

## Forburys Wine Column November 2009

### Festive Cheers

Christmas time is a chance to raid the cellars, open a precious vintage and introduce relatives to the delight of great wines and ports, but this year, perhaps more than others in recent memory, budget are lightly to be tight.

Although it pains me to admit it, Supermarket are certainly doing their bit to ease this situation with reduction and discounts reaching ridiculous levels. Jacob's Creek for instance is one of the best of the major brands and is selling at around five pounds mark.

With energy, transport and production cost all rising fast, not to mention a fluctuating exchange rate, someone somewhere has to pay, and you can be sure it's not the supermarkets, it's the producers, and if you look closely, you can see an ominous trend emerging. As margins are squeezed even further winemakers are likely to go elsewhere to sell their goods leaving the UK market as a dumping ground for gallons of man produced plank.

Having said that, there are plenty of great value wines on the market that will not decimate the house hold budget, with this in mind, this year marks something in a departure for this column as I go in search of the best deals in the high street. In my House, Christmas day start with Champagne, there are fantastic offers in champagne prices or alternatively try a sparkling wines such as "Prosecco spumante" or "Rocco'venezia Rustico" or a "Cava Masmiralda Rosado", all around six Pounds mark Asda, Aldi...

When it's time to eat, most guests are happy with a glass of white wine, Waitrose has a good selection of Sauvignon Blanc at around Seven pound, for something a little more upmarket, Oddbins is selling good New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc from the Marlborough area at around seven pound fifty.

By the time the turkey arrives, most palate will be feeling the first sign of fatigue, so you need a vibrant red wine with rich cherry fruit and gallons of scintillating acidity with a charming kindness, Majestic has a good choise at around five pounds ninety nine per bottle.

For dessert you can finish on a nice Champagne or a nice port with your stilton. Remember, life is too short to drink bad wines, so make the right choices for you and your guests, quality rather than quantity is always best remembered.

My suggestions;

- ◆ The ned waihopai River Sauvignon Blanc 2009, Marlborough @ £5.99
- ◆ Prosecco Di Conegliano, Valdobliadene Dry, Italy @ £7.99
- ◆ Vacqueras 2006, Rhone Valley, France @ £9.59
- ◆ Reserve Perrin, Cotes Du Rhone 2007 @ £6.95
- ◆

All available from [www.majestic.co.uk](http://www.majestic.co.uk)

Happy Festive season.

Xavier Le Bellego  
Forbury's restaurant