



REYNOLDS RECOMMENDS

A blog by the Wednesday Swindle's favourite wine expert and all round nice guy David 'Sommelier' Reynolds.

December 2020 Reynolds Recommends.....

Kopke Reserve Tawny Port

Such a shame that we won't be able to have our customary Christmas knees-up together this year, but no matter, I have found the perfect bottle with which to toast your golfing achievements, to forget your hacking horrors or even as a present.

Kopke is the oldest Port House in Portugal, established in 1638 by Nicalau Kopke of Hamburg. They have established a reputation for first class Colheita ports; tawny port made exclusively from grapes harvested in the same vintage year. Their striking and differently shaped black glass bottles with simple white paint lettering have become iconic in the world of wine. However, there are two factors which make this wine a total winner this Christmas. First, it is absolutely gorgeous with a fragrant nose and rich, spiced golden raisin palate. Secondly, between 2-16 December, you can get a bottle of this nectar from Waitrose for only £10!!! That, dear reader has to be the bargain of 2020!!

Now, I know how much my Christmas "Stickies" have been appreciated at previous gatherings, I know that it can sometimes be difficult to get hold of my recommendations and I know that this wine will sell out, fast. Therefore, I am taking the initiative and ordering a dozen bottles from Waitrose Cellar. I will keep two of those for myself and offer the other 10 bottles to you, strictly first come first served. Email me david@novatum.co.uk to reserve your bottle.

Happy Christmas everyone.

October 2020 Reynolds Recommends.....

Famille Perrin, Les Cardinaux, 2017

From the Southern Rhone Valley where the makers, Family Perrin, have established a first class reputation going back five generations. Their top wine, Chateauneuf du Pape from Chateau de Beaucastel, retails for around £60 a bottle for current vintage. I was fortunate enough to have shared a bottle of that wine recently, from 2001 vintage, which would cost you around £400 a bottle if you bought it today.

This wine is not a CNDP but it is made with similar grape varieties (a blend of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre) harvested from the regions better terroirs. It won't break the bank either. At £10 this represents excellent value but, with the 25% off any 6 bottles at Tesco until 5 November, it's a steal!

A full bodied, luscious wine with bags of black fruit on the nose. The black cherry, plum and dried fruit flavours mingle harmoniously on the palate with hints of black pepper, sweet spices and silky tannins to leave one with a lengthy and satisfying finish. With autumn now well established, and winter on the way, this well crafted wine will be a fine accompaniment to roast meat, casseroles and heartier fare or just enjoy a glass in front of the fire!

July 2020 Reynolds Recommends.....

L'Arène des Anges, Costières de Nîmes, Rosé

I previously enjoyed the spicy red wine from this producer so, when I spotted this rosé from them, I had to try it. Made from a blend of Grenache and Syrah grapes typical of this Southern Rhone Appellation. It's dry but with plenty of flavour, a refreshing mixture of ripe peach and raspberry. A new arrival at Waitrose and currently on offer (25% off) for £6.69. Well chilled, this makes a lovely aperitif on a warm summer evening. Santé!

October 2019 Reynolds Recommends.....

Terre di Faiano, Primitivo Salento IGP, 2018

I'm really pleased with my latest find, currently available from Waitrose at £7.49; that's 25% off the regular price. This full bodied wine is made from organic Primitivo grapes from the Southern Italian region of Puglia. Deep ruby red in colour with an inviting nose of rich dark fruit, the wine has a silky texture and bold, spicy flavours of dark cherries, vanilla and chocolate. There is a slight underlying sweetness to the finish which keeps you coming back for more. This is a wine for cold autumn nights if ever there was one. Like most Italian reds it will pair well with tomato based dishes. I tried it with a few bits of parmesan cheese....absolutely delicious!

May 2019 Reynolds Recommends.....

