

red

to order call freephone 08000 272 272

£6.95

13.5% alc.



**Cape Chamonix Rouge,
Franschhoek, South Africa 2007**

The danger with buying an inexpensive wine speculatively is that you run the risk of it sitting at your dinner table like an unwelcome guest, enforcing awkward silences and bringing down the general mood like some cheerless killjoy. Avoid the problem by taking our word for this ingeniously inexpensive blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec and Petit Verdot from the brilliant young winemaker, Gottfried Mocke. It's wonderfully full-flavoured, with a suppleness rarely found in wines of this price. Loaded with ripe red, black and purple berry flavours plus a hint of spice, it delivers more pound for pound value than anything else we know.

£7.50

13.5% alc.

**'Manon' Tempranillo Cabernet,
Tierra de Castilla, Spain 2007**

A terrific value red from Don Quixote's homeland of Castilla-La Mancha, packed with soft black fruit pastille flavours and spicy oak. It's ideal for parties as it has a rich, supple texture and soft tannins.



£8.95

13% alc.



Chianti Rufina 'Del Mulino', Fattoria Lavacchio, Tuscany, Italy 2007

Looking for something that doesn't exist is a task undertaken by fools. You wouldn't, for example, go looking for an unbroken mirror in Wayne Rooney's house. Looking for something that you know exists but that continues to elude you is a task undertaken by the stubborn and the pigheaded. For the last four years, we have been hunting for a top quality inexpensive Italian red but our quarry has never come within range until now. This brilliant little Chianti Rufina is just the thing we have been searching for, full of beautiful Tuscan flavours of cherry, sandalwood, vanilla, tobacco and leather. It's medium-bodied, wonderfully supple in the mouth and has a gentle grip of tannins that never pinches. **The perfect everyday red.**

£8.95

13.5% alc.

**Cotes du Rhone
'Les Plates Pierres',
Domaine Marc
Brugaliere, France 2007**

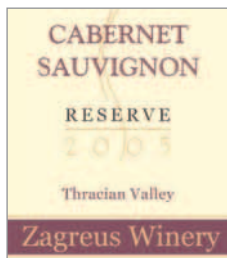
Everyone loves a good Cotes du Rhone, but so many of them taste like bottled narcolepsy that people are starting to lose faith. Here's one that will bring people back into the fold, because it has the evocative fragrance you would hope for of soft, supple fruits, flowering herbs, tapenade and subtle sweet spices. Made from two thirds Grenache and one third Syrah, it is gentle, medium-bodied and filled with all the joy of rolling down a lavender-covered hillside.



£8.95

12% alc.

**Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, Zagreus Winery,
Thracian Valley, Bulgaria 2005**



There are several reasons why you are reading this tasting note. Apart from the fact that you obviously like buying wine from an independent merchant, you must also have a curiosity that drills down beneath the surface to less familiar wines. You are about to be rewarded for your intrepidity, because this is one of the greatest discoveries we made in a long time. It may be a one-off, where all the elements that make an exceptional wine just happened to align, but no matter. It is a brilliant bottle that has some of the ethereal perfume of Piemontese reds as well as the allure of mature Tuscan Cabernet Sauvignon. It is relatively soft and gentle for a Cabernet, with a pleasingly light alcohol content and fine, integrated tannins. It offers wonderfully sophisticated flavours for an inexpensive wine, with chestnut, tar, wet leaves, rhubarb, red flowers and rosehip to be found on the nose and palate. High-toned, subtle, soft and pretty, it is fully mature and should be enjoyed now while it is at its peak.



red

to order email wine@swig.co.uk

£9.50

13% alc.

Waipara West ‘Ram Paddock’ Red, New Zealand 2004

As a wine merchant we have to be impartial, so our personal taste must come second to our objective appreciation. In fact, so scrupulous are we in this discipline that we are indifferent to Marmite. As a customer, however, you can exercise your freedom of opinion willy-nilly and we suspect this wine will split a few of you. Those who love the intense blackcurrant fragrance of Ribena will swoon whereas those who don't will recoil. The culprit in this brilliant Bordeaux blend is the fabulously ripe Cabernet Franc component, which gives an extraordinarily pungent whoosh of wet blackcurrant leaves and purple berries on the nose leading to a palate that is lithe and succulent, with raspberry cordial and morello cherry flavours echoing the intensity of the aromas. Despite all the exuberance above, it gift wraps all those flavours into a very classy package reminiscent of a ripe Pomerol. You're going to love it. Then again, you might loathe it.



