

	Welcome: Season 2024/25 Week 2: Ghosties and Ghoulies	Grape Varieties	Cost £/Where from
White	<p><b>Gruner Veltliner Single Estate Traisental D.A.C. 2023 by Markus Huber – Austria</b> We are trying an Austrian Red this afternoon so it seemed an ideal time to sample Gruner Veltliner again, also because it is from Waitrose’s premium No. 1 range and was on a great offer. Austria produces high quality, focused and very individual wines and Gruner Veltliner is their flagship white grape variety. Markus Huber’s wines are from limestone soils and should give an elegant, fruity and refreshing wine – also at a marginally lower alcohol level than many wines these days with green apple, rich tropical fruit and a twist of the grape’s characteristic white peppery spice. Also produced from a single estate so at the upper end of the quality spectrum.</p> <p>Markus is a tenth generation wine maker and in 2000 he took over four hectares from his father which up to that point had only produced wines for the family restaurant. He has won the Falstaff award for best Winemaker in Austria in 2015 and his winery is a showcase for precision, minerality and elegant wines and he has put Traisental “on the map” internationally – the family work without compromise in the vineyard and cellar for premium quality. He produces a huge number of top end Gruner Veltliner wines including single vineyard Grand Crus, those from terraced vineyards etc.</p> <p>A wine which can handle Asian Flavours which is always a bit of a hard food pairing but also with grilled fish. At £8.35 this promises to be a bit of bargain for the level of quality on offer!</p>	Gruner Veltliner	Waitrose normally £11.00 but on offer at £8.79 and less a further 5% case discount so £8.35 net
White	<p><b>Douro D.O.C. Quinta de la Rosa Reserva - Branco - Douro Valley, Portugal 2023</b> The Wine Discovery Group is no stranger to the wines of Portugal – a combination of the use of indigenous grape varieties, very well made wines by often state of the art wineries and very competitive pricing mean a selection will often feature in our events. On this occasion we have a white wine from the Douro which almost seems a bit of an oxymoron as we know the Douro as the home of that most red of red wine, Port. But producers there would struggle to survive on Port sales alone as the demand for it is no longer what it was so they often turn to using the grapes and vineyards to make table wines which are of a high quality.</p> <p>The Quinta de la Rosa has a very long history but in 1988 it effectively reinvented itself under Tim Bergqvist and his daughter Sophia who inherited the Quinta and in 1991 it trailblazed the new way forward in the Douro, becoming one of the first of the Port Quintas (Estates) to produce table wine rather than just Port, with help from David Baverstock (an Australian Winemaker who is very well known for largely transforming and modernising the Portuguese wine industry through his work at Esporao who produce top Portuguese wines with a focus on indigenous grape varieties in the Alentejo that we have tried).</p> <p>La Rosa didn’t take its eye of the Port ball either however, winning Fortified Wine Maker of the Year in London in 1996. Their Winemaker, Jorge Moreira joined them in 2002 and shortly after was awarded “Best Winemaker in Portugal”. La Rosa win many awards and regularly get 95 plus points in tastings and it is one of the top 273 Wineries in the world per Wine Spectators New York Wine Experience.</p>	Likely 50% Voisinho, 30% Gouveio, 20% Arinto- or possibly with Rabigato and an element of so called Field blend – and maybe some Alvarinho coming on board in the future – where a vineyard comprises a mix of varieties (all old vines)	Waitrose normally £12.83 but on offer at £10.25 and less 5% case discount so £9.74 net.

