

Napoleon Red Case

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WINE CLUB MANAGER

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Christmas will once again soon be upon us and in my house, one of the most important parts of the celebration is choosing the wine! Your November Napoleon Red Case should have some brilliant options for festive entertaining. The 2005 Vieux Robin, at almost a decade old, is drinking beautifully now and is the perfect wine for roast beef if turkey is not on the menu. 2010 was an outstanding vintage for Beaujolais and the Moulin à Vent will pair admirably with cold cuts on Boxing Day. Finally, the long-lived 2003 Château Musar will be a great match for the festive cheeseboard.

2010 MOULIN À VENT, LA ROCHELLE, OLIVIER MERLIN



Olivier Merlin's main business is in the white wines of the Mâconnais but he couldn't resist buying a plot of old vines (planted 1937) in a prime spot in neighbouring Moulin à Vent, the finest appellation of the Beaujolais capable of making wines built to last.

Medium deep, red purple in colour, with an impressive bouquet of mixed red fruits leading to a complex palate. The bright fruit continues interwoven with an attractively crisp acidity and some fine grained tannins. Now-2017.

Food matches	Charcuterie or chicken salads
Price	£25.50 per bottle
How to serve	Decant an hour in advance
Region	Beaujolais, France
Grape variety	Gamay
Product code	80345B
Style	Dry, medium to full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Red sandstone on granite
Buyer	Jasper Morris MW

Tasting notes

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MORGON OR FLEURIE

2005 CH. VIEUX ROBIN



Vieux Robin is a perfect example of all that a Médoc Cru Bourgeois should be. It sits in the heart of the proper Medoc, right at the top of the peninsular and is a true example of *terroir* with different soil types allowing each variety to have its place. I have always enjoyed these wines, even in lesser years, but the 2005 proves exceptional value.

A recent tasting of a number of 2005s reminded me just how good this vintage, and the quality of the wine, is. Deeply coloured with gorgeously ripe, vivid summer pudding fruit on the nose and crisp, pure cassis on the palate. Crystalline fruit quality and superb balance. Now-2018.

Food matches	The best sausages you can find
Price	£24.00 per bottle
How to serve	Decant for an hour or so
Region	Médoc, Bordeaux, France
Grape variety	Cabernet Sauvignon 55%, Merlot 40%, Cabernet Franc 3% and Petit Verdot 2%
Product code	98013B
Style	Dry, full-bodied red wine
Terroir	A mix of deep gravel, some clay and lighter sand
Buyer	Philip Moulin

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like: BORDEAUX BLENDS FROM
SOUTHERN FRANCE OR SOUTH AMERICA

2012 GRANGIOVESE TOSCANA, SESTI



After providing neighbourly help assisting in nearby vineyards and wineries, Giuseppe Sesti soon discovered his own passion and talent for winemaking, planting his own vines at Castello di Argiano in 1991. Having studied astronomy, it is not surprising that many of his winemaking processes follow the lunar cycle. He is expertly assisted by his daughter Elisa.

100 percent Sangiovese from Rosso di Montalcino vineyards, Sesti's "Grangiovese" is a fresher, juicier, medium bodied take on the Tuscan classic. And such was the 2012 vintage, with its snowy winter and summer drought, that it's immensely gratifying too, with crunchy summer fruit and spid currant flavours. Very moreish. Now-2017.

Food matches	Pasta dishes
Price	£17.95 per bottle
How to serve	At 18°C
Region	Tuscany, Italy
Grape variety	Sangiovese
Product code	Z2037B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	Ochre red iron rich 'terra argianese'
Buyer	David Berry Green

Tasting notes

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ROSSO DI MONTALCINO OR CHIANTI CLASSICO

2012 LES OBRIERS DE LA PÈIRA



The somewhat unlikely alliance of Kiwi composer Rob Dougan and Margaux-trained winemaker Jérémie Depierre appears to have been destined for greatness from the start. Investment in the best terroir in the now celebrated Terrasses du Larzac has been matched by great maturity in the winery and the best wines, with a little bottle age, are great indeed.

Here we have the complexity born of a great wine in a great vintage. The aromas are dominated by tar, roses and spicy fruit; then the palate is opulent and beautifully textured, with black fruits, finely wrought tannins and firm refreshing acidity. The dominant Cinsault component adds a floral lift and a seductive silky mouthfeel. Now-2016.

Food matches	Casserole, moussaka, lighter game dishes
Price	£18.45 per bottle
How to serve	Decant an hour before serving at room temperature
Region	Languedoc, France
Grape variety	Cinsault 65%, Carignan 35%
Product code	96688B
Style	Dry, medium to full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Pudding stones and other alluvial deposits over limestone
Buyer	Simon Field MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

MONTPEYROUX OR FAUGÈRES

2003 CHÂTEAU MUSAR ROUGE



Founded in 1930 by a 20-year-old Gaston Hochar, Musar has been managed since 1959 by his oenologue son Serge, and more recently by the latter's son Gaston. Through all the vicissitudes of Lebanon's recent history Musar has made its iconic, Bordeaux inspired wines and shipped them to an appreciative, worldwide army of customers.

A profound garnet colour points to the concentration and maturity of this wine. The nose alludes to the heat of the Bekaa with its notes of baked fruit, baked earth and exotic spices. The palate is full, ripe, and rounded, with a fine grained tannic structure. Perfect now, but capable of evolving over another decade. Now-2025.

Food matches	Robust red meats, particularly if spiced
Price	£25.00 per bottle
How to serve	Decant an hour before serving at room temperature
Region	Bekaa Valley, Lebanon
Grape variety	Cabernet Sauvignon 40%, Cinsault 30% and Carignan 30%
Product code	73994B
Style	Dry, full-bodied red wine
Terroir	1,000m altitude and 300+ days pa sunshine make this ideal for long-lived wines
Buyer	Martin Hudson MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

BORDEAUX OR SOUTHERN FRENCH WINES

2011 CROZES-HERMITAGE, TROIS CHÊNES, EMMANUEL DARNAUD



One of the leading lights in the new wave of Crozes-Hermitage producers, Emmanuel Darnaud is based in Pont de L'Isère in the southern part of the appellation. His life's work, hitherto unstated, but clear to me, is to demonstrate that the very best wines from Crozes-Hermitage can equal those from Hermitage itself in quality and profundity.

As the name suggests, three types of oak have been used to mature this wine, lending elegance and complexity, but not overwhelming the wine's structural make-up and inherent approachability. Blackberry, peat, tapenade and crème de cassis notes are captured on both nose and palate, the latter long and satisfying. Now-2017.

Food matches	Most roasts, calves' liver, lasagne
Price	£22.85 per bottle
How to serve	Open 45 minutes before serving at room temperature; no need to decant
Region	Crozes-Hermitage, Rhône Valley
Grape variety	Syrah
Product code	94823B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	Small stones/alluvial with mainly clay subsoil
Buyer	Simon Field MW

Tasting notes

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HERMITAGE OR ST JOSEPH