A very classy package reminiscent of a ripe Pomerol. £5 less than closest NZ equivalent.

£9.95

14.5% alc.

Heartland Shiraz, Langhorne Creek, Limestone Coast, Australia 2007

There's no need to write extended waffle about this consistently great value Shiraz, because we have featured it numerous time in the past. Suffice it to say that the new vintage is as good as ever, with the key combination of beautiful oak and Ben Glaetzer's magic touch lifting it above the morass. Rich without being jammy, it offers melt-in-the-mouth flavours of blackcurrant, chocolate, vanilla and tobacco leaf.



£9.50

13.5% alc.

A.A. Badenhorst Family Wines ‘Secateurs’ Red, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2008



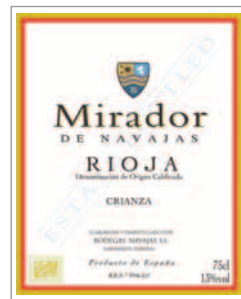
One of the latest buzzwords among winemakers is 'minimal intervention', which refers to the gracious retreat that they make from the winemaking process in order to allow the fruit to speak for itself. It's a grandiose display of humility and ego-distancing from the journey between vineyard and bottle. Others call it laziness. By co-fermenting the grapes and ageing the wine in old oak casks, Adi Badenhorst has let the fruit get on with it and avoided micro-managing the process, allowing the Shiraz, Mourvedre and Viognier grapes to express themselves. It's an excellent, Rhone-inspired South African red, with a pretty fragrance of dark fruits, apricot, orange cream, hillside herbs and black pepper. Allow it to open up in the glass for a few minutes and drink with hearty fare like bangers and mash or cottage pie.

£9.95

13.5% alc.

Rioja Crianza Mirador, Spain 2005

Until telekinesis allows you to transport yourself to Spain in the blink of an eye, this hugely evocative Rioja will have to do. It has beautiful aromas of coconut, sweet vanilla, orange cream, chestnut purée, old wooden writing desks, moist tobacco, autumn leaves, a picador's saddle, ok maybe not the last one, but it's amazingly resonant of its birthplace. It definitely fits into the 'old school' Rioja category, summoning thoughts of old libraries and worn leather armchairs, but has enough ripe generous fruit and velvety appeal to satisfy those who have more modern leanings. This is exactly what great Rioja should be. Warm, deep, rich, sweetly delicious and comforting, yet rallied by sour cherry and orange juice acidity. It's a Spanish postcard in flavour form.



£10.50

14.5% alc.

Vinica, Zagreus Winery, Bulgaria 2007

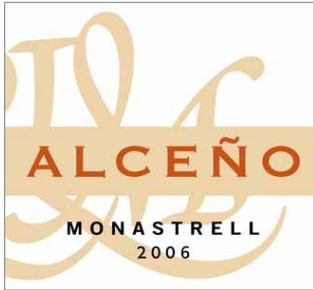
Convincing you to buy a Bulgarian wine is hard enough. Convincing you to buy a Bulgarian wine whose name sounds like 'vinegar' is like trying to persuade Pete Doherty to buy a protein shake. On the plus side, you can be sure that we wouldn't make life hard on ourselves if it wasn't really good. This richly-endowed wine is made from everybody's favourite, the Mavrud grape, and it undergoes a process similar to Amarone, where the grapes are dried outdoors for 2 months before fermentation, thereby concentrating the sugars and flavours. As a result, the wine is rich and textured, with dense flavours of dark fruits, warm spice, raisins, plum skins and chocolate. To make it sound more palatable, we suggest you pronounce its name with a sibilant 'c' (i.e. Vin-itsa).

red

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£11.50

14% alc.