Co-op Irresistible 30° Pinot Noir, Casablanca Valley, Chile 2018

Pinot Noir can be quite temperamental. Get it right and it can produce some very elegant and rewarding wines. Frankly, I have given up on French Pinot because, to get anything worthwhile, a price tag in excess of £30 is to be expected. These days I look either to New Zealand or to Chile for quality and value. One of my favourite Chilean Pinots is called 20 Barrels and that weighs in around the £20 mark. Decanter Magazine rated this wine recently, alongside my favourite, as a stand out, but at only £8 a bottle. I simply had to try some and I recommend you do too!

A lightly extracted and medium bodied wine, it is a relatively simple but perfectly pitched expression of the variety, full of moreish summer fruits and herbal, even minty notes. It is refreshing but succulent with a fascinating bittersweet finish. This drinks very well on its own but would excel with roasted or barbecued pork and lamb. It is in stock at Southdown Coop and will be the best value wine you buy this year. Top tip: open, and decant if possible, to aerate and bring out the flavour, at least an hour before drinking.

December 2018 Reynolds Recommends.....

Roca Alata Amerone Della Valpolicella DOCG 2015

From near Verona in the Veneto region of North East Italy this wine is produced by Cantina di Soave, one of the oldest co-operatives in Italy founded 1898.

Valpolicella wine is made with a blend of Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara grapes.

Amerone Della Valpolicella is one of my favourite Italian reds, produced using the Passito method. Grapes are harvested in whole bunches which are laid out on mats or racks to dry naturally. The process takes several months during which time the grapes become partially desiccated. Pressing and fermentation follow. The wine is then matured in oak barrels before bottling.

The result is a rich and concentrated wine with incredible depth of flavour. Medium ruby red with a nose of cherry and red fruits. The palate is complex. Cherry, plum, chocolate and tobacco with a hint of spice on the finish. Tannins are soft and alcohol is high but the wine is well balanced and elegant.

This one came from Tesco at the very reasonable price of £14 a bottle. Drink with grilled or roast meats, game and mature cheese. A perfect partner for venison.

Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira

From the Portuguese Island of Madeira, situated in The Atlantic Ocean some 400 miles off the coast of North Africa. Blandy's, established 1811, is the leading producer of premium quality Madeira and is still owned and managed by direct descendants of the founder, John Blandy.

Made from the local Tinta Negra grape, the wine is fortified using grape brandy to arrest fermentation with high residual sugar. Oxidative aging in "estufa" tanks is followed by three years aging in oak barrels.

Deep golden brown in colour it has honey and raisins on the nose. Rich, full bodied and soft textured, it has flavours of toffee, raisins, date and fig.

George, Duke of Clarence, was the brother of King Henry IV. A drinker of considerable capacity and reputation, this was his favourite style of wine. Unfortunately, he was accused of plotting against his Brother, The King, and was imprisoned in The Tower of London awaiting execution. In 1478 it was rumoured that he had asked to be drowned in a butt of "Malmsey" (the name then given to Madeira wine) rather than to be beheaded, as was the normal practice. The rumour was later substantiated when the body was exhumed and found to be intact.

This fine wine is a superb accompaniment to soft cheeses and sweet delicacies of the season, such as Christmas cake, mince pies and chocolates. It also makes a fine after dinner drink.

October 2018 Reynolds Recommends.....

Veuve Monsigny Champagne Brut NV

Everyone likes a drop of champagne over the festive period. This one hits the spot without costing a fortune.

The wine has been a top performer in my popular "Posh vs Plonk" tastings. Tasted blind against so-called "premium brand" Champagnes, costing up to three times as much, over 75% of tasters said they preferred it. In fact, an even higher percentage of tasters said they thought it was the more expensive wine!

The French would call it a "Marque d'Acheteur", i.e. it is produced for the seller, under the seller's own label, by Philizot et Fils. Never heard of them? They've been helped by Uncle Gerard, former Head of Winemaking at top champagne house Lanson, since 2002. He certainly knows what he's doing.

Classic, fresh nose of green apple and lemon, with a fabulous biscuity palate. The perfect aperitif and accompaniment to your smoked salmon. Stock up at Aldi for £11.49 a bottle before they run out. Top tip: beat the crowds – order online with free delivery on 6 bottles or more.

