

This year's top 100+ ☐ whites

13 Dec 2012 by Jancis Robinson/FT but this is longer

France seems to hog an even higher proportion of recommendations here than it did for last week's reds - perhaps not surprisingly in view of so many stunning wines from Alsace and the Loire - and Burgundy. It is worth remembering that above £10 or so a bottle, smaller, apparently more upmarket, merchants can often offer better value than the mass-market retailers - though top marks to M&S for sourcing in strange but satisfying places. I had to cut this list of 34 down to 25 for the *Financial Times* but this is the long list.

Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, Niedermenniger Herrenberg Riesling Kabinett 2011 Mosel

Broad, fruity, flattering Mosel that is light and lively and very rewarding. Lychee flavours. Off dry, pure and fabulous quality for the price, presumably because the vineyard is not famous. 11%

£9.50 *The Wine Society*

Verus Sipon 2011 Stajerska Slovenija

Tokaj's Furmint by any other name grown in western Slovenia. Exciting! Broad, spicy and pretty tight on the palate but convincingly tense with clean, fresh fruit. Very tart on the finish but none the worse for that. 13%

£9.99 *Real Wine Co*

Producteurs Plaimont, Le Passé Authentique 2010 St-Mont

Bravo, les Gascons, for having rescued their indigenous Arrufiac and Petit Courbu grape varieties and blended them with Gros Manseng to produce this tense, vibrant, scented, herbal bargain dry white. 13%

£9.99 *Waitrose (257 branches)*

Sevilen Sauvignon Blanc 2011 Turkey

The most unexpected wine of all? A high altitude Aegean that tastes almost more like Chablis than Sancerre. Quite broad across the palate but bone dry and hugely respectable. Great value. 12.5%

£9.99 *Marks & Spencer (140 stores)*

Yering Station, Little Yering Chardonnay 2010 Yarra Valley

Very well made, New Oz-style bright Chardonnay. Delightfully balanced. Not concentrated but a lesson in winemaking and cleanliness to the winemakers of Burgundy. Very satisfying. Low key but excellent value. 13%

£10.25 *Oddbins*

Argyros, Atlantis 2011 Santorini

Another great eastern Mediterranean bargain from M&S based on the fabulous Assyrtiko grape. Mineral, tight and lemony. Very dry finish. A great example of a classic wine allowed to express itself without being shoehorned into a supermarket shape. 13%

£10.49 *Marks & Spencer (177 stores)*

Vincent Carême, Grenouilles Demi Sec 2009 Vouvray

Exciting, fresh, nervy, off-dry Loire Chenin Blanc with a lovely mix of almond and apple flavours. 13.5%

£10.95 *The Wine Society*

La Grange de Quatre Sous, Bu N'Daw Petite Arvine 2010 Vin de Table

100% Petite Arvine, an ancient Swiss vine from the Valais grown in Assignan, Languedoc. How enterprising to plant this variety here. Scented, herbal and with no shortage of either body or acidity. Really alpine and with great delicacy and freshness. Underpriced! 13%

£13.40 *Vine Trail*

Von Hövel, Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Kabinett 2011 Mosel

Son Max von Kunow's second vintage. Sweet, featherlight, lovely Saar classic with blackcurrant leaf aromas. For reviving flagging appetites? 8%

£13.50 *The Wine Society*

Dom Vincent Dampé 2011 Chablis

Quite a rich nose. Then it tightens up on the palate to become much tauter and more something very respectable and decently priced. 12.5%
£13.95 Corney & Barrow

Marcel Deiss, Pinot d'Alsace 2010 Alsace

Real attack and dimension. Racy and intense. Great value. The Riesling 2010 (£19.95 Roberson) is also outstanding. 13%
£14.95 Lea & Sandeman

Paul Blanck Gewurztraminer 2011 Alsace

No wonder this wine is so good; 20% of the fruit comes from the Furstentum Grand Cru. Heady rose-petal aroma. Tastes quite sweet (residual sugar is only 10 g/l in fact) but it's gorgeous and not at all flabby. There is decidedly smoky tension. 13.5%
£14.99 Waitrose (259 branches)

Vincent Delaporte, Chavignol 2011 Sancerre

Fine, mineral and so different from the average varietal Sauvignon Blanc! Blackcurrant leaf flavours. 13%
£15.95 Lea & Sandeman

J M Brocard, The Society's Exhibition Vaillons Premier Cru 2010 Chablis

Fabulous purity. With typical wet stone flavours this is racy, cool, and you could actually enjoy it already. Great stuff. 12.5%
£16 The Wine Society

Beaumont, Hope Marguerite 2010 Walker Bay

Grown near Hermanus. Very pure varietal expression of Chenin Blanc without any obvious oak although there is structure. Nervy and with a future. Still youthful. A Platter five-star wine. 13%
£16 The Wine Society

J J Prüm Riesling Kabinett 2010 Mosel

Lovely pure, open, clean, dry-tasting wine because, presumably, there is so much fresh acidity to counterbalance any fruitiness here. Knocked spots off many more expensive French wines served alongside when I tasted it. 8.5%
£16.25 Corney & Barrow

Roger Champault, Le Clos de la Cure 2011 Menetou-Salon

Lovely smoky/reductive Sauvignon Blanc nose with masses of terroir influence. The back label suggests the vineyard was first worked in the 11th century. Great breadth of ripe fruit across the palate. A certain green creaminess (gooseberry fool?) on the finish. Sufficient but not intrusive acidity. A very serious answer to Sancerre, not overpriced. 12.5%
About £16.50 Domaine Direct, Richard Kihl, Butler's Wine Cellar