Alceno Monastrell '12 Meses' Bodegas Pedro Luis Martinez, Jumilla, Spain 2006

If this wine list were a new toy box and you were our best friend, we'd pull everything out and show you this wine first. We're childishly proud of it and want you to share in the fun. It is made from seriously old Monastrell vines and those gnarled old beasts provide extraordinarily rich, swaggering fruit, making for a deep and wonderfully nuanced wine. The nose greets you warmly with plum and white chocolate, creamy dark berries and roasted spices. On the palate it amplifies after the initial sip, gaining in complexity and depth, with vanilla, sweet orange, cocoa, plum pudding and plush purple fruits.

£12.00

13.5% alc.

Pascual Toso Malbec Reserve, Mendoza, Argentina 2007

This is such an exuberant wine, it should have its own float at the Rio carnival. A beautifully fragrant Malbec with intense notes of violets, blueberries, damsons cinnamon, cedar and white chocolate. Heady, plush and generous with a velvet texture, it's a gorgeous expression of Argentina's signature grape variety.



£12.50

14.5% alc.

Peter Lehmann 'The Antiquus' Old Vine Shiraz, Barossa Valley, Australia 2001

It's becoming increasingly difficult to find good Australian Shiraz with some bottle age in its rear-view mirror, so it was with no shortage of delight that we stumbled upon this beauty made by Ozzie legend Peter Lehmann. Made as a one-off bottling for a supermarket that subsequently reneged on the deal, we immediately put our hands up for it when the shipper slashed the price in order to move it on. It's a wonderfully open, generous old vine Shiraz that has untucked its shirt and loosened its belt. Rich, ripe, heady and billowing with cedar, fruitcake, nuts and ink, its perfect state of maturity brings an otherworldly charm that is absent in brash young Shiraz. Be sure to use a wide-bowled glass to gain maximum pleasure from this beauty.



£14.50

14% alc.

Red Claw Pinot Noir, Yabby Lake, Mornington Peninsula, Australia 2008

If Mowgli had been raised solely by Baloo the Bear, then he may well have grown up to be a feckless jungle urchin with no sense of purpose. Equally, if Bagheera the Panther had been his sole parent, then he might have grown up to be too cautious to survive in the wild. Together, however, they made a great double act and raised him to a fine, well-balanced young man. The same goes for this wine, which counterpoises ripe, lovable, soft-bellied fruit with a necessary backbone of bright acidity and well-behaved tannins. An ultra-succulent, supple, ripe Pinot Noir bursting with juicy flavour. The grapes are from the same vineyard that make their £21 wine.



Spectacular Pinot Noir. A £20 wine for a £14 price tag.

£13.50

13% alc.

Silene, Cesanese Cantina Ciolli, Lazio, Italy 2005



The wines of Lazio have a long way to go before they are revered in the same way as the wines of Tuscany or Piedmont, but the volcanic hills around Rome are home to some wonderfully unusual grape varieties, such as Cesanese, which was highly prized during the

Renaissance, but whose reputation languished during the 20th Century. Jump back five hundred years and Caravaggio would have been holding a paintbrush (or dagger) in one hand and a goblet of Cesanese in the other. This example is soft and subtly floral, verging towards Pinot Noir in its sweet red berry and herbal character, but more earthy and savoury. Deliciously different.

£15.00

14.5% alc.



Chianti Rufina Riserva, Fattoria Lavacchio, Tuscany, Italy 2007

An Australian professor called Larry Lockshin found that most consumers spend an average of 38 seconds deciding which wine to buy, which means that, after reading this introduction, you've only got 30 seconds left, so we better be quick. Why choose this? Because it is a very smart Italian red for grown-up entertaining priced within the comfort zone for dinner party offerings or indulgent suppers at home. A squashed cherry-red Sangiovese with a splash of Merlot, it was aged for 18 months in French barriques giving a velvety smooth texture enfolding light sweet spice, blood, sour cherry and leather notes. An upmarket Chianti Riserva at a very good price.

red

to order email wine@swig.co.uk

£15.00

13% alc.



