



**Written by**  
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## Fifty great red wine buys...



*This is a longer version of an article also published in the Financial Times.*

See also my [50 great white \(and pink\) buys](#), not least for an explanation of this selection, listed upwards in regular price. Prices in brackets indicate some special offer price.

### **Vieille Fontaine Red 2005 Vin de Pays du Comte Tolosan**

*£2.99 Tesco*

Clever blend from Plaimont stiffened with a bit of St Mont Cabernet. Fresh, lively - much better than the white version.

### **Classic Côtes du Rhône 2005**

*£3.49 Waitrose*

Sweet and unchallenging - a soft cushion of a wine from the Tulette co-op. What chance does

eastern Europe have when France can deliver this sort of value?

### **La Sabrosita Old Vine Garnacha 2005 Calatayud**

*£4.99 M&S*

Fantastic value, hand picked from ancient bush vines and skilfully made into something that tastes twice the price by British MW Norrel Robertson. My only criticism is the unnecessarily heavy bottle, unlike its stablemate Viña Fuerte at Waitrose which is £3.99 until Dec 3.

### **José Maria da Fonseca, Periquita 2004 Terras do Sado**

*£4.99 Waitrose*

A fruity classic from just south of Lisbon. Great value and personality.

### **Taja Monastrell 2005 Jumilla**

*£5.76 Corney & Barrow*

Wonderfully rich, fruity and lively for the money, made from Bandol's Mourvèdre.

### **La Chablisienne 2005 Bourgogne Epineuil**

*£5.99 Majestic*

Light in every way. Fresh, pure Pinot Noir - very clean and fruity. Should be drunk by this time next year.

### **La Riada, Old Vines Garnacha 2005 Campo de Borja**

*£5.99 (£3.99) Wine Rack and selected Thresher*

From Bodegas Aragones, this wine has an amazing amount of punch for the three-bottle price, though as usual is not quite good enough for the full price.

### **Mareante Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 2004 Central Valley**

*£5.99 (£4.79 until 4 Dec) M&S*

Winner of the first Wines of Chile Awards. Alvaro Espinoza at VOE, which claims the biggest biodynamic vineyard in the world, made this certified organic wine that is bursting with life. Good value.

### **Casa de la Ermita Joven 2005 Jumilla**

*£6.49 Bibendum, Wines of the World, Planet of the Grapes (£6.50)*

Sweet, rich and long, a thoroughly satisfying blend of Monastrell, Tempranillo and Cabernet.

### **Dom du Joncier, Le Gourmand 2004 Lirac**

*£6.95 Stone Vine & Sun*

Good value mouthful of rich, juicy Grenache fruit.

### **House of Certain Views Shiraz 2004 Orange**

*£6.99 Tanners of Shrewsbury*

Lovely bright fruit from high country in New South Wales made by the talented Andrew Margan in the Hunter Valley. Great value.

### **Yering Frog Shiraz Viognier 2005 Yarra Valley**

*£6.99 (£5.99 until 5 Feb) Majestic*

Very ripe fruit transformed skilfully into a great value, screwcapped bottle - but drink this soon.

### **Sainsbury's Coonawarra Cabernet 2003**

*£6.99 Sainsbury*

A Katnook bargain. Tesco answer with Mount Hurtle Coonawarra Cabernet 2004 which is £42 for 4 bottles via [tesco.com](http://tesco.com) with equally awful label.

### **Moueix Company Reserve 2003 Bordeaux**

*£7.40 Corney & Barrow*

AC Bordeaux can be little better than mouthwash but this is from the Pétrus team from a very rich, early-maturing vintage and so is already sweet and lush.

### **Cave du Château de Chénas 2005 Chénas**

*£7.49 (£5.99 until 5 Feb) Majestic*

Great tang and life - smooth and juicy.

### **Preece Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 Victoria**

*£7.49 Bibendum, £6.95 Cellar Door*

The only reason this well-made wine does not cost more is that Cabernet is currently unfashionable and over-supplied in Australia. Minty and very pure. The Mitchelton Shiraz 2003 from the same source, is also good, at £9.69.