September 2018 Reynolds Recommends.....

La Réveil Cabernet Sauvignon

Our long, hot summer has developed a faintly autumnal feel. Minds turn towards winter and all that brings. Sameer has mentioned our Christmas “do” and Jane MacQuitty, wine writer for The Times, listed this one amongst her top 50 “Wines for Winter”. I’ll go with that.

This simple wine is made of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes originating from the South of France. Cab Sauv is a versatile grape and, made in this accessible style, results in a soft, fruity and satisfying wine. The beguiling aroma of blackcurrant and blackberry is very typical of this famous variety. Medium in body, dry, and moderately tannic, this quaffable wine is also a winner with steak, casseroles and other winter fare. £5.99 a bottle, from Waitrose. Why not give it a try?

July 2018 Reynolds Recommends.....

J P Chenet Cincault Grenache Rosé

Now that I’ve broken the back of our “Kitchen refurbishment”, I thought it was high time to pick up where I left off on the blog. That thought came across me the morning after an unusually busy night at the sharp end of my research programme into wines of the world.

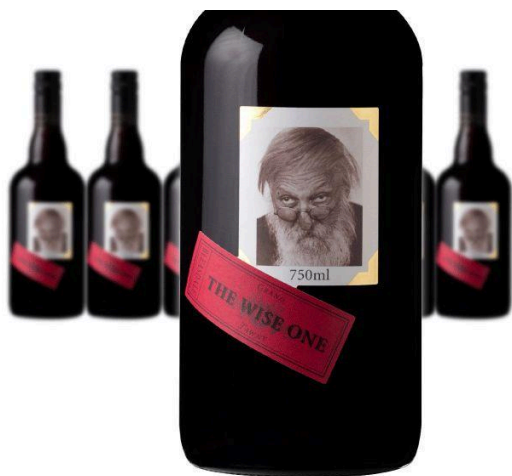
Rosé is the fermented juice of red grapes. Having had only brief contact with the skins, it takes on a tinge of colour, light, subtle aromas and fresh flavours that hint of the fruit from which it originated.

J P Chenet have blended Cincault and Grenache from the sun drenched South of France to produce a fresh, fruity but dry rosé. The nose has strawberries but there’s pear too, that comes through on the palate as pear drops, mingling with other red fruit flavours and a hint of cherry. The strawberry comes through on the finish.

This wine won’t break the bank at £5.35 a bottle from Sainsburys. To be enjoyed, in the sunshine, on its own or with light foods such as poached salmon and salad. Perfect.

Christmas 2017 Reynolds Recommends.....

a. Bleasedale Vineyards, The Wise One



Clearly inspired by members of the Wednesday Swindle, this Aussie sticky has a symphony of Christmasy flavours to delight the palate.

A fortified wine is not just for Christmas.....it’s a MUST for Christmas!

This one comes all the way from Langhorne Creek in South Australia where The Potts Family have been making wine since 1850.

The grape variety is Verdehlo, a white grape that is widely grown in Portugal and gives its name to one of the four main types of Madeira wine. Unsurprising, then, that the style of this wine lies somewhere between a Madeira Verdehlo and a Tawny Port. The wine was matured in small oak casks, for ten years, stored under the winery’s hot, tin roof; giving it a similar colour and character to its European counterparts.

Colour: The once lemon verdehlo is now light mahogany from 10 years of oxidative aging in oak casks

Nose: Toffee, fruitcake, vanilla and nuts.

Palate: Lusciously sweet with fig, raisins, caramel and a marmalade tang

Finish: Spirity, tending towards mocha coffee and sweet spice

This indulgent, fortified wine is perfect as an after-dinner treat and will happily partner mince pies, Christmas pudding or cheese.....Happy Christmas!

The Wine Society, £11.50 a bottle

b. San Antolin Reserva 2010



From the viticultural paradise of NW Spain, a beautifully made wine that is extremely versatile. Have a few bottles of this in for Christmas and you've got it covered!

