

	Welcome: To the Beautiful South and the start of the 2022/2023 Wine Discovery Season	Grape Varieties	Cost £/Where from
White	<p>First Cape Bush Vine Chenin Blanc, Western Cape, South Africa 2021 I went in to get a Chenin Blanc highly recommended by Will Lyons in last week's Sunday Times magazine called "The Curator", also from Western Cape – but couldn't find any trace of it - but they did have this example on offer and it comes in at what must be one of the cheapest prices we have ever paid locally for a wine after additional discounts! Chenin Blanc is really the signature white grape of South Africa, historically grown and known there as Steen and effectively rediscovered as the re-emerging South African wine industry originally disregarded it to focus on other varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc which were popular with European consumers – they realised they had a USP in their existing vines!</p> <p>The winemaker is Christiaan Visser and First Cape is a brand which is co owned by a dynamic group of neighbouring farmers to market their wines internationally so by no means just another mass produced wine! The wine is unoaked and fermented at low temperature to retain crispness and freshness and emphasise the natural flavour of the fruit. We should get citrus and peach notes on the nose and pear and tropical fruit flavour on the palate. Good to go with seafood or creamy pasta. "Bush Vine" appears on many South African wines and also European wines and refers to vines growing individually rather than trained in regimented rows. This has to be worth trying at this price and promises staggering value for money! "The Curator" has since appeared at Waitrose and may feature in a future discovery.</p>	Chenin Blanc	Waitrose – Normally £7.53 but on offer at £4.57 - I had a 20% off spend and save voucher and got an additional 5% off as part of their case discount so net £3.42 a bottle!!(Four bottles) Also one bottle at full price less case discount so £6.96 net (1 bottle)
White	<p>Farm Hand Chardonnay – Monash Valley, South Australia 2021 Most of us associate Australian Chardonnay with the oaky, creamy, buttery flavours that dominated in the 1980's and 90's and indeed the style eventually lost its initial popularity to a point that it even seemed to be a bit naff to order a bottle of Chardonnay – of course no one would ever think it naff to order a bottle of Chablis which is, of course, Chardonnay!</p> <p>In response, the Australians are now producing fresh, subtle and uplifting Chardonnay and emulating Chablis style acidity to make a much more food friendly wine – and this is borne out by the notes on the rear label that promise us fresh, fruit driven with stone fruit and melon and a touch of soft mineral acidity – although somewhat confusingly, Waitrose's tasting notes refer to buttery brioche flavour with zesty lemon and lime – so who knows, it could be a bit of an amalgam of the two styles – any creamy notes should be subtle in any event!</p> <p>Any Chardonnay that can emulate Chablis is especially welcome at this price point as prices for Chablis have gone through the roof and it is certainly a special occasion wine only, so I am always on the lookout for a Chablis pretender! Not a bargain basement wine at its normal price but staggering value at £5.64 a bottle! The winemaker is Con-Greg Grigoriou, a Fourth Generation wine grower with 100 acres in the Monash Valley – the vines are up to 30 years old and planted widely apart for airflow with natural irrigation. The wine matures on its</p>		Waitrose – Normally £9.16 but on offer at £7.32 and we had a spend and save voucher and their case discount which knocked off another 23% so £5.64 net a bottle! (3 bottles) I had to get an additional two bottles at their full price, less case discount so two bottles at £8.70 each.

	<p>lees for four months for added complexity. The emphasis is on retaining freshness with fast and precise vinification in stainless steel to maximise fruit expression and aromatics.</p>		
White	<p>Pessac-Leognan “Chateau de Rochemorin” Andre Lurton 2018 (and one bottle, 2019), Bordeaux, France You may well have a feeling of deja-vu if you were at our Driftwood Lunch this Summer. This was our main course white and went down very well indeed! It certainly surprised a few of you who are used to an NZ style Sauvignon.</p> <p>As improbable as it may seem, we had three bottles unopened from that event and your Convenors resisted temptation all Summer and preserved them in the cellars of Chateau Hiver. The great news is they have already been paid for so we only had to buy two bottles to make up a round for our white selections! – and even one of those was on offer! For those of you who had this at the Lunch, it is a chance to re-acquaint yourself with this superb Bordeaux white – to those who couldn’t be there, it is an opportunity to sample a top drawer wine normally outside of our budget!</p> <p>White wines from Bordeaux are typically made from Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon – this is a pure Sauvignon Blanc example – but is very different from an NZ Sauvignon Blanc and far more food friendly! – we are told to expect peach, nectarine and lemon zest with hints of vanilla suggesting a hint of oak ageing. Juicy and focused with a kick on the finish with lees ageing.</p> <p>It will have smoothness on the palate, with roundness and superb structure with a balance between richness and crisp freshness and depth of flavour.</p> <p>2018 was one of the warmest years in Bordeaux since 1900 with abundant sunshine and heavy rainfall in the first half of the year. Andre Lurton is regarded as very accomplished with white wine and this is a Chateau bottled example from one of the top Appellations of Bordeaux – Indeed Pessac Leognan produces Bordeaux’ finest dry white wines.</p> <p>The wine has encouragingly garnered a Decanter award at 92 points and the 2019 example got similar from James Suckling MW. This is something a little different for a refined white wine option – and most white Burgundies of any interest are well above even this price.</p>	Sauvignon Blanc	<p>Waitrose – Normally £16.50 but on offer at £13.74 and on the one bottle I initially needed to buy I had the benefit of spend and save voucher and case discount that took it to £10.85 net for the bottle. I then had to return to pick up an extra bottle and the offer was over and it came in at a painful £15.68 net of case discount – that would normally make this wine way beyond budget but.... – the other three bottles are left over from our Summer Lunch at Driftwood so already paid for and no cost to Group for those !!</p>
Red	<p>Medoc, Baron des Cours, Bordeaux, France 2020 This wine is presently on offer at Waitrose at £7.32 which in theory is a steal for a Medoc – we achieved a net £5.49 after discounts which is outstanding value for a quality Bordeaux red – its normal price is £11.00. I should however stress the online reviews vary greatly for this wine – 50% think it’s great the other 50% think it’s terrible! At £5.49 it is most certainly worth a punt. I happened to notice it is considerably cheaper at the Carrefour in France!</p>	Cabernet Sauvignon predominantly with a bit of Merlot.	<p>Waitrose Normally £11.00 and on offer at £7.32 but after spend and save voucher and case discount net to Group at £5.49 a</p>

