality here. Still quite

youthful. Persistent.

£32 M&S 142 stores

Bollinger, Special Cuvée NV Champagne

Lots of character here. Bone dry with great structure and confidence. Not that light! Lots of maturity. The gentle fizz feels as though it has had to battle its way through great intensity of flavour. Kick of acidity on the end. 12%

£34.95 Lea & Sandeman and widely elsewhere, usually at a higher price

Jacquesson, No 735 NV Champagne

Special cuvée aged in oak casks and with a particularly low dosage (sweetening added before final corking). Dry, very

fine and long. This bottling seems to me to have been on sale for decades! But this can't be true since it's based on the

2007 vintage. Nicely balanced and grown up. Complex and complete. 12%

£35 The Wine Society

Larmandier-Bernier, Terre de Vertus Non Dosé Premier Cru NV Champagne

Smells quite mature, tight knit and complex. Very satisfying despite the lack of any added sugar. Really dense and

intellectual. A fair price if this is the sort of champagne you're after. Krug-ish. 12.5%

£36.95 Lea & Sandeman

Eric Rodez, Cuvée des Crayères Grand Cru NV Champagne

From Ambonnay, equal proportions of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Based on 2007 with reserve wines back to 2002.

Complex, well developed nose with some honey and toast - though no obvious oak. Very firm, solid and savoury. Serious

champagne. Rather Bollinger style. This champagne almost smokes a cigar!

£39.90 The Sampler

Louis Roederer 2006 Champagne

Pale gold. Dry finish. Substance here though the wine is still quite youthful. Serious champagne from a family-owned

company that now owns bordeaux second growth Ch Pichon Lalande. Very refreshing and dry on the finish.

About £45 Tanners, The Wine Society and others

Veuve Clicquot 2004 Champagne

Notes when tasted blind: Very light nose with a hint of apple skins. Then a hit of dosage. Tight texture. Very good bead -

a talented winemaker here. Refreshing finish. But it fades just slightly.

About £45 Slurp and others

Pol Roger 2002 Champagne

This wine showed beautifully in a comparative tasting of top wines from the superlative 2002 vintage last week.

£49 The Wine Society, also Lea & Sandeman, Berry Bros

Egly-Ouriet, Rosé Grand Cru Ambonnay NV Champagne

Very pale strawberry with an intriguing hint of cheesiness on the nose (better than the usual sickly raspberry aromas).

Very fine bead and admirably dry finish. Distinctly superior - but so is the price.

£63.25 Lea & Sandeman

Taittinger, Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs 2002 Champagne

A stunning vintage and a very fine example of this luxurious champagne.

£120 Berry Bros

Krug, Grande Cuvée NV Champagne

The current cuvée is still young, but potentially great - greater than many a vintage-dated Krug. Now with a code

signifying date of disgorgement. The first three digits are the most important. If the number begins 311, it means that the

wine was disgorged in the third quarter of 2011, for example. You can find out more from krug.com.

About £135, widely distributed

Billecart-Salmon, Cuvée Elisabeth Salmon 2002 Champagne

The palest salmon pink. Stream of tiny bubbles.. Quite mature and resolved on the nose. Really appetising kick on the

finish and admirable persistence, though a less complex finale than the Bollinger Rosé 2004 tasted alongside. Fine rather

than emphatic.

About £140 Hedonism Wines and others