

	Welcome: Week 4 2022/2023 Grapes Galore!	Grape Varieties	Cost £/Where from
White	<p>Verdejo – Rueda, Spain 2019 Verdejo (pronounced Verdecho) from Rueda is Spain's answer to Sauvignon Blanc and gives a zesty white wine. This wine is marketed under a Spanish "ClubMasterChef" designation and possibly may be coming towards the end of its drinking window of 2/3 years although Rueda Verdejo has ageing potential! - I noticed it was on a good offer at the Co-op so thought I would give it a go! It is normally £9.00 so no bargain basement at normal shelf price. We are told to expect white fruit aromas, herbal notes, citrus fruit, lemon in a fresh, balanced wine.</p> <p>Rueda is part of the Castilla y Leon province of Northern Spain, next to Galicia. Spain is also another good source of interesting white wines – Albarino springs to mind! Bring out the tapas!</p>	Verdejo	Co Op normally £9.00, on offer at £7.50 and we get 10% off with Karen's mum's former staff discount so net at £6.75 to the group
White	<p>Alvarinho Vento'Z Vinho Verde 2021 – North West Portugal Unsurprisingly perhaps, this wine comes not that far from the Galicia region of North West Spain, famous for its Albarino, and here we have the same grape just across the border, where in Portugal it is Alvarinho and quality is just as good. We tend to think of Vinho Verde as a spritzy, petillant wine with a hint of fizz but this is more in line with an Albarino table wine and it sounds very promising with minerality, intense flavours of apple, tropical fruit, some peach and citrus – a spot on wine for shellfish like chilli garlic prawns! It is by Casal de Ventozela. A bit of an alternative to its better known Spanish cousin and probably a tad cheaper than a Riax Baixas Albarino.</p>	Alvarinho	Waitrose normally £8.25 but at £6.19 as part of 25% off all wines offer
White	<p>Chardonnay – Bonterra Estate Collection 2020, Mendocino County, California, USA The Bonterra Estate is ultimately owned by the Concha y Toro wine group of Chile – it has a very good reputation and is committed to its organic principles</p> <p>The first important point to note about Chardonnay is that Chardonnay wines tend to come in two distinct styles – a very minerally, crisp wine or the buttery, honeyed, rich style (taken to extreme in the Australian Chardonnays of the 80's and 90's). Both have their place – the richer styles being good with rich seafood like lobster thermidor and chicken in rich sauce – the minerally style great with plain grilled fish.</p> <p>The factor that is responsible for these two styles is whether the winemaker uses oak in the fermentation process – and the extent to which it is used and the type of oak – if fermented in stainless steel, a very crisp, fruity wine will result- in this case Bonterra go down a middle road fermenting 30% in stainless steel and 70% in French and American oak barrels - mainly previously used or neutral oak in order to preserve those fruit characteristics but still lending some richness and cream – about 15% of the wine is fermented in new oak to lend the wine a vanilla note.</p>	Chardonnay	Waitrose £11.91 but £8.93 on 25% off all wines offer

