

	Welcome: Season 2024/25 Week 4: <b>Simply having a Wonderful Christmas Wine 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024</b>	Grape Varieties	Cost £ Where from
Fizz	<p><b>Juve &amp; Camps Reserva de la Familia, Brut Nature Vintage 2019</b> Those of you who have been attending the Wine Discovery events over a few years will know that I have a bit of a soft spot for Spanish Cava and when the opportunity presents itself, it is often my go-to fizz for Wine Discovery meals and a popular Xmas fizz selection! The reasons are many! Firstly, it is made by exactly the same method as Champagne (unlike Prosecco which has gas added to it), secondly it is made generally from three grape varieties (although Spanish varieties, different to those of Champagne although some Cava is now being made with the addition of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir) and it is available in a number of quality levels and even at the top end you can get a classy fizz without breaking the bank – especially in comparison with Champagne – and if you need to get a lot of bottles for a party this prevents the cost becoming prohibitive.</p> <p>It is great to enjoy that indulgent, sense of occasion, that popping the cork on an ice cold bottle of fizz entails and pouring it into flutes as an aperitif for your guests to enjoy in the kitchen while you prepare a feast, glass in hand! A bottle of Cava lets you do this without breaking the bank and the quality now is high and the fizz has individual personality as it is not trying to be Champagne. Juve &amp; Camps are one of the top names of Cava and I recall they supply the Spanish Royal Family and have an international reputation for top quality cava.</p> <p>The Company has a long family history over 200 years but its modern incarnation came about in 1921 when Mr Juve married Teresa Camps who inspired the launch of a sparkling wine under their own brand – it was made in the underground cellars beneath the family home in San Sadurn d’Anoia in the Penedes region near Barcelona which is the region for Cava – the name Cava alludes to the production of the wine in caves or underground cellars and distinguishes the wine from Champagne (which of course is a fiercely guarded trademark) - and other fizz offerings.</p> <p>This Cava is pale gold in colour, has aromas of white peach, toasted brioche and green tea with hints of citrus and apricots, rich, creamy foam and broad on the palate. There will also be Cava’s notes of fresh apple, rosemary possibly and nuts and dried fruit.</p> <p>We have tried a Juve &amp; Camps Cava before but I do not think at this top Cava quality level (Gran Reserva) - which reflects additional ageing etc (36 months minimum in bottle). You would be able to buy Cavas at half this price (or a third of its normal shelf price) but they will not be Gran Reserva but at the more basic “Guarda” level - this gives an opportunity to get a thoroughly indulgent fizz with those tiny, well integrated bubbles and brioche flavours reminiscent of a quality champagne at a very good price point if you want to spoil your guests and friends this Christmas or New Year!</p> <p>For the full Spanish experience try it with some wafer thin slices of Iberico ham, some toasted almonds, or maybe even some pigs in blankets with a bit of apple sauce to dip in on the side – or even with a baked camembert!!</p> <p>This was on the C &amp; D Wines stall at the Liberation Wine Tasting fronted by a very uber cool Spanish Rep who was delighted that I was so enthused about Cava and appreciated and relished the opportunity to sample a premium example.</p>	Macebeu, Xarello and Parellada (all of which contribute elements to the Cava in a similar way to the grapes of Champagne)	Liberation normally £18.25 but on offer at £12.75

White	<p><b>White Malbec, Land of Malbec, Mendoza, Bodega Estancia Mendoza, Argentina 2021</b> – Another something different from Liberation and a bit of a new trend – here we have a white wine made from red grapes! – so, the grapes are picked early to give higher acidity, the juice is run off before it takes on any colour from contact with the grape skins and fermented in stainless steel. The result is a floral white wine with citrus and herbs on the nose and smooth on the palate with balanced, refreshing acidity – a left field white choice to go with the Christmas Turkey – or a salmon or even a seafood starter. Also, quite a low alcohol level. It is made by a federation of wine making co operatives of which there are 32 members in the Mendoza region. Tina Guille is already a fan of this wine as I discovered at the Liberation Wine Tasting event but hopefully it will be a new discovery for many of you! When we think of Argentinian Malbec, we normally think of a bold, beefy red to go with a juicy pan fried Steak so this shows the versatility of the grape and the ingenuity of the winemaker!</p>	Malbec (yes, red grape, you read this right!)	Liberation Normally £12.25 but on offer at £8.50
