

raise a
glass with Jane Clare



SPRING has spring and vipped! I want to spring into the garden to celebrate. Well that might be a bit optimistic. When I had a practice run last weekend my finger nails were numb in five minutes.

I clasped a glass of heavy red through slippy mittens and imagined what it would be like if the sun was shining and the icy wind dipped. I'm no weather girl, but I doubt you'll have any better luck in the spring sunshine makes this weekend. Here's a clutch of outdoor reds to wait to clutch, as you wait for warmer weather.

First up, a couple from M&S. Journey's Lind Kendall Lodge Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2012 (£8 from £10 until April 6) is a vibrantly juicy, luggable red. Go for it, try it in the chilly garden if you dare. I did, and a very pleasant cream and soft vanilla, oil finished with a sprinkling bite of spice.

Frances Priorat 2013 (£11 from £14 M&S, until April 6) is a no-nonsense red from grapes grown on the extraordinary slopes of Priorat in northeast Spain. This vintage won a silver at last year's International Wine Challenge. It's a juicy young fresh tangle of easy-drinking fruits with brambly berries, liquorice, and a brush of herbs.

Sangre de Toro (RIP £7.99 from Tesco, Waitrose and Asda) is so-called as Torres' tribute to Bacchus, the Roman god of wine otherwise known as son of the bull. It is chokka with velvety ripe fruit with toasty notes embraced by flavours of blackberry jam. A very scrummy and warming wine.

How about early spring garden whites? I'm not suggesting bright, squeaky and citrusy choices, let's save those until the warm weather is on.

Christopher Piper Wines) Yes, they make white Beaujolais too. This is 100% chardonnay and the grapes are fermented in old barrels and kept on the lees for eight months. This makes for a creamy mouthfeel, alongside aromas of apricot and blossoms in bloom.

Commonly, you'll find in Los Boldos Block 7 Sauvignon Blanc 2012 (£13.95, www.stirp.co.uk) is a hand-on hips "look at me" sauvignon blanc which has typical statements of gooseberry, grapefruit, but with a level of complexity, elegance and substance which raises it above other knife-edge, sometimes shrill, sauvignon blancs.

Great for gardens, chilly or otherwise. Garden pink?

Well, we can dream can't we? You can't do better than to sink into a garden chair with a blush of a sunshine pink, listen to the birds sing, see the sun glint off your glass. OK, I'm a few weeks ahead of this dream. Pour a glass and watch The Voice from the comfort of your Saturday sofa.

Lindauer New Zealand Sparkling Rose NV (Co-op, £9.99) is a sparkle with a spring (see what I did there) in its step and is a blend of great nose and pinotage. It has had bottle

fermentation, so has been in contact with the lees to add a rich yeasty nose. It's a really nice strawberry creamy fizz with zesty bubbles.

A light, light pink, Watrose Provence Roseé (£8.99) is crisp, dry, and enjoys a good chill. Don't think in your face sweet strawberries and red fruits; think subtle hints of red fruits from this blend of grenache, cinsault, and syrah.

A little aside... last week I mentioned the Hiltop Premium Pinot Grigio. Kirshstain from the Co-op and didn't give you the price. If you lovely folks are of the mind to try it, it's a simple £4.79.



Journey's End Kendall Lodge Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot

Beaujolais-Blanc Clos de Rochebonne Château Thivin 2013, (£14.57

YORK can contact me at jane@onefontinthe grapes.co.uk

Beaujolais-Blanc Clos de Rochebonne Château Thivin 2013, (£14.57

Christopher Piper Wines) Yes, they make white Beaujolais too. This is 100% chardonnay and the grapes are fermented in old barrels and kept on the lees for eight months. This makes for a creamy mouthfeel, alongside aromas of apricot and blossoms in bloom.