

	Welcome: Season 2024/25 Week 5: New year , New wine 28 th January 2025	Grape Varieties	Cost £ Where from
Fizz	<p>Prosecco Superiore Conegliano Valdobbiadene D.O.C.G. by Carpeno-Malvolti Veneto, Northern Italy At our last few Wine Discoveries, we have found ourselves with a bit of a budget surplus after purchasing the three reds and three whites – this has been easily rectified by bringing along a bonus Fizz for each table and today is no exception – which is good as it gives an opportunity to talk about Fizzy wines and to try some examples that you may not have had before - as well as an opportunity to belatedly raise a toast to 2025 and Wine Discovery in general!</p> <p>Thus far, we have tried a lovely Cremant wine from Burgundy which shares many of the underlying credentials of Champagne – grape variety, method of production etc - We also tried a top end Cava from a prestigious Cava house in Spain – again whilst the grape varieties are different, the labour intensive method of production is similar and the choice of grapes seek to emulate Champagne’s use of three varieties bringing different qualities to the wine - You might have formed the impression from my notes and comments about these that I might be a bit sniffy about Prosecco and that I regard it as inferior to Cava and Cremant – that is not entirely true but my point was really that Cava and Cremant are made by a much more labour intensive method of production and much closer in style to Champagne and in my humble opinion are probably bargains if you go for quality examples.</p> <p>Prosecco is made by injecting gas into the wine to get the fizz rather than the fizz developing in the bottle. However, clearly Prosecco must be doing something right as it is a very popular and trendy fizz – I feel sorry for the Cava and Cremant producers who probably are left scratching their heads as to how this “new kid on the block” came from relative obscurity to dominate mass market fizz.</p> <p>The important thing to remember is that all Proseccos are not created equal – if you are buying Prosecco, you need to focus, especially, on seeing if the word “Valdobbiadene” appears on the label with the letters “D.O.C.G.” Valdobbiadene is the area that produces the higher quality Prosecco wines and its wines are entitled to the use of Italy’s theoretical top notch standard of classification “D.O.C.G.” rather than just “D.O.C.” which you will find on many bottles of Prosecco. The wine we have today is from the Conegliano Valdobbiadene so is DOCG and the producer, Carpeno-Malvolti is one of a handful of producers we are told to look out for by Hugh Johnson of World Atlas of Wine fame!</p> <p>You can now only get Prosecco from the Veneto in Northern Italy. The grape variety I recall used to be known as Prosecco but the Prosecco producers realised that, as is the case with Pinot Grigio, the grapes could be grown anywhere in the world and the wine marketed under their varietal name - we now see Australian/NZ Pinot Grigio for example – so the last thing they wanted were other countries getting in on “their” act and hastily decided the grape’s name was in fact the far less glamorous sounding “Glera” – and “Prosecco” became effectively a trademark/regional name that can only be used on the label of Glera wines made by producers in that legally demarcated area – rather like the use of the word “Champagne” – so if an Australian winery wants to produce a Prosecco, they would have to call it Glera or some alternative name that won’t upset the Italian authorities or infringe trademarks!</p> <p>Although this is not expensive in the great scheme of fizzy wine, you will certainly find Prosecco at cheaper price points than this but it is unlikely to be DOCG Valdobbiadene or from such a quality producer so hopefully we will be rewarded for our investment – my recommendation is to look out for that DOCG designation rather than being swayed too much</p>	Glera	Co Op £8.75 – not on any offer but we do get our 10% staff discount so £7.88 net to the Group

	by fancy bottles or celebrity associations on the label! This is a beautifully understated bottle with perhaps just a nod to a Dom Perignon!		
White	<p>Giorno Chardonnay Orange Wine – I.G.T. Puglia, Southern (heel of Italy’s boot!) Italy 2023 We have tried so called “Orange/amber Wines” before from Waitrose (one from South America that was popular and more recently Georgia where they are made in clay qvevri which turned out to be a bit of a marmite wine!) but this one appears to be new to their range as I have not seen it before on my many pilgrimages to Admiral Park and I noticed they now also have an Orange Wine made by Paul Mas in the Languedoc which will certainly be worth a try if this gets enough “thumbs up”!</p> <p>So, first things first, it is not a wine made from oranges or in some way infused with orange essence! Orange wine is also known as skin-contact white wine, amber wine or skin fermented wine and is made from white grapes where the grape skins are not removed but stay in contact with the juice for a long period, in some cases months, in contrast with normal white wines, where the juice is generally removed quickly after crushing the grapes giving generally light and clear white wines. The white grape skins contain colour pigments, phenols and tannins that are normally regarded as undesirable in a white wine but will give the wine colour, flavour and texture - as would be the case if you were making red wines where the juice remains in contact with the skins during the wine making process, known as “maceration”.</p> <p>In a sense and in simple terms, this is a white wine made by the red winemaking method but still using white grapes! Orange wines tend to be “natural” wines, that is wines made with minimal intervention by the winemaker and this is not surprisingly an organic wine.</p> <p>This is by no means some “new fangled” wine making method as it dates back thousands of years in Georgia and was also copied in Italy hundreds of years ago. In fact, these Orange wines were very popular in Italy up until the 1960s (even if they weren’t called that then) but fell out of fashion when fresh, clear white wines started to dominate the international market – (I recall we have tried a natural cloudy Italian white wine from the Co Op too). The term Orange wine was apparently coined by a British wine importer in 2004.</p> <p>Unfortunately, I could not find too much additional information about this wine specifically and there were no reviews probably because it is a relatively new line at Waitrose although it was clear that orange wines from Puglia are definitely a thing and the soil types lend themselves to white grapes like Chardonnay.</p>	Chardonnay	Waitrose £9.16, not on any offer but less 5% case discount £8.70 net
White	<p>Assyrtiko by Kir Yianni, Macedonia, Greece 2023 - Assyrtiko, a grape variety originally from Santorini, is regarded as one of the best varieties of the Mediterranean, balancing power, minerality and high acid with ageing potential. It is one of Greece’s iconic grape varieties.</p>	Assyrtiko	Co Op normally £10.00 but on offer at £8.00 and less a