Franz Künstler, Hochheimer Hölle Riesling Kabinett trocken 2011 Rheingau

Racy, lacy, correct. Yet with all the lushness of fully ripe Riesling. Great balance and nerve. It's wonderful to have a wine like this in mass distribution. 12.5%
£16.99 Waitrose (36 branches)

Cérvoles 2011 Costers del Segre

Full-bodied, expressive Catalan blend of Chardonnay and local Macabeo. Tastes more than a year old but very complex and satisfying. 14.5%
£17.20 Berry Bros

Dom François Carillon 2010 Bourgogne Chardonnay

An early wine from one of the two successors of Louis Carillon bodes well. Some good-quality oak and almost Chablis-like precision. Pretty fine for a Bourgogne. 13%
£18.85 Corney & Barrow

Meerlust Chardonnay 2009 Stellenbosch

Some leasiness on the nose, but good savoury, confident fruit. Serious wine with lovely texture. Refreshing acidity and

intriguing almond flavours. Much more open and approachable - and lively - than many a 2009 white burgundy at this price. Shows just how good Cape Chardonnay can be. 13.5%
£18.99 Wine Rack

François Chidaine, Les Tuffeaux Demi Sec 2009 Montlouis-sur-Loire

Not the sort of wine you expect in a supermarket. Lovely tang and toast. Fabulous old Chenin vines. You could drink this with any savoury white wine dish. Or on its own. Hugely satisfying and only at the start of its life. 13.5%
£18.99 Marks & Spencer (65 stores)

López Heredia, Viña Gravonia 2003 Rioja

100% Viura. Unashamedly oaky nose. Soft with low acidity but sufficiently lively on the finish. Still swimming along with a mix of wax and lemon and like nothing else.
£18.95 Berry Bros

Cinque Terre, Costa da Posa 2011 Liguria

A bottling of an individual vineyard on the much-photographed steep coastal terraces south-east of Genoa. Very scented and yet delicate. Really delightfully poised. Floral but with fine structure. 13%
£18.50 Butlers Wine Cellar, Highbury Vintners, Corks of Cotham

Dom Rapet Père et Fils, Les Combettes Premier Cru 2010 Pernand-Vergelesses

I actually tasted this chez Marks & Spencer where it was one of the most outstanding wines in their selection - but it costs considerably more at M&S than when ordered from Domaine Direct (where, admittedly, you have to buy at least 12 assorted bottles). Very satisfying with just a trace of oak but masses of truly Côte d'Or character. Really racy and bone dry but not skinny. Should seduce any white burgundy fan. 13%
£21.30 Domaine Direct, £26 M&S

Dom Anne Gros, Cuvée Marine 2009 Hautes-Côtes de Nuits

Deep gold. Very lifted, cool, savoury/lemony nose. Much racier than most 2009 white burgundies, and richer than this bottling usually is. A most attractive lemon sherbet note but real breadth on the palate. Smoky top note. No obvious oak. Lovely current drinking - though I wouldn't hold it for that much longer. Not trying to be Meursault; presented on its own terms. Quite persistent. 13%
£22.20 Domaine Direct

Dom Jean-François Ganevat, Les Chalasses Vieilles Vignes 2009 Côtes du Jura

Really quite mainstream for Jura and Caves de Pyrène! But delicious with a sort of mineral twang and lovely sleek polished fruit. Great stuff and so different from most Chardonnays. Very persistent. 13.5%
£28.99 Les Caves de Pyrène

Bründlmayer, Steinmassel Riesling 2011 Kamptal

Berrys now have excellent Austrians thanks to their recent acquisition of Richards Walford. Racy and open. Herbs and dried grasses on the nose. Very dry and delicate. Really gets the saliva flowing. The Heiligenstein at £26.95 is also delicious. 12.5%
£23.95 Berry Bros

Dom de la Bongran, Cuvée EJ Thévenet Quintaine 2004 Viré-Clessé

Brilliant value - rich yet with great structure, depth and acidity. Grapefruit peel flavours and sumptuous texture. The white served at Patrick Sandeman's wake. 14%
£24.75 Lea & Sandeman

Pithon-Paillé, Schistes 2009 Savennières

Toast and minerals and reverberation. Great stuff! Really nervy. No sweetness but excellent. Bruised-apple flavours. This should ideally be kept a year or two. 13%
£25.40 Justerini & Brooks

A A Badenhorst, Wine NV Western Cape 16.5 Drink 2012-2015

A fair South African copy of the Jura's vin jaune at a fair price. Highly individual. A headache for Cape authorities but great fun for wine geeks. 13%
£18.99 Handfords

Olivier Leflaive, Clos du Cromin 2010 Meursault

Slightly oaky with real breadth and energy of fruit. Classic modern Meursault that's already drinking well. 13.5%
£28.95 Corney & Barrow

Ch Simone 2008 Palette

Provençal blend of 80% Clairette, 10% Grenache Blanc, 5% Ugni Blanc, 5% Muscat Blanc from a historic estate outside Aix. Full, subtle and exciting. Both ready and lively, a real jewel. 13.5%
£30 Yapp Brothers

Tardieu-Laurent 2008 Hermitage Blanc

A potentially glorious wine style from the northern Rhône that is always full bodied but can last for ages. Scented, smoky and heady. Round, a little salty and hugely enjoyable. Clean, intense, multilayered. A white to drink with goose, even? Very accomplished. 13.5%
£39.55 Corney & Barrow