Holloran Vineyards 'Stafford Hill' Pinot Noir, Oregon, USA 2007

Hand-crafted, small production Pinot Noir from Oregon. You probably already have a figure in your head? When we tasted this gorgeous example with owner Bill Holloran, we tightened our stomach muscles in anticipation of the body blow that would surely follow when he revealed the price. There was no need, our tummies could slump back to their default position atop our belts. To find an Oregon Pinot Noir of such quality for this price was a special moment for us. It has a wonderfully bright nose of summer berries, café au lait, raspberry and violets. Perfectly weighted in the mouth, with just a subtle pinch of tannins, it favours freshness and purity instead of concentration and over-extraction making it wonderfully food-friendly.

£15.50

13% alc.

Saint Joseph Rouge, Stephane Montez, Domaine de Monteillet, Rhone 2008

If the blue blood of nobility had a scent then this would be it. There's something very exalted and refined in the heady aromas that float from the surface of this high-toned Syrah, suggesting cherry juice on wet black stones, black pepper sprinkled on strawberries and violet-infused blueberries. Although that might sound like the dessert trolley at The Fat Duck, it's simply an attempt to evoke the amazing aromas that soar from the glass. Where there is height, there is also depth and the richer notes of plum and red pimento sustain the harmony on the palate. **Stephane Montez, as we have told any poor bugger who steps within earshot, is the most exciting producer in the Rhone Valley and this is a fabulous demonstration of his skill.**



£16.50 very limited quantity

14.5% alc.

Buitenverwachting 'Christine', Constantia, South Africa 2006

Cynics might think that by simply adding the new vintage of this wine to our latest list we are taking our foot off the pedal and losing the intrepid streak on which our mighty reputation has been built. Fear not friends, we have tasted numerous rivals in the 'South African Bordeaux Blend' category in the intervening year and none has come close. Those who abhor overstatement should look away now, because we believe this to be the greatest pound-for-pound South African red wine on the market. Bordeaux lovers will swoon when they breathe in the sweet perfume of sandalwood, ink, plum, oyster shells and graphite. In the mouth it has heft, flesh and savour, along with a bright acidity that gently ushers everything along. If South Africa were to hold a judgement of Paris, then this is the wine that could shock the world!



The greatest pound-for-pound South African red wine on the market

£16.50

14% alc.

Chateau Musar, Lebanon 2002

If you are planning on bluffing your way through life as a wine expert, you may think that you can skip Lebanese wine entirely, but it will be your Achilles heel, because Chateau Musar is as famous among wine connoisseurs as Chateau Lafite. The wine has a loyal band of followers, populated largely by imperfectionists, who are willing to forgive its minor faults for the sake of individuality and idiosyncrasy. Fans of polished, technically perfect wines should look elsewhere. The 2002 vintage, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan, is a classic Musar, rich in sun-drenched flavours of warm spicy oak, leather, dried herbs and orange zest. It is sweet and seductive on the palate, with silky tannins and a combination of sautéed plums, sweet rhubarb, dried fruit and cedar wood.



£16.50

14.5% alc.

Mullineux Syrah, Swartland, South Africa 2008



Chris Mullineux doesn't look like he's old enough to cross the road on his own, let alone already have two distinctive winemaking positions on his CV. Having made noteworthy Syrah at Tulbagh Mountain Vineyards, he has now established a family label with his wife, Andrea, a graduate in Viticulture and Oenology from Davis University. Wine writers have been falling over themselves to claim 'you heard it here first', because the debut vintage is nothing short of sensational. Their Syrah is wonderfully fragrant in the style of a northern Rhone red with just a little extra richness and spice. It is so supple it can put its legs behind its head. A generous, perfumed, open-knit wine with a wild, bramble fruit nose and flavours on the palate of black pepper, creamy blueberries, vanilla and hickory smoked bacon. Look out for their white blend and their straw wine too, both featured in this list.

South Africa's Syrah to beat

red

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£17.00

13% alc.