	<p>It should have a blackcurrant edge and cedar notes and is a typical Bordeaux blend of grapes. The Appellation of Medoc forms the top of the left bank of the Gironde Estuary which is the confluence of the Dordogne and Garonne rivers above Bordeaux – it is just above the great Appellations of St Estephe and Pauillac. Earlier this year we drove down to Lisbon and stopped en route at Blaye which is the other side of the Estuary and had a super meal inside a fortified Citadel looking out towards Medoc so this wine brings back some happy memories of the Summer!</p> <p>In typical French tradition, little mention is made of the grape varieties which the French regard as simply the means by which the terroir is expressed and are the varieties which have been found to grow best in that particular region – and as the choice of grapes that can be grown if a wine is to call itself say a Medoc is strictly regulated, it is sufficient simply to say which Appellation the wine is from and expect the consumer to have a fair idea of what they are getting – a complete contrast to New World wines which rely on grape variety to give the consumer some idea of what to expect from a wine. That is changing a little however as the French are realising that many consumers in UK supermarkets tend to buy wines based on grape variety – even if the style of the wine can vary considerably depending on where it comes from!</p>		<p>bottle (Four bottles) One bottle at full price less case discount so £10.45 (ouch)</p>
Red	<p>Little Giant Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, Australia 2020 This is not the Group's first experience of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon but we have not tried this example before!</p> <p>Coonawarra is home to some of Australia's best (for quality and value) Cabernet Sauvignon. Coonawarra is famous for a long narrow rectangle of rich red soil on well drained limestone above a permanent table of pure water - ("Terra Rossa"). The land is almost ideally designed for fruit growing ! The area is much further south than any other Australian Wine region and only 50 miles from the coast and hence much cooler (cooler than Bordeaux, the spiritual home of the Cabernet Sauvignon grape) and the combination of the soil and climate make for near ideal conditions for growing Cabernet Sauvignon.</p> <p>It will be fun to contrast this Southern Hemisphere Cabernet Sauvignon example against our classic Bordeaux offering! Our friend Ed had recently discovered the delights of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon and set about on a personal mission to find the very best example of the genre and assures me this is the best he has come across having tried examples at twice the price. Bravo Ed, I am happy to have left the leg work to him and simply added the bottles to my trolley.</p> <p>We are assured (by Waitrose, not Ed) that we will get dark berry fruit flavours with nutmeg, herbs and florals in the finish with deep and rich finish and integrated fruit and oak and come choc-mint scents with freshness and crisp acidity and supple tannins giving backbone to the flesh fruit flavours – has the stuffing to improve over the next five to ten years if you fancy putting a bottle under the stairs. Some great reviews on line so maybe Ed knows what he is talking about! Fantastic value at the price we achieved with vouchers and special offer</p>	Cabernet Sauvignon	<p>Waitrose Normally £11.91 but on offer at £9.15 and we had spend and save voucher and case discount so net to Group at £7.23 a bottle (Four bottles) and one bottle at full price less case discount so £11.31 (one bottle)</p>

	combination. If you do go looking for this wine at Waitrose, do be aware there are a number of varietal wines selling under the Little Giant brand with similar distinctive label and bottle shape so if you like it make sure you are getting a Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon and not a similarly branded Shiraz!		
Red	<p>Mad Fish Cabernet Shiraz, Western Australia 2020 Will Lyons of the Sunday Times recently wrote an article on uplifting wines from down under and selected this blend from the Great Southern and Margaret River regions which combines silky dark cherry and a note of pepper. Mad Fish was founded by surfer Jeff Burch and the Margaret River region has a Mediterranean climate of warm days and mild nights.</p> <p>Here we have the classic Australian grape variety of Shiraz (Syrah in Europe) but tempered with Cabernet Sauvignon.</p>	Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz	Waitrose £8.25 but we had the benefit of spend and save voucher and case discount so £6.35 net (Four bottles) and one bottle at £6.08 after case discount as it has subsequently gone on offer!