

LIFESTYLE



Bunch of rosés and more for your Valentine

LIGHTHEARTED, lively and tasty should be the watchwords for wines this weekend, as St Valentine's Day comes round once again. Many men, even ageing romantics like myself, like to mark the event as a special one, albeit obviously much more low-key than other much bigger celebrations like Christmas and the arrival of the New Year.

Today's suggestions include an aptly named French red, plus other red, pink and white wines, some with a sparkle.

Beginning on a top note, there's Champagne Jacquart Brut Monie Rose NV (12.5 per cent, £30.70, 130 Sainsbury's).

This distinguished, stylish pink champagne comes in a new gift box released in the autumn to celebrate the brand's 50th anniversary. It is an elegant glassfull, with touches of cherry and wild strawberry in the flavour, and a really pale pink colour.

Clouds of tiny bubbles and a fresh exuberance should help any celebration get off to a great start.

It's also an appealing aperitif, or accompaniment for oysters, the traditional 'food of love'.

This champagne is aged for three to four years, and I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed a glass two or three weeks before St Valentine's Day. The blend features chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier.



ALL ABOUT WINE

BY PETER HOMER

The aptly named wine mentioned above is Sainte-Amour Domaine des Pierres Jean Francois Trichard 2013 (13 per cent, £12.95, Tanners). This sprightly, juicy, vibrant Beaujolais, just the ticket to bring a smile to the face, has aromas with hints of violets.

It is made from grapes grown on old vines. A special St Valentine's Day cuvée is created every year. Twenty to 25 per cent of production is drunk over February 14 in France and other countries.

A pair of other wines from the Beaujolais region also caught my eye, and taster's as ideal for companionable consumption.

Both are produced in the Cote de Brouilly, and situated on Mont Brouilly.

Cote de Brouilly Chateau This is Cuvée Godefroy 2011 (13 per cent, £16.95, Berry Bros and Rudd) comes from the oldest estate on the slopes of Mont Brouilly.

It's an invigorating, intensely coloured red, made from 90 year old vines - a concentrated, deeply fruity wine, with a bouquet hinting at blackberries and blueberries.

Cote de Brouilly Jean-Paul Brun Domaine des Terres Dorées 2013 (12.5 per cent, £12.80, Savage Selection) offers aromas of cherries, and fulsome, upfront tastes of the same fruit.

A fresh and well balanced red wine, also with the characteristic Brouilly depth.

I sipped a glass before dinner all by itself, lightly chilled.

Blank pink are the two words that often come to mind for February 14.

They refer, of course, to rose wines, whose beguiling colours, ranging from deep pink to a faint blush, make them a preferred choice for many couples.

I picked four examples available at the Majestic Wine Warehouse, three of them currently at reduced prices.

Cuvée de Richard Rosé Pays d'Herault 2013 (12.5 per cent, £5.99) is made mainly from the climatic grape, with a small amount of muscat,

rown in the Languedoc. It's dry and crisp, with strawberry notes, plus an extra shot of fruity flavour contributed by the dash of muscat.

From Italy comes Breganze Pinot Grigio Rose 2013 (12.5 per cent, £2.99, or £5.74 each when you buy two until April 27). Minimum purchase at Majestic is six mixed bottles. Pinot grigio grape skins naturally develop a pale pink colour when the fruit is ripe. There are light, fresh fruit tastes, ideal for sippies before a meal - or when nibbling each other; I suppose, on St Valentine's Day.

On to a sparkling rose and Extra par Langlois Rose VV Cressant de Loire (12.5 per cent, £14.99, or £9.99 each when you buy two until April 27).

The Langlois chateau, owned by the Bollinger family since 1974, is one of the Loire's top producers of sparkling wine.

This one has a peachy pink colour, with tastes of raspberries and other summer fruits.

Finally a pink champagne - Oeil de Perdrix Rose NV (12 per cent, £25, or £16.96 when you buy two until March 26). The name means 'partridge's eye' and it is made from pinot noir and chardonnay.

The colour is pale salmon pink, and the style light and delicate. A price tag of £16.96 sounds pretty reasonable to me for a decent champagne.



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