Chateau de Braude, Haut-Medoc, Bordeaux 2002

When hosting a dinner party, a real wine lover will choose the wine first, followed by the food and finally the guests. For them, wine is the epicentre from which all other pleasures must necessarily emanate and finding suitable guests is the last piece in the jigsaw. They should chime with the character of the wines, so, for example, you wouldn't invite Jeremy Kyle if you were planning on serving something palatable. This wonderfully mellow, food-friendly claret demands convivial company as it offers such friendly charms. It sits gently in the mouth with easy tannins in a supple and succulent frame making it perfect with classic roast lunches. Fresh and balanced with beautifully sweet ripe fruit and tentative hints of sandalwood and star anise, it's the perfect Sunday quaffer.

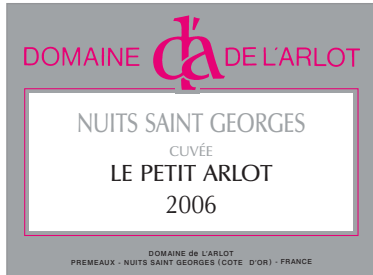


£19.00

13.5% alc.

Nuits-St-George Le Petit Arlot, Domaine de l'Arlot, Burgundy 2006

Surrounded by tasting notes full of superlatives, this lovely red Burgundy runs the risk of being ignored as it's not a wine that induces the kind of turgid rhetoric so familiar to our readers, but it's a very pretty wine that deserves a second glance. Made from the younger vines of the Clos de l'Arlot, it is a charming, early-drinking red, which exhibits very pure, precise and supple Pinot Noir character that lies somewhere in the intersection between cherry, raspberry, and rhubarb. Calling a liquid 'precise' might sound like mumbo jumbo, but by that we mean that it is very true to the character of the grape, with very little oak influence and showing a purity and translucency that tells you more about its vineyard origins than the winemaking techniques.



£20.00

13% alc.



Chateau Haut-Goujon, Lalande de Pomerol, Bordeaux 2001

School days evoke particularly vivid memories and we all remember staring pleadingly at the clock during double maths while chewing on the end of pencil. As your teeth gnawed away at the woody splinters, you suddenly touched upon the thrilling coolness of the graphite interior. That is the impression we hope to convey when we talk about 'pencil lead' in red Bordeaux and this mature beauty has a real sense of that flinty quality beneath the surface. There is a mouth-watering core of black fruit cordial with a perfect balance between the sweet and sour elements, opening up to overtones of leather and cedar cooled all the while by that seam of graphite. This is a gorgeous, mature Bordeaux ready for drinking over the next couple of years.

£21.00

13.5% alc.



Yabby Lake Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Australia 2007

There's an American food company whose tagline is "With a name like Smuckers it has to be good!" Well, the same applies to Yabby Lake. As Engelbert Humperdinck has proved though, a name is no barrier to success, and we are proud to represent this outstanding cool climate Pinot Noir whose serious winemaking pedigree is in indirect proportion to the daftness of its name. Tom Carson is the man at the helm and there is no one making better Pinot Noir in Australia at the moment. The wine exhibits a relatively deep colour for a Pinot and is rich in wild strawberry, asian spice and perfumed oak aromas. The mouthfeel is silky and sensuous, floating over fruit-laden acidity and sappy juice. Plenty of wow factor on show and a wine to treasure over the next decade.

£21.50

14.5% alc.

Barbera d'Alba 'Vigna Pozzo' Renato Corino, Piedmont, Italy 2006

Never play cards with a man called Doc. Never cut your own hair after drinking absinthe. Never trust a winemaker with small hands. We've shaken hands with enough great winemakers to know that a tactical pat on the upper arm is the best form of welcome if you want to avoid the sound of crushed bones and Renato Corino has one of the most terrifying pair of mitts in the business. In fact, so famous is he for his giant paws that he puts a little picture of them on his wine label. It's not actually a warning but a symbol to show that his wines are hand-crafted, natural wines and anyone with a straight flush of broken fingers will tell you that he clearly does much of the hard graft himself. This sensational Barbera is deep in colour and awash with beautiful Italian flavours. Rich without being sweet, it offers layer upon layer of ripe blackcurrant, roasted coffee beans, vanilla, Honduran chocolate, sour cherry and sweet woody spice. A modern-styled beauty.



red

to order email wine@swig.co.uk

£25.00

12.5% alc.