	<p>The vineyard is at 700m above sea level with cold winters and warm summers with four lakes creating a mild climate- the soil is poor but that is great for grape vines as they have to work hard to gain nutrients resulting in wines with rich aromas. It is always good to be able to bring along something a little different and we have tried a number of Greek wines in the past at our Discovery events – the mantra for Greek wine is that wine demands food and food demands wine! - Greek wines often have high acidity that can cut through and act as a foil to fatty and oily foods.</p> <p>This wine will have citrus flavours and high acidity with lemon, nectarine and jasmine with a long and mineral finish – it is suggested as a great alternative for Sauvignon Blanc lovers who are looking for something a bit different.</p> <p>The winemaker is Stellios Boutaris, a fifth generation winemaker who has run the family winery, Kir Yianni, since 2002. It is one of Greece’s most respected wineries. This wine forms a part of Co Op’s “Irresistible” range where they partner with respected winemakers to produce a quality range of wines at affordable price points. This wine is normally £10 a bottle but on a great offer at £8.00 – do make sure you have some nibbles to hand when you try this wine.</p>		<p>further 10% staff discount so £7.20 net to Group.</p>
White	<p>Equilibriste Chenin Blanc – by Philippe Socheleau, Domaine des deux Vallees - Loire Valley France 2023 We often tend to associate Chenin Blanc with South African wines as it their signature white grape variety but its spiritual home is really in the Loire Valley and particularly in the wines of Vouvray where it makes dry, off dry, semi sweet and honeyed wines - so you need to be careful when buying Vouvray and check it is the style you are expecting!!</p> <p>A quality Vouvray sold by Waitrose comes in at about twice the price of this alternative – it is from the Loire Valley although presumably not from grapes from the appellation of Vouvray or another where Chenin Blanc is a permitted grape and so can only really be marketed as a simple “Vin de France” notwithstanding its credentials!</p> <p>Phillippe studied food and wine and with his Father took a massive gamble in 2001 when he bought the 61 hectare property, Domaine des Deux Vallees and ripped up the vineyard’s Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc vines in favour of Chenin Blanc – however he now produces some of the top Chenin Blanc in the Loire including some premium single vineyard examples from the top Appellation of Savennieres. The family’s skill really lay in apple growing so it was a steep learning curve assisted by a nearby vigneron friend. The sale of their apple orchards gave them the resources to purchase the Domaine.</p> <p>This is probably a bit of an insiders’ choice giving an affordable everyday drinking example of a Chenin Blanc from a top Loire producer with some of that Savennieres class and zesty freshness at a fraction of the price . The equilibriste name is likely a reference to the perfect balance of apple, pear and lemon notes with zesty freshness.</p>	Chenin Blanc	<p>Waitrose £8.25 not on any offer but less 5% case discount so £7.84 net</p>