Navarra, the less well known neighbour to Rioja, produces some very good wines and this is no exception. Like most Spanish wine, this is a blend. However, unlike all Rioja wines, it doesn't use tempranillo; only Graciano is borrowed from the Riojan recipe. The other varieties are more typically found in the wines of Bordeaux; Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. A Reserva wine must have spent at least 12 months in oak and a total of 3 years aging before release.

Colour: Vibrant ruby tinged with purple. Bright and inviting the glass.

Nose: The rich cherry fruit nose combines beautifully with an elegant, vanilla aroma that suggests considerably more oak contact than 12 months.

Palate: The initial impression is of fruit, and bags of it, lasting well into the finish. However, there are more subtle, secondary flavours, from the oak, such as tobacco which will only develop further if left in bottle. Tannins are fairly firm but well balanced with the fruit and acidity.

Finish: The fresh, cherry flavours and mouth watering acidity stay with you and keep you coming back for more.

A hugely versatile wine that will pair well with anything meaty or cheesy and is soft enough to work well on its own.

Waitrose, £9.99 a bottle

November 2017: Reynolds Recommends....Gérard Bertrand Minervois 2015

Now that my kitchen refurb project is nearing completion, I thought it high time to come forward with another recommendation. I happened to be in Waitrose this morning and spotted a wine, I have previously enjoyed, with 25% off.

This one is made in the Languedoc region of Southern France by Gérard Bertrand, a former French international rugby player and passionate advocate of the lifestyle and gastronomie of his home region.

The deep ruby colour, tinged with purple, looks very inviting in the glass. The nose has bags of black berry fruit but I picked up some herbs and the peppery aroma one associates with Syrah, of which this is blended with Grenache and Carignan. Full bodied and smooth on the palate the black fruit gives way to more subtle and complex flavours on the lengthy finish.

A super wine for Autumn, drink with pretty much any red meat or cheese. Top notch, in my humble opinion, and currently on Waitrose shelves for £7.49.

April 2017: Reynolds Recommends.....Wines for summer drinking (Rosé)

Someone of my acquaintance asked me, recently, where had I been to acquire what I would regard as a modest tan. I certainly didn't get it in Copenhagen, I replied. It got me thinking. We have been blessed with some lovely, sunny, Spring days for our Wednesday golf. Could this be a sign of things to come? Maybe, just maybe, we will have a warm, sunny summer this year. This idle thought prompted my current theme for the Swindle Blog. In my humble opinion, few wines conjure the spirit of summer drinking better than Rosé.

Rosé is the fermented juice of red grapes. Having had only brief contact with the skins, it takes on a tinge of colour, light, subtle aromas and fresh flavours that only hint of the fruit from which it originated.

I took myself off to Rollings Wine in Station Road, Harpenden, and bought a selection of light rosé wines which I have tasted to bring you my pick of the bunch: Pecheron Grenache Rosé, 2016, from Swartland, South Africa. The product of low yielding, old vines once farmed with Pecheron draft horses, both now a rare breed. Pale salmon in colour with a light, strawberry/peach nose, this wine is dry, with subtle strawberry flavours, and supremely refreshing. To be enjoyed, in the sunshine, on its own or with light foods such as poached salmon and salad. £6.95 a bottle. Perfect.

January 2017: Reynold Recommends Rioja

Wines of Bodegas Beronia, Rioja, Spain

When I was asked to choose some wine for Keith and John, on behalf of the Wednesday Swindle group, I decided to play it safe. Rioja is, arguably, Spain's most well known and popular wine region, and rightly so. However, with different styles to choose from, I thought I would pick one of my favourite producers and let the illustrious pair explore some different styles from their range.

Bodegas Beronia is a relatively young producer, having been founded in 1973. Their winery is located in the heart of the Rio Alta sub-region, and they have 900 hectares of prime vineyard sites surrounding it. The climate and soil in this area are ideal for producing the grapes authorised to make Rioja wine, largely Tempranillo, with small quantities of Graciano, Mazuelo, Garnacha and Viura also used in blending.