White	<p><b>Albarino, Canelones, Vina Salort, Uruguay 2023</b> The vineyard is located in Paso Cuello, Canelones and spreads over high hills and slopes that give good drainage and aeration of the grapes and vine canopy, producing grapes that are rich in colour and structure and grapes are hand harvested.</p> <p>Aged for 5 months on its lees (the residues, natural yeasts etc to add flavour) Classic albarino aromas predominate with herbal and floral notes, stone fruit and citrus, textured and round on the palate with grip on the finish and rich fruit cut with refreshing acidity, minerals and citrus. If you are having a vegetarian focus at Christmas this would be a great choice with any Mediterranean grilled veg, padron peppers but also with the Turkey or maybe a Coquilles St Jacques.</p> <p>A refreshing wine and a bargain price for something very different. Albarino is the star white variety of Uruguay but they also produce quality Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier. Canelones is the heartland of the Uruguay wine industry. It will be interesting to compare this to our classic, Rias Baixas Albarino from Galicia, NW Spain!</p>	Albarino	Liberation normally £12.40 but on offer at £ 8.65
White	<p><b>Albarino, “Pazo as Barreiras” Rias Baixas, Galicia, North West Spain Bodegas Villanueva 2023</b> Whilst I feel inclined to apologise for bringing another Albarino along to our Wine Discovery, we simply could not let this special wine pass us by at the Liberation Wine Tasting! This came from a stall only showcasing Spanish wines with an uber cool Spanish rep who picked up and caressed the bottle with obvious pride and affection and positively purred with delight when he realised that even on this isolated rock in the English Channel, Guernsey folk were already well aware of the reputation of Rias Baixas Albarino! I impressed him no end by pronouncing it correctly which is “Reeass Buy – shuss”.</p> <p>This is THE region for Albarino and if you see Rias Baixas on the label you should be getting a good one. It is in Galicia in the north western corner of Spain, a region with parallels of Brittany – a Gallic history (hence the name) and a seafood and shellfish tradition which Albarino is spot on with. The coastline is one of mini fjord like inlets and ports – so called Rias. Many of the vines here are grown on pergolas so that other crops could traditionally be farmed underneath by the local families and also keeping the vines ventilated in damp conditions of the region – the Albarino grape is mildew resistant so it is ideal to tolerate the sea fogs which roll in off the Atlantic.</p> <p>We also tried a Cordoniu Albarino only the other week which was outstanding but from the other side of Spain near Barcelona – that was an absolute bargain for the quality but this premium Albarino wine, although more expensive, seemed to</p>	Albarino	Liberation Wines normally £15.95 but on offer at £11.15

	<p>take Albarino to the next level. The Pazo as Barreiras winery is located in a beautifully restored military fort of some antiquity with impressive coats of arms carved in stone over the entrance in the manner of Spanish fortified gateways.</p> <p>I probably should write a note to self, “Mark must not bring along any more Albarino wines for a while!” – that said Albarino is certainly a big thing in wines at the moment – both here and in Spain and now appears on many local wine lists – mainly because it is great with our fresh Guernsey seafood and shellfish!</p>		
Red	<p><b>Ad Hoc “Cruel Mistress” Pinot Noir, Larry Cherubino, Western Australia</b> Pinot Noir is traditionally the grape variety choice to go with the Christmas Turkey and whilst a top quality Burgundy red would be spot on, it may leave you with little left to spend on anything else for your Christmas Day budget! Often it is suggested to look at New Zealand Pinot Noir but that is increasingly expensive and this is something a little different from WA.</p> <p>This wine has won all sorts of awards over the years and we should get graphite and minerals, bright raspberries, forest floor and juicy cherries on the nose, a hint of spicy oak with soft textured palate, surprisingly silky for a youthful wine with a lingering whisper of spice, fresh and vibrant with black cherry and earthy beetroot carried along with a fine long, acid finish. This wine is said to capture the elegance of Pinot Noir, not a big blockbuster of a red wine but one with delicate fruitiness, coaxed out by the winemaker giving the wine a finesse that belies its price point. That bright acidity gives a foil for the richness of the stuffing and pigs in blankets!