	<p>The spectacular vineyards of the Douro are terraced on the near vertical sides of the Douro Valley so mechanisation is difficult so many grapes here are handpicked which gives high quality wine. Jorge Moreira is a very “Terroir” focused winemaker and avoids over extraction, tannin or too much use of oak, letting the terroir express itself through the wine – balance, equilibrium good acidity and minerality are his focus aiming for elegant and fresh, mineral wines which has become La Rosa’s trademark</p> <p>The grape varieties are not specified on the label other than a statement that it is a blend of local varieties – but a look at their website tells us what they are likely to be and they are all varieties it is unlikely any of us has heard of so perhaps understandably, they don’t bother listing them – but this exactly the USP of Portuguese wine, white and red, the use of those indigenous Portuguese grapes to create a unique product rather than slavishly trying to produce another Sauvignon Blanc or other well known “international” variety.</p> <p>It looks like part of the harvest is vinified in French Oak and the other in stainless steel tanks to temper the oak influence with a final 8 months in oak before bottling. The use of the word “Reserva” tends to suggest use of Oak. The Estates grapes are categorised as “A” the very best the Duoro has to offer. Soils are schist and granite giving white wines remarkable acidity, minerality and freshness with floral, citrus notes and balanced fruit.</p> <p>Great with Charcuterie so ideal for our buffet offering but I suspect this would be great with any fish dish too! This wine forms part of a joint venture with Waitrose as part of its No1 range and was on an introductory deal too!</p>		
White	<p><b>Vermentino Di Gallura D.O.C.G. “Le Arenarie” 2023 by Sella &amp; Mosca, Sardinia, Italy</b> This wine comes from Italy’ second largest island, Sardinia and the whites and reds from the island are amongst world class wines. We have tried some Vermentino’s in the past but certainly not at this price point (this bottle resides in Waitrose’s coveted wooden shelving in its wine section). You will notice the bottle is marked D.O.C.G which is a designation reserved for Italy’s top appellations (or at least its theoretical top appellations as there are some which were granted this status many moons ago and may no longer warrant such lofty credentials).</p> <p>Vermentino generally gives an almost lemony wine although there is no mention of this on the label but the Vermentino di Gallura is noted for its salinity and flinty notes, different to its sister wine, Vermentino de Sardegna as a result of the pink granite soils in the region and there is high minerality and acidity. There should be hints of rosemary and the wine is recommended for those who enjoy Gavi and Chablis. The grape variety is likely of Spanish origin originally.</p> <p>Sella &amp; Mosca was founded over a century ago by a Lawyer and an engineer and the Estate is one of the largest in Europe at 650 hectares. The vineyards from which this wine comes are on the slopes of Monte Limbara with maritime influences and cooling hill breezes. The Company has a partnership with a local artist who produces some very arty labels for its wines but sadly (especially for Sue McGregor, the Wine Discovery Group’s resident artist) this range has a more conventional look!</p> <p>This should be a top quality Italian white wine and an ideal partner for seafood or seafood pasta.</p>	Vermentino	Waitrose £13.75 less 5% case discount so £13.06 net

Red	<p><b>Zweigelt – Neusiedlersee D.A.C., Burgenland, Austria 2021 - Lentsch</b> It is always great to find a wine that we most definitely have not tried before at the Discovery Group! – hopefully this will be something new, although if you have been on an Austrian holiday or perhaps a Danube cruise then you may have come across this grape variety. The grape variety here is Zweigelt (also known as Blaufrankisch) which the label states is the most popular red wine in Austria – and apparently everyone who tries it loves it, so here goes! – it is said to be an underrated grape variety and should give an aromatic, dark, supple wine and is also found in Hungary which is just across the border from where this wine comes from and Germany.</p> <p>The wine region this comes from is Lake Neusiedl which gives a warm climate ideally suited to red grapes and the province of Burgenland has proved its ability to produce decent red wines. Decanter magazine said they were “really impressed with the brightness and energy of this gorgeous little red, especially considering it is under £10. Vibrant cranberry fruit aromas with crunchy dried leaves, barnyard (!) dried mushroom and dried orange peel – intriguing and complex”. The producer, Lentsch, is a family owned winery on the beautiful lake Neusiedl where brothers Thomas and Markus are the third generation to run the business.</p> <p>In general terms, Austrian and German wines now represent exceptional value for money – mainly because they are very high quality wines but as a result of past wine public relations disasters they are not as popular with mainstream consumers as they probably should be – we will remember many German wines as sickly sweet and of course Austrian wine producers in 1985 tried adding anti freeze to wine to improve its sweetness! Many of us would probably not automatically reach for a German or Austrian wine when doing our supermarket shop or indeed order one in a restaurant so this leaves us Discoverers with an ideal opportunity to change perceptions and of course to see if we can sniff out a top quality wine at a bargain price.</p>	Zweigelt	Waitrose Normally £9.16 but on a bit of an offer at £8.24 and less 5% case discount so £7.83 net