Red	<p>Braucol, (Hidden Vine series) Cotes du Tarn IGP, South West France 2023 If this bottle looks familiar it is because we have tried a number of wines marketed under the “Hidden Vine” label. These focus on unusual grape varieties that have gone out of fashion – or maybe were never in fashion! This is certainly a new one on me and the series gives a good opportunity to bring along something a little different.</p> <p>It comes from the region of the River Tarn where the grape is known locally by an equally obscure name, “Fer Servadou” derived from the Latin meaning wild or savage and it is thought that originally these were once wild local vines. It is a key variety in the wines of Gaillac that you sometimes see in French supermarkets. Tasting notes always seem to come up with blackberry, bramble and blackcurrant so expect a very bold fruity red.</p> <p>Tim Atkin MW says the variety has a resemblance to Loire Cabernet Franc so if you like the wines of Chinon this may well be up your street and also to Chilean Carmenere. The general advice seems to be to enjoy it slightly chilled to bring out the fruitiness – it is recommended for hearty stews and I guess we will all be enjoying a few of those while the cold spell continues.</p> <p>Currently on a good offer at the co op until the 28/1.</p>	Braucol (Fer Servadou)	CO OP – normally £9.50 but on offer at £7.00 and less 10% staff discount (thanks Karen’s Mum) so £6.30 net to Group
Red	<p>Rioja D.O.C, “El Gran Jefe” 2022 You couldn’t fail to notice this bottle on the shelves of the Co Op with its striking, arty label. The name translates to “the Big Boss” which also appealed to me! However, this is no ordinary run of the mill Rioja. When we think of Rioja we tend to think of the grape variety Tempranillo which is behind most of its wines although other varieties are permitted – this wine brings together 5 of them including Garnacha (Grenache in France) Mazuelo (Carignan in France) Maturana which is a small grape variety with intense colour of red and violet with vegetable aromas, Tempranillo of course and Graciano which is rarely found outside of Spain – it is low yielding and susceptible to mildew and accordingly many growers ripped out their Graciano vines to grow more fashionable Tempranillo – especially when they were paid by the kilo!</p> <p>It is made by Bodegas Eguia founded in 1973 and appears to be part of Bodegas Muriel. Rioja is the name of the region, named after the river that runs through it. The use of oak in Rioja is a big thing – the Spanish growers were historically influenced by Bordeaux growers who went down there when their vines in France were devastated by the Phylloxera bug and introduced them to the concept of ageing wines in oak barrels – which the Spanish adopted with gusto and indeed today Rioja is still marketed in quality levels which generally revolve around simply how long the wine has spent in a barrel rather than necessarily the terroir of the vineyard, skill of the wine maker etc! – so you get Reserva, Gran Reserva, Crianza – but some wines are specifically sin crianza – so no use of oak – the bottle gives little away although the fact it is described as juicy suggests oak influence, if any is likely to be restrained.</p>	Garnacha, Mazuelo, Maturana, Tempranillo, Graciano	Co Op £9.00 not on any offer but less 10% staff discount so £8.10 net

Red	<p>“Nicolas” Boschendal Estate, Franschhoek, South Africa 2022 This was another one of several outstanding wines we tasted at the Liberation Wine Tasting in November on a stand which comprised entirely South African wines, especially from Franschhoek region. I will repeat my notes about Franschhoek in the event anyone missed our recent Wine Discovery where we tasted another great wine from that region: When we think of South Africa we tend to think of the Dutch influence but it turns out that in the late 1600s French Huguenot refugees (probably relations of many of our forebears in Guernsey!) arrived to begin a new life in what the Dutch Governor of the Cape at the time called a wild and desolate land and the South African wine industry developed on the shoulders of those few hundred refugees who arrived in 1688 and planted the first vines.</p> <p>The area they settled in was Franschhoek which unsurprisingly translates as “French Corner” - and there are many Wine Farms (Vineyards) there that have French names, albeit sometimes with quirky spellings! Here are located the well-known and iconic Boschendal Estate and also Rickety Bridge Wine Estate (once both parts of the historic Huguenot “La Provence” Estate) whose more recent owner used to have connections to the Aval du Creux Hotel at the top of Harbour Hill in Sark (now sadly looking very sorry for itself having been closed up for some years) which used to have a wide selection of Rickety Bridge wines on its wine list.</p> <p>“Nicolas” certainly gives a “nod” to the French heritage of Franschhoek as it is effectively what is known in South Africa as a “Bordeaux blend” as it uses a host of the classic Bordeaux varieties – Syrah (or Shiraz as they call it there) for spice and depth, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot giving a classical structure and Malbec giving a beautiful deep colour and vibrant fruit, Merlot for fruit profile and Cabernet Franc giving spicy richness. It has been given 92 points by Tim Atkin MW, has double gold at the Michelangelo international wine awards.</p> <p>Tasting notes include Red cherries, plums, cassis, pencil shavings, dark chocolate and cedar cigar box ! Drinking well now but will cellar and get more complexity for up to 10 years so get a bottle and tuck it away.</p> <p>The name of the wine is a reference to Nicolas de Lanoy (presumably of Huguenot descent) whose land now forms part of the Boschendal Estate and he is regarded as one of Boschendal’s founding pioneers.</p> <p>Spot on with sizzling steak or lamb shank - or a roast chicken in a rich jus – The price reflects the quality of this wine although on a very good offer at the Tasting event.</p>	<p>Bordeaux Blend – Syrah (Shiraz) Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Merlot</p>	<p>Liberation Group normally £20.95 but on offer at £14.95</p>
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