### **Porta Select Pinot Noir 2005 Bio Bio**

*£7.99 (5.33) Selected Wine Rack*

Delicate coffee-like notes on the nose of this very lively Chilean, with good freshness and fruit on the mid palate. Clean finish - not stinky.

### **Clos d'Yvigne, Le Petit Prince 2003 Côtes de Bergerac**

*£7.99 (£6.99 until 5 Feb) Majestic*

A really stunning wine for the price - very vital, just bursting with life and flavour from the author of *The Ripening Sun*. Almost more like a very ripe Loire wine than a Bordeaux, made much closer.

### **Dom de la Paleine 2004 Saumur**

*£7.99 Handford*

A red Loire that's very aromatic but with good flesh too.

### **Couly-Dutheuil, La Grille 2005 Chinon**

*£7.99 Oddbins*

Very lively and aromatic with good palate weight - clearly fully ripe fruit - though much less complex than the Petit Prince above.

### **Tautavel Réserve Gérard Bertrand 2003 Côtes du Roussillon Villages**

*£7.99 (£5.99 until 3 Dec) Waitrose*

Very distinctive - sweet and intense but with a texture almost like fermented nails (of the metal sort). Great value at the lower price.

### **Calvet-Thunevin, Cuvée Constance 2003 Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes**

*£8.99 (£5.99 until 3 Dec) most Waitroses*

Another stupendous bargain from the Agly valley in Roussillon with involvement from the owner of St Emilion's Château Valandraud.

### **Lurton, La Chapelle 2005 Bordeaux**

*£8.99 M&S*

Pierre Lurton of Chx Cheval Blanc and Yquem made this sweetish, mainly-Merlot wine, from vines just south of Fronsac. A sort of junior Girolate. Shows that we don't necessarily have to wait that long for the miraculous 2005 bordeaux.

### **Perez Burton 2003 Rioja**

*£8.99 M&S*

Telmo Rodriguez conjured this from his Tempranillo vines near Lanciego in Rioja Alavesa. Satisfying, sweet and gentle.

**Domaine de la Jérôme 2004 Côtes du Rhône Villages**

*£9.25 Jeroboams*

Sylvette Brechet of Gigondas has made a silky yet spicy wine that puts many Gigondas to shame. Lovely.

**Piancornello, Poggio dei Lecci 2005 Toscana Rosso**

*£9.50 Stone Vine & Sun*

Beautifully balanced, accessible Sangiovese from a fine source of Brunello di Montalcino.

**Torbreck, Marananga Dam 2004 Barossa Valley**

*£9.99 M&S*

Great value for a Rhône blend from 80 year old unirrigated vines made by world famous Dave Powell. Grenache dominates. 18 months in French oak. Real magic touch wine with sweetness and scent - madness not to buy it.

**De Forville, Barbaresco 2003 and Vigne Vecchie 2004 Barbera d'Alba**

*Both £9.99 (£8.99 until 5 Feb) Majestic*

Clever special twin parcel whose pricing speaks volumes for the rehabilitation of Barbera in Piemonte. Very opulent example with a particularly transparent, precocious Barbaresco.

### **Mt Langi Ghiran, Cliff Edge Shiraz 2001 Grampians**

*£9.99 (£8.99 until 5 Feb) Majestic*

Correct Shiraz, with a hint of menthol but very appetising, transparent and long. Good bottle age.

### **Château Martinat 2003 Côtes de Bourg**

*£9.99 Oddbins special parcel*

Lively, fresher than most '03s. Quite solid, with a dry finish.

### **La Bastide St Vincent, Pavane 2004 Vacqueyras**

*£10.75 Berry Bros*

Better value than many a Châteauneuf-du-Pape with great pure, transparent fruit and lovely texture. The Gigondas 2004, bottled later, at £12.45 is also excellent.