Chateau Poumey, Pessac-Leognan, Bordeaux 1995

Muddy riverbanks, savoury cheese rind and old saddle leather are not the sort of tasting impressions that are going to get you frisking yourself for your wallet, unless, of course, you love mature claret and all the heady evocations they inspire. This beauty from Bordeaux's Left Bank has a haunting scent that uses gentle brushstrokes to paint its sketch of flavours. To the eye it still has a healthy glow of ruby red colour at the centre, tapering towards red brick at the rim. On the palate it gives the impression of ribbons of silks, with a lingering ripeness and a classic mix of pencil shavings and sweet blackcurrant. Let your mind wander and allow some of the more enigmatic impressions to appear. It becomes easier after the second glass.

“Phenomenally good quality mature claret for this price.”

£25.00

14.5% alc.

Barolo Renato Corino, Piedmont, Italy 2005

Some young Barolos behave like juvenile delinquents, creating mayhem in your mouth, with their abrasive tannins and brutal acidity. The really bad ones belong in a young offender's institution, not a wine cabinet. The situation tends to get worse the further you wander into the cheaper neighbourhoods, so it's vital that you take advice from people in the know. When it comes to assessing young Barolo, Jancis Robinson has been around the block a few times and she has this to say about Renato Corino's regular bottling: "Mid ruby. Light but appetising nose. Very mouthfilling and flattering. Rather velvety. The structure is almost overwhelmed by pure velvety power. Quite flattering and early maturing but lots of pleasure. 17 points."



£26.00

13% alc.

Rioja Gran Reserva Ontanon, Spain 2001

It would be overstating things to say that this does anything more than it says on the tin, but it does it very beautifully and you get what you pay for. It's a classic, old-fashioned Rioja full of exotic woody flavours and balmy hints of coconut and tobacco. The deep, ripe, heady flavours show that this is a close-bosomed friend of the maturing sun, rich in warm autumnal hints of mellow fruitfulness - to mangle a line from Keats. It's a wine to savour from a wide-bowled glass.



£28.50

16% alc.

Valpolicella Superiore Carlo Ferragu, Veneto, Italy 2006



We walked into an enoteca in Soave for an early evening aperitif and walked out with one of our best discoveries in recent years. On the nose, this wine exudes relaxed, generous, winning flavours of melted chocolate, orange cream, dried apricots, cherry and plum skins. In the mouth, it is dry but luxurious and ripe, with pashmina-soft tannins and smooth, succulent layers of fragrant red fruits that coat the palate and it has a twist of bitter chocolate on the finish that acts like a ribbon, tying the whole parcel together. It has none of the dried fig or sticky date character that tends to weigh down so many Amarones and can be drunk now and over the next ten years.

“This is a serious wine that was way beyond my expectations... Opulent, hedonistic and very, very classy.”

Paul Jaines - Swig customer

£30.00

14% alc.

Pyramid Valley 'Eaton Family' Pinot Noir, Marlborough, New Zealand 2007



Great grapes are like great actors. The best are able to shed their identity and become amazing characters that go beyond caricature and pastiche. A great Pinot Noir, such as this, doesn't rely on mimicry or tired old devices but creates an original personality of its own making. It's a sensational one-man show, which pays homage to the finest performers in Burgundy, while adding fascinating characteristics from its birthplace. Fine, subtle and beautifully nuanced, with a seamless interplay between the sweet and savoury elements, it doesn't burst onto the scene, but tightens its hold line by line. A sensational wine with real star quality.



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£30.00

14% alc.