Tempranillo can produce wines with the structure of Cabernet Sauvignon and the fruitiness of Grenache. However, to understand the wines of Rioja one needs to know about their classification system and that is all about oak-aging. In basic terms, the simpler, fruitier styles spend little, or no, time aging in oak whereas the more structured and complex styles will have spent longer in oak. The four tier classification is as follows, Rioja Yoven – youthful wine that has not been aged in oak. Low in tannin, light in style, full of zippy fruit and showing the true varietal characteristics of Tempranillo, this wine is ideal for regular consumption with or without food.

Crianza – wine that has spent at least a year in cask, generally used barrels, and a few months in bottle, where the oak influence is not too pronounced. With some structure and body, still fruity and not too rich. Beronia Crianza is cherry in colour with a fruity nose. It is a “fruit forward” style with vanilla and sweet spice highlights from its oak contact. Try with tapas, including dry cured Iberian ham.

Reserva – most makers use carefully selected fruit in these wines which will have been aged for a minimum of 3 years of which at least 1 year will have been in cask, generally new barrels. Beronia Reserva is aged in new barrels, made with American oak staves and French oak tops, for 20 months. It has an intense ruby colour. It has an attractive nose with candied fruit and plum with sweet aromas such as chocolate. The characteristic notes of the Tempranillo variety, cherry and strawberry, accompanied by liquorice, dominate and fill the mouth. The balanced acidity and silky tannins guarantee a long finish from this elegant wine. Ideal with roast meat or game.

Gran Reserva – most makers use only their best fruit in these wines which will have been aged for a minimum of 2 years in cask, usually best quality, new, French oak barrels, and 3 years in bottle. The wines have a tannic structure which makes them suitable for extended bottle aging. Beronia Gran Reserva has a deep maroon colour. Intense and complex on the nose with dried fruits, such as dates, standing out over a base of chocolate and sweet spice from the French oak. Silky and meaty on the palate, with pleasant tannins giving structure and

complexity. This wine has body, elegance and intense flavours. Ideal with red meat, game, strong cheeses and even chocolate desserts, it should be decanted before serving. I have just received the latest edition of Decanter magazine which, purely by coincidence, has a feature on the wines of Rioja. The feature contains results of a large panel tasting, in which Beronia Gran Reserva 2008 was "Highly Recommended". The judges comments were as follows "A ripe and subtle palate is marked by distinctive American oak ageing and feathery, tender tannins. Deliciously suave in mouth, it is a jewel of clear Rioja gran reserva identity".

October 27 Reynolds Recommends.....USA

North American wine, where to start? Well, the obvious place would be California; nearly 90% of all American wine comes from there. In the infamous blind tasting "Judgement of Paris" of 1976, a panel of, largely, French wine experts judged selected Californian wines to be superior to their French counterparts. Now hideously over-priced, in my opinion, most Californian wine makers have become far too big for their cowboy boots! Nevertheless, red Zinfandel is the sensibly priced option from the region and can be excellent. Look for wines from the Lodi sub-region.

Tastes, and styles, have moved on from the 1970's and there are some fabulous wines being made, today, in other parts of the USA, at accessible prices.

Oregon is a State which has a justifiably good reputation for some excellent Pinot Noir and for some of the aromatic white varieties. Look for wines from the Willamette Valley. A little further North is Washington State, another wine region with a good reputation, where many different varieties are successfully vinified.

On the East side, New York State, where the climate is cooler, also has a good reputation for Pinot Noir. Look for wines from the Finger Lakes sub-region. Further North from there and you are in Canada; heaven for "Icewine". An incredibly pure form of dessert wine, vinified from frozen grapes where the grape must is concentrated by removing ice crystals. Look out for it.

October 16 Reynolds Recommends.....Wines for spicy food

As threatened, the evening included a tasting of two wines which I put forward as worthy partners to spicy food. Here is recap with details of the wines.

Ask a room full of wine enthusiasts what they would recommend to accompany curry and you would likely get different answers, ranging from "anything goes" to "forget it, drink lager instead" and everything in between.