	<p>The fruit itself gives green apples, pear and citrus – the combination of methods of fermenting the wine should result in an initially rich buttery creamy flavour of honey and toasted almonds but with aromas of pineapple, citrus lemon and refreshing on the palate and still giving good minerality making the wine bright and clean with a tartness and lemon zest – so in theory the best of both worlds!</p> <p>The use of oak in Chardonnay is the subject of much debate and although no style is strictly better, everyone will have their own preference and are unlikely to enjoy a rich, buttery Chardonnay if they like a minerally wine but the determining factor is probably what are you going to eat it with – a Lobster Thermidor will almost certainly demand a Chardonnay with a degree of oak contact – and never be sniffy about Chardonnay! – if you have a bottle of any quality white Burgundy – Puligny Montrachet, Mersault, Chablis Grand Cru – it will be Chardonnay you are drinking! It is always worth reading the back label on any Chardonnay if you prefer one of the styles – if it mentions vanilla, honey, butter – then you will know oak features – if it stresses minerality, freshness etc then the likelihood is oak has not played a great part.</p> <p>The Holy Grail for your Convenor is to try to pin down examples of sensibly priced Chardonnay that emulates some of the fun of drinking quality Burgundy white without breaking the bank and for this it is useful to look to other parts of the world.</p> <p>James Suckling MW gave this vintage 90 points with fresh fruity nose of white peach, apples and pears with medium to full body and creamy palate with some honey and juicy melon on the close.</p>		
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Red	<p>Amandla Shiraz Zinfandel - Western Cape South Africa 2021 Who could resist this wine label ?! I just had to pick it up and I like the sentiments expressed on the back label particularly appropriate to the U3A Wine Discovery - “drink this wine with your best friends, or use it as an excuse to make new ones!” We have Shiraz blended here with possibly an unusual choice of grape – Zinfandel – this is much grown in California where it is used in some (acquired taste!) sweet Rose wines but it is also likely to be the Italian grape, Primitivo which is behind some of the red wines of Southern Italy, so maybe not so unusual a selection in a red blend – it is capable of long ageing and can produce very lush red wines with blackberry like flavours.</p> <p>This is suggested a great choice with pizza, chorizo empanadas, samosas and nibbles and the wine maker is Praisyl Dlamini –everyone in the company, the HER Wine Collection is black and female according to their website and the wines appear to be a very recent addition at Waitrose.</p>	Shiraz Zinfandel	Waitrose normally £8.25 but at £6.19 as part of 25% off all wines offer
Red	<p>Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet 2019 The Waitrose offer allows us to bring in some premium offerings within budget and Penfolds is one of the world’s top wineries - a magnum (equals two normal size bottles) of 2014 Penfolds Grange Shiraz is £1,080 ! – a magnum of their 2010 Penfolds Kalimna Shiraz from Barossa is £2,802 – and it is great to be able to try (albeit a more humble) example from their stable which shares their winemaking style and philosophy!</p> <p>In this case we have a blend of Shiraz (the classic Australian red grape variety- Syrah in Europe) which provides the fleshy fruit flavour and Cabernet Sauvignon which provides a framework and well rounded structure of fine grained tannins. The use of oak gives spicy paprika and celery salt, hazelnut chocolate sweetness with savoury pan fried pancetta and fine line acidity and tannin gives a supple and plush feel in the mouth – on the nose raspberry coulis, dark cherry and a hint of bergamot with Earl Grey allure, all with exotic spice – in this vintage there was a warm summer with high temperatures and irrigation was crucial although the proximity of the Southern Ocean moderates things allowing for a high quality harvest although with smaller yields.</p> <p>Koonunga Hill was first released in 1976 and it cost Aus \$ 1.69 a bottle – it will still be perfectly drinkable now but will set you back Aus\$250 a bottle at auction so if you can resist drinking it, put a few bottles away – if my maths is right that would be about a 14,000% return over 40 years!</p> <p>Penfolds was founded in 1844 by Dr Christopher and Mary Penfold who planted vine cuttings they had carried on their voyage to Australia – Mary became the leading light at the Winery whilst Dr Penfold focused on his growing medical reputation. They produced popular claret style wines and Rieslings and Mary was determined and full of endeavour. Her daughter Georgina took over in 1884 and she continued experimenting with new production methods. By 1907 Penfolds was South Australia’s largest winery and in 1948 it appointed its first “Chief Winemaker”, Max Schubert who propelled Penfolds onto the global stage by experimenting with wines with considerable ageing potential – and created “Penfolds Grange” in the 1950s.</p>	Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon.	Waitrose £9.17 but less 25% as part of wine offer so £6.87

	<p>Many of Penfolds wines were originally simply named after the area of the cellars where it was aged so we now have for example “Kalimna Bin 28” or “Coonawarra Bin 128” etc. By 1960 Penfold’s board had been won over by the quality of the aged “Grange” wine and Schubert was given full backing to go into serious production – the medals flowed in and it is now one of the most revered wines around the world. In 2008 Penfolds scored a perfect 100 points for its Grange from two of the most influential wine magazines. They have a large and prestigious range.</p>		
Red	<p>Malbec de Balthazar – by Pierrick Harang 2020 Languedoc France We have tried one of Pierrick Harang’s wines before. Just about every bottle of wine we see with Malbec on in big letters comes from Argentina but the grape is behind the wines of Cahors in France.</p> <p>This wine comes Carcassonne in the Languedoc which is a dramatic, walled city that looks like it is straight out of a 1950’s Hollywood movie film set about Robin Hood and his Merry Men. Pierrick Harang brings technical expertise and science to winemaking – there is no family Chateau or extensive vineyards but he comes from a line of wine merchants and oenologists. He works directly with producers and appears to be somewhat of a “négociant” in lending his expertise in winemaking, marketing etc to market wines under his “Balthazar” brand.</p>	Malbec	<p>Waitrose normally £8.25 but at £6.19 as part of 25% off all wines offer</p>