</p> <p>Western Australia’s wine regions are spread over large distances and their climates vary significantly under the influence of the Indian (warm westerly breezes) and Southern Oceans’ (cooling) and this wine showcases the potential of the cool climate regions of WA. The grapes are grown in select vineyards of Great Southern with its cool maritime climate, well drained soils, hand harvested grapes and the winemaker believes in meticulous vineyard management, harvesting at optimal ripeness and minimal intervention in the winemaking process.</p> <p>Larry Cherubino is a legend in Western Australia – he has worldwide experience in wine production and makes both his own wines and lends his services to other big brands and lives and breathes winemaking and this shows in the quality of his wines.</p>	Pinot Noir	Liberation normally £15.95 on offer at £11.15
Red	<p><b>Coribante Syrah-Malvasia Nera Salento IGT 2022 by Castello Monaci – Salento Peninsular Southern Italy</b> This was another wine we enjoyed at the Liberation Wine Tasting in November – it hails from the Salento peninsular which forms the heel of Italy’ boot shape and is very close to the area that produces Salice Salentino which is one of the Puglia’s top red wines.</p> <p>The name is inspired by the “Corybantes” – lively dancers who to the rhythm of the tambourine, unleashed frenetic dances and pulsating music capable of transmitting heat and energy in unparalleled harmony! This sounds like one of the multiple choice option answers we put in our Wine Quiz but apparently it is true!</p> <p>We should get a strong ruby red colour, fine and intense fruit, velvety with hints of liquorice – great with a Sunday roast beef or some mature cheese!</p>	60% Syrah, 40% Malvasia	Liberation Group normally £13.75 but on offer at £9.55

<p>Red</p>	<p><b>Nebbiolo, “Mazer”, Valtellina Superiore DOCG, Lombardy, Italy Nino Negri 2020</b> This region of Italy comprises a mountainous valley just south of the Swiss border - and certainly not a region I have come across before! This wine, which we tasted on Gruppo Italiano Vini’s stall at the Liberation tasting, was stunning.</p> <p>The grape variety here is Nebbiolo but known as “Chiavennasca” in this part of the world. This is a “Superiore” wine which indicates it will come from the better terroirs in the region – you will often see the word “Superiore” on Italian Wines and generally that is what it means.</p> <p>It is also made, at least in part, from dried grapes – this is a common practice for a number of quality Italian wines where flavours are intensified by drying the grapes before extracting the juice known as “<i>Appassimento</i>” (meaning fading or withering) – Amarone is another good example. The result of course is generally an expensive wine as you need far more grapes to get the equivalent amount of juice and this is no exception (£24 a bottle in the UK and £18.70 full price locally).</p> <p>Nebbiolo is the grape behind one of Italy’s grandest wines, Barolo but generally Barolo is not approachable when young as it will be tannic but this 2020 from Valtellina was drinking well -maybe that’s why they dried the grapes first to take the tannic edge off it. Its drinking window is 2023 to 2029 so you could easily tuck a bottle or two away and see how it develops!</p> <p>We should have a bright garnet red wine with a nose of blackberry with liquorice and spice with those dried grapes lending soft, elegant, velvety fine grained tannins with a fresh aroma and dry and flavoursome with some lashings of oak on the finish. This would be a great choice with a beef roast if you go the joint of beef route for Christmas day – or equally would sit nicely alongside the Turkey and cope with the strong flavours of the trimmings. “Mazer” is a local dialect word meaning “distinguished” which seems apt!</p> <p>The Nino Negri Winery is centred around a fifteenth century palazzo with barrel cellars with dry stone walled vineyards and has been making wines for 100 years. It is a DOCG wine which indicates one of Italy’s theoretically best wines. The vineyards are shallow, sandy loam with low fertility – ideal for vines as it makes them send down roots and dissuades them from producing too much foliage at the expense of grapes on terraced vineyards. As a result, grapes are hand picked (ensuring quality) and a proportion of the grapes are left in the drying sheds before pressing. The wine will spend time in French and Slavonian Oak.</p>	<p>Nebbiolo (Chiavennasca)</p>	<p>Liberation, Admiral Park normally £18.70 but on offer at £13.15</p>
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