One reason for this is that the term "curry" encompasses such a wide range of styles, ingredients and degrees of spicyness. There is quite difference between a creamy, chicken tikka massala and a tomato rich lamb rogon, for example. Another reason, of course, is that, in the end, it all comes down to personal preference.

These are two wines that I like anyway but which I thought it would be fun to try with our Indian food.

Cono Sur, Reserva Especial, Riesling, 2016 – Bio Bio Valley, Chile

This is versatile wine. Its nose is principally citrus (lemon, grapefruit) with some stone fruit (apricot, peach) and floral notes. The palate is intense and the fruity flavours hint of sweetness in what is otherwise a dry/off dry style, well balanced with medium acidity. The body is quite full, for a white wine, it has a nice mouth-feel and a long, harmonious finish. Try this one with chicken tikka massala and hotter chicken curries like madras. It will also go well with Thai food, such as red chicken curry. Tesco £9.00, ordered online.

Domaine des Bassets, Morgon AOC, 2015 – Beaujolais, France

Morgon is recognised as one of the Beaujolais "Crus" producing wines of fuller body, but is still only a medium bodied wine. The nose is very fruity, with notes of strawberry and raspberry. The palate is dry, with medium acidity, an abundance of red fruit flavours and hints of liquorice. Made from "old vine" Gamay, this wine has a structure and grip so often lacking in lesser wines from the region. My advice would be to try with tomato based

curries such as lamb rogan or bhuna. Try serving it slightly chilled, especially if you like your curry on the hotter side!

Waitrose Cellar £11.99, currently on special offer for £8.99 (great value), through the website, not on the shelf in Harpenden Waitrose.

August 2016 : Reynolds Recommends.....Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore DOC 2013

I uncorked a bottle of this wine and was moved to write this missive as I sip.

You may have gathered, by now, that I generally favour wines made by the French. However, I do have a soft spot for red wines of Italian origin. My favourite Italian red is called Amarone....you may have heard of it. Essentially, it is Valpolicella with a difference. Grapes for Amarone are laid out on mats, to dry in the sun, before pressing; a method that is known as Passito. The result is a rich and concentrated wine with incredible richness and depth of flavour, and a price tag to match (rarely will you see Amarone at less than £20 a bottle and often for significantly more).

The Italians are a resourceful lot, and the wonderful pulp that remains after a Passito pressing does not go to waste. They re-ferment ordinary Valpolicella wine (a blend of Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara grapes) on Amarone pulp to produce a wine which lies somewhere between the ordinary and the extraordinary, if you see what I mean. They call it Ripasso. The process gives additional colour, texture, flavour and alcohol to what can, sometimes, be a rather insipid wine.

A while back, I bought a couple of bottles of Ripasso from Aldi. I didn't expect that much...worth a try I thought...and, boy, was I right. This Ripasso wine has a wonderful fruity bouquet, tinged with the aromas from 18 months aging in French oak barriques. The palate is full of rich cherry and plum fruit flavours, with soft tannins, and an incredible length, which has an elegant nutty finish. Closer to an Amarone than a bog standard Valpol.

I know people in Harpenden who don't want to be seen with an Aldi carrier bag. Do yourself a favour, forget all that nonsense and get some of this cracking wine without delay. £8 a bottle. You'd be mad not to give it a try! As always, I do appreciate your feedback...good or bad.

July 2016 Reynolds Recommends.....World Wine Awards 2016

Groups of experts have laboured through weeks of wine tasting to bring Decanter Magazine subscribers the World Wine Awards 2016. I haven't tried them myself (yet!) but here is a selection of medal winners, at sensible prices, available through normal outlets.