Red	<p><b>Cederberg Private Cellar – Syrah 2022 - Dwaarsrivier, Cape Winelands, South Africa</b> The Cederberg vineyards are remote, very high altitude with a unique terroir which is virus free with mountain spring water, a cold climate with coastal influence and a winemaker, David Nieuwoudt. The Khoisan people inhabited this area from early times leaving a legacy of rock art and the Nieuwoudt family arrived there in the mid 1800s. Although the estate covers 5500 hectares only 74 are cultivated as vines. The family first made its own wines using spare grapes it didn't sell to the local wine co operative to give to its farm workers but it was so good that in 1977 they started to make their own wine commercially. David Nieuwoudt studied at Agricultural college in Stellenbosch and worked on other wine estates before returning to take over the reins from his Uncle at Cederberg in 1997. Three years later Cederberg was rated 4.5 Star by Platters South African Wine Guide for his Chardonnay which set him on a stellar trajectory as young winemaker. Cederberg Shiraz (Syrah) won Gold at the 2021 Syrah du Monde which recognises the best Syrah wines in the world and has been in the top 10 Wine Farms in South Africa twice under his leadership.</p> <p>New World Wine Producers tend to use the term Shiraz or Syrah (the grape is known by both names but is the same grape) for their wines based on the style of wine they are emulating. Syrah tends to suggest perhaps a more French, Northern Rhone style of wine – Shiraz perhaps something more powerful and robust such as a Barossa Valley style red.</p> <p>Northern Rhone Syrah is very expensive – starting at around £16 for a St Joseph but heading much more northward for a Cote Rotie or a Cornas so if we can find a quality Syrah at this price point it is well worth trying to tease one out! Again, a wine that</p>	Syrah (or Shiraz if you prefer)	Waitrose normally £11.90 but on offer at £9.52 and less 5% case discount so £9.04 net

	<p>features in Waitrose's premium No.1 branding range which features various wines made in collaboration with top winemakers.</p> <p>This wine should have Syrah's black pepper edge with dark fruit and is recommended to pair with Roast Lamb, a steak or even a sausage casserole so ideal as we head into that Autumnal weather and chilly Winter weekends!</p>		
Red	<p><b>Villa Antinori, Toscana I.G.T. 2022 by Marchesi Antinori</b> This top quality Tuscany wine would ordinarily be well outside of our budget but was on rather a good offer that was too good to miss as it is rarely on any offer. This House produces top class Chianti Classico and as with a number of the top Chianti producers, they also produce two "Super Tuscans" – we have come across this term before – in essence, producers in the Chianti region of Tuscany were originally bound by very restrictive rules as to what grapes they could use/ production techniques etc if they wanted to sell their wines as Chianti Classico.</p> <p>Many got fed up with this as they believed they could produce a far superior wine by varying the grapes used to make the wine etc and basically blew raspberries at the authorities and produced their wines according to their own preferences - which then could only be sold as basic "Toscana" table wine as it would not qualify for the Chianti Classico designation – however wine aficionados soon discovered what these rebellious wine makers were up to and the wines were in huge demand, notwithstanding their very humble "table wine" status and prices for them are now stratospheric. The authorities were presumably left fuming as they assumed punters would only buy and pay top prices for Chianti Classico. This "Toscana" wine is therefore very similar in concept to a SuperTuscan (and as close as many of us will probably ever get!) – it is made in the same region as Chianti although with likely a blend of grape varieties that would not conform to the rules of Chianti Classico and indeed at its normal price point is more expensive than many Chianti Classicos in the supermarket.</p> <p>Antinori has a legendary reputation and this wine is described as Antinori's interpretation of Chianti Classico and Tuscany's unique identity. This wine was first crafted in 1928 and features the family's Villa on the label which apparently was quite an avant garde design at the time! The Antinori's have been producing wine for 600 years and this wine will be deliciously oaky with red fruit and silky tannins. If you like this style of wine but can't bring yourself to blow quite that much on a bottle, the Co Op has a couple of Toscana wines, one of which, Poggio Baddiola, is on offer at the moment at around £8.50 I recall although I think this wine will set the bar for Italian reds quite high!</p>	Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot	Waitrose normally £17.41 but on offer at £12.82 and less 5% case discount so £12.18 net.