### **Mas Conscience, Le Cas 2005 Vin de Pays de l'Hérault**

*£10.95 Berry Bros*

Intriguing name, price and wine from the Terrasses du Larzac in the Coteaux du Languedoc. Very smooth handling of old-vine Carignan grown at high altitude.

### **Quinta de Macedos, Pinga de Torto 2003 Douro**



*£10.99 Handford*

Particularly good value example of this exciting new category of table wines from port country. Wild flavours but very, very clean as well as rich.

**Catena Malbec 2004 Mendoza**

*£10.99 Majestic, Bibendum*

Very fine - a cross between the richness of Argentina's signature grape and the structure of a fine Bordeaux. No hurry to drink this.

**Glenguin, Stonybroke Shiraz 2002 Hunter Valley**

*£10.99 Bibendum, Bristol Wine Co, Lockett Bros*

Very mineral and lively.

**Dom Pierre Labet, Vieilles Vignes 2004 Bourgogne Pinot Noir**

*£11.75 Corney & Barrow*

From 45 year-old vines in Chorey, organic since 1992, with real freshness but no shortage of fruit.

**Dom Maillard 2004 Chorey lès Beaune**

*£11.99 Waitrose*

The first of [NB ??check before final draft] three recommendations from this reliable, well-priced

domaine. Soft, fragrant and slightly earthy with a powerful finish. Great value.

### **Château La Croix 2000 St-Estèphe**

*£12.99 Majestic*

From the Cuvelier family of Ch Le Crock. Very deep colour and very ripe fruit. A tiny bit simple and crude on palate but not bad value and just about ready.

### **Château La Croix des Moines 2001 Lalande de Pomerol**

*£12.99 Adnams of Southwold*

'Fighting claret' from this adventurous independent merchant. Gently velvety and flattering - a very good substitute for serious, mature Pomerol. Price goes down to £11 if bought by the dozen.

### **Sarget de Gruaud Larose 1997 St-Julien**

*£15.99 (£12.99) Majestic, £16.44 Caves de Pyrene of Surrey*

Seriously good value, fully mature claret.

### **Saintsbury, Garnet Pinot Noir 2004 Carneros**

*£13.99 (£11.19 until 5 Feb) Majestic*

A beautifully mannered wine for early drinking - a world away from California's super-charged, super-sweet Pinots.

### **Glen Carlou Syrah 2004 Paarl**

*£13.49 Oddbins*

Good example of South African Syrah, as opposed to Shiraz, with oak (just) mastered though not as subtle as Boekenhoutskloof.

### **Dom Maillard 2004 Savigny lès Beaune**

*£14.99 Majestic*

Ready to drink now - sweet and pretty with good depth and evolution.

### **Chivite Colección 125 1996 Navarra Gran Reserva**

*£14.95 top two Waitroses*

Mature, gentle, well balanced and complex - unusual to get this much development at this price.

### **Dom St Jacques d'Albas, La Chapelle 2003 Minervois**

*£14.99 Handford*

Very impressive old-vine cuvée from an English-owned Languedoc domaine. Not given away though.

### **Dom Maillard 2004 Beaune**

*£14.99 Majestic*

Full, round and punchy with another year or two in it.

### **Dom du Pimont 2003 St Aubin Premier Cru**

*£14.99 M&S*

M&S's own label on this spicy yet fresh representation of fully ripe Pinot. These 'lesser', cooler corners of Burgundy did particularly well in the heatwave vintage. 35 year old vines.

### **Château Mont Redon, Le Fussier 2001 Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

*£14.99 M&S*

Fully mature blend of Grenache with 20 per cent Syrah and five per cent Mourvèdre. Sweet and round.

### **TMV Syrah 2005 Swartland**

*£15 largest Waitroses from late Nov*

A new South African star. Surprisingly fragile and nervy for a 14.6 per center.

### **Alois Lageder, Lindenburg Lagrein 2002 Alto Adige**

*£15.49 Bibendum*

And now for something completely different...wonderfully round, mouthfilling red fruit flavour and zesty mountain acidity from the Dolomite foothills.