Red

- La Moneda Reserva Malbec, Central Valley, Chile 2015 (£5.75 from Asda) Platinum
- Vidal-Fleury, Côtes du Rhône, France 2013 (£9.99 from Majestic) Platinum
- Waitrose, Mellow and Fruity, Campo de Borja, Spain 2015 (£4.99 from Waitrose) Silver

White

- De Martino, Colinas Old Vine Field Blend, Itata Valley, Chile 2014 (£10.00 from M&S) Platinum
- Dias de Verano, Reserva Muscat, Itata Valley, Chile 2015 (£6.99 from The Co-Op) Platinum
- Château de Fesles, Lot 12 Chenin Blanc, Anjou, Loire, France 2013 (£9.99 from Aldi) Silver

Rose

- Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Bordeaux Rosé, France 2015 (£8.00 from Sainsbury's) Bronze

Please give feedback if you get the chance to try any. There are 260 pages (!) devoted to the subject so only possible to include a few here (all under £10 from supermarkets). Let me know your favourite wine type or style and I'll gladly identify some options for you! Happy drinking.....

June 23rd 2016: Reynolds Recommends.....Quinta do Noval Extra Dry White Port

Quinta do Noval lies in the heart of the Douro Valley where they have made great ports since 1715. The grapes for Noval White come from cooler, northerly vineyards, at altitude, which are more suited to growing white grapes. A blend of indigenous varietals was used to make this wine, including Malvasia Fina, Gouveio, Rabigato and Godega.

Pale straw in colour, with an intense and fruity bouquet of stone fruit and honeysuckle, the palate is a mix of tropical fruit and floral, elderflower notes. This is a well balanced wine in which the alcohol (19.5%), sweetness and acidity combine to give freshness and a long finish.

"What does Reynolds think he's doing, recommending port in the middle of summer?" I hear you ask. Let me tell you, this light and elegant port makes an excellent, long summer drink when served over a few ice cubes, mixed with chilled tonic water, finished with a slice of lemon and a few mint leaves. It also makes a fine aperitif, served chilled, on its own; ideal with a few salted nuts. Why not give it a try? Rollings Wine Company (Station Road, Harpenden) have this on the shelf, priced at £10.45 a bottle.

April 24th 2016: Reynolds Recommends.....Cuvée Royale Brut Crémant de Limoux NV

Sparkling wine was created by accident, and not by the Champagnois! Pierre (Dom) Pérignon, a Benedictine monk who, in the late 17th century, was master of the abbey cellars at Hautvillers, in the Champagne region of France, is often given credit for "inventing" sparkling wine. He certainly contributed to the development of sparkling wine, as a product, but didn't invent it. In fact, it was the monks of Saint-Hilaire, near Limoux in South West France, who discovered and first pioneered sparkling wine around 1530.

Fitting, then, that we should feature a delicious sparkling wine from the South West of France where it all began. This is a particularly good example of Crémant (the general term given to sparkling wine from appellations other than Champagne). Like Champagne, all crémants are made using the "methode traditionnelle" in which wine undergoes a secondary fermentation in bottle. The process imparts subtle aromas and flavours to the wine from yeast contact, often interpreted as bready or toasty characteristics, and, results in that all important fizz!

Coming from the warm region of Languedoc Roussillon, this wine is richer in character than typical, non vintage Champagne. However, with a core of 70% chardonnay (one of the classic Champagne varieties), it also has that dry, citrusy style we associate with quality sparkling wine. Chenin Blanc (20%) and Pinot Noir (10%) complete the blend. Chenin adds an orchard fruit element and the Pinot gives a hint of strawberry. The end result is sublime, with subtle notes of brioche coming through on the finish. A perfect aperitif, an ideal party starter, and definitely something for a summer evening, a bottle of this delicious wine can be yours from Waitrose for a mere £8.99 whilst the current offer lasts.

April 20th 2016: Reynolds Recommends.....Vinalba Reservado Cabernet Sauvignon Malbec Merlot 2013

Three traditional Bordeaux varieties were crafted into this outstanding wine from the Mendoza region of Argentina. A backbone of 60% cabernet sauvignon provides black fruit notes, elegance and structure. Malbec, which has become the country's No 1 variety, adds a spicy complexity, whilst lower tannin merlot grapes soften the blend and contribute to its full body. Bursting with juicy, ripe, black fruit flavours, it has a subtle, toasty finish

from 12 months aging in oak barrels. An ideal partner to steak, other red meat or mature cheese, you can currently pick up a bottle of this lovely wine from Sainsburys at the incredible offer price of £8.00!