Pyramid Valley 'Calvert' Vineyard Pinot Noir, Marlborough, New Zealand 2008

The theory goes that if it rained Chateau Lafite every day, then people wouldn't raise their mouth to the sky. However, if you replaced Chateau Lafite with Pyramid Valley 'Calvert' Vineyard Pinot Noir, you'd find us performing a rain dance every day with our mouths wide open. The famous biodynamically farmed 'Calvert' vineyard in Central Otago is shared by only three producers, Felton Road, Craggy Range and Pyramid Valley. The grapes from there produce wines with extraordinary richness of flavour and fruit intensity and Mike Weersing has created a stunning Pinot Noir from beautiful raw materials. Swirling with raspberry, boysenberry, sour cherry, violets and Chinese spices, it's wonderfully effusive yet wrapped in a silky, medium- to full-bodied frame.



£38.00

14.5% alc.

Domaine Serene 'Evenstad Reserve' Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, Oregon 2006

It's more a matter of pride than shame to admit that this wine was brought to our attention by a customer. When it comes to recommendations, we police a two-way street and, despite the occasional head-on collision, we greatly appreciate all suggestions. Domaine Serene was a godsend, because no sooner had we signed on the dotted line than Jancis Robinson gave their 'Evenstad Reserve' equal top billing in her Oregon Pinot Noir report, resulting in a flood of enquiries so we hit the ground running. The 'Evenstad Reserve' is a blend of their finest barrels from each vintage and in 2006 the warm growing-season produced fully mature fruit of the highest quality. It's a luxury Pinot Noir.



£36.00

16% alc.



Alto Moncayo Garnacha, Campo de Borja, Spain 2006

If you are dissatisfied with the level of esteem in which you are currently held by your peers, then here's a wine to raise your status. Taking it to a friend's house is the equivalent of arriving at a party with Samuel L Jackson and Scarlett Johansson on each arm. Made from Garnacha vines planted in the 1940s and 50s, it is a hedonistic red from the ultra-fashionable region of Campo de Borja. Sensational aromas of malted barley, violets, blackcurrant cordial and white chocolate dominate on the nose, with some of the ethereal magic found in the aromas of rich red Burgundy. The palate is awash with creamy blackcurrants, vanilla, cinnamon and spiced orange all held in the grip of a gentle giant. There's no getting round the fact that it's a big wine, but it has an amazingly gentle grasp and the balance is such that it disguises its weight beautifully. It was aged in new French and American oak and bottled unfiltered.

£45.00

14% alc.

Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, Margaret River 2006

Not often do we celebrate low Robert Parker scores, but on this occasion there is ample reason to rejoice, because we believe that Mr P has completely overlooked this wine in recent vintages, meaning that its price has remained relatively low. Obviously, when discussing a £45 wine, the key word in here is 'relatively', but the quality is such that we have no hesitation in comparing it to the First Growths of Bordeaux, particularly the great Pauillacs of Chateau Lafite, Chateau Latour and Chateau Mouton-Rothschild. Now how does £45 look? Great wines perform conjuring tricks and this one manages to carry its intense and beautiful flavours on a breeze. It is mellow yet powerful, discreet yet indulgent. A heavenly concoction of dark fruits, cedar, loamy soil, orange liqueur, chocolate, mint and Indian spice.

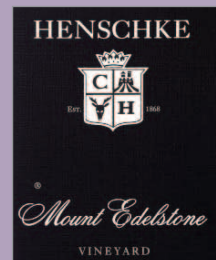


£47.00

14% alc.

Henschke Mount Edelstone Shiraz, Eden Valley, South Australia 2005

Stephen Henschke tells a lovely story about an old man who visited his winery and asked if he could buy a case or two. Stephen Henschke told him that he could only sell the current releases, which needed a few more years in bottle before they should be drunk. The old man looked a little crestfallen and replied,



"At my age, I don't even buy green bananas". The current release of Henschke's Mount Edelstone Shiraz is nothing short of a masterpiece and although it can be drunk now, thanks to the explosion of hedonistic fruit, it has ages ahead of it and easily matches the quality of their Hill of Grace 2004 at this stage of its life. It is made from low-yielding 100 year-old vines, which deliver great concentration and intense perfume involving blackcurrants, blueberries, chocolate, café latte, sage, black pepper, star anise and sweet plum. With Penfolds Grange and Henschke's Hill of Grace both selling for over £300 a bottle, you could argue that this is a bargain!

red

to order email wine@swig.co.uk

£68.00

14% alc.



Brunello di Montalcino Cupano, Tuscany, Italy 2004

Anyone for a bit of deductive reasoning? Great people make great wine. Lionel Cousin and Ornella Tondini are great people. You don't have to be Aristotle to reach the conclusion. For us, it's vital to know that our wines are in the hands of honest, diligent, ambitious and talented producers and our friends at Cupano comfortably fulfil each criterion. Sweet perfume surges from the glass of their Brunello 2004, with scented wisps of vanilla, leather, toasted wood and sweet cherry. The palate continues the seduction with rich, dark, brooding flavours and although the nose invites you to dive in immediately, the palate raises an upturned palm, because, while it's deceptively approachable, it will improve considerably for further cellaring and will be drinking at its best between 2013 and 2020.

"There is no doubt that Cupano is one of the most exciting discoveries I have made in the past ten years." Ian d'Agata of The International Wine Academy

£78.00

17% alc.

Amarone Carlo Ferragu, Veneto, Italy 2005

Lock up your daughters! Mad, bad and dangerous to know, this extraordinary Amarone is like drinking Lord Byron's stag night. Weighing in at a massive 17% alcohol, the grapes spent 90 days drying on straw mats before fermentation, whereupon the wine then wallowed in American oak barrels for a further three years. It's incredibly rich and powerful, with intense flavours of scented damson, Venezuelan chocolate, chestnut puree and orange cream. It's a 'sublime' wine, in the sense defined by certain poets during the Romantic period, as a combination of the grotesque and the beautiful. There is no escaping the fact that it's a wine that needs to buy its shoes from a specialist shop, but it has such a bold and winning character that you can't help falling in love with it. Beauty and the beast rolled into one.



sweet

to order call freephone **08000 272 272**

£14.50

14% alc.

Malvasia Puntinata 'Stillato', Pallavicini, Lazio, Italy 2007 (50cl)

In his guide to The Best Wines of Italy, Ian d'Agata describes Stillato as "one of Italy's greatest dessert wines", which is to be hailed a king among kings, because no country makes a greater variety of mouthwatering sweet wines than Italy. This beauty is produced in tiny quantities from the Malvasia Puntinata grape, air-dried on mats and then barrel-fermented to produce a velvety smooth, scintillatingly fresh nectar tasting of tangerine, apricot preserve, honeysuckle and spiced orange. Ian d'Agata recommends drinking it with ricotta tart with chestnut honey or raisin sponge cake with honeyed goat's cheese – available at your local Costcutters.



£19.50

10.5% alc.

Mullineux Straw Wine, Swartland, South Africa 2008 (37.5cl)

Typical! The one wine on this list of which we have barely any stock and some doofus from Robert Parker's Wine Advocate gives it 96 points and proclaims it to be the equal of Chateau Yquem 1986. No sooner has the article been published, than the phone begins to ring and our carefully-balanced demand-versus-supply scales come crashing down to earth. Made from air-dried Chenin Blanc, this South African version of a vin de paille is sumptuously sweet (289 g/l RS) and suffused with rich apricot marmalade, peach, honeysuckle and toasted almond flavours given a charge of brilliant acidity to retain its precision. Sadly, we can only spare 3 bottles per customer.



£38.00

14% alc.

Summum de Chateau La Bertrande, Cadillac 2001 (75cl)

This amazing little wine must really frustrate the people at Chateau d'Yquem. In the annual Fleurus Guide, one of France's most prestigious wine guides compiled by the country's top sommeliers, it consistently beats or equals Yquem. Scoring 19 out of 20 for the 2001 vintage, David has hit Goliath right between the eyes yet again. Not bad at £38.00 per bottle, compared to £400.00 for the famous Sauternes. The grapes for the Summum were picked, not bunch by bunch, but berry by berry, and the result is liquid gold. It exhibits a delirious display of saffron, quince jelly, orange syrup and jasmine. The palate is full-bodied and unctuous yet silky, with a thrilling acidity and a finish that goes on until dawn.

