

Wellington Red Case

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WINE CLUB MANAGER

Barbara



French winemakers are well represented in March's Wellington Red Case with a rich and full-bodied St Emilion Grand Cru, a classy Carignan-dominated blend from the Languedoc and an expressive, seductively complex Ermitage from Northern Rhône producer Domaine Ferraton – the undisputable highlight of the case for me. Looking further afield, the New Zealand Pinot Noir from Isabel Estate is another stand-out wine. Layers of concentrated, softly spiced red fruit are supported by sinew-like tannins, making this beautiful to drink now but with the potential to age for another six or seven years – if you can resist it for that long.

2012 CH. FRANC LA ROSE, ST EMILION



Bordeaux winemakers since 1620, the Trocard family believe that their history and their future are inextricably linked to the wines they produce. The six hectares which make up Ch. Franc la Rose are situated in St Christophe des Bardes, in the appellation of St Emilion. The vines here have an average age of 40 years.

Bright ruby in colour, this classic blend of Bordeaux varieties is velvety in texture with persistent notes of plum, cherry and blackcurrant on the nose and palate. Ripe tannins and subtle hints of spice, pepper and tobacco add complexity to the long, soft finish. Drink now to 2020.

Food matches	Roast chicken or rich pasta dishes
Price	£32.25 per bottle
How to serve	Decant an hour or two before serving at cool room temperature
Region	Bordeaux, France
Grape variety	Merlot 75%, Cabernet Franc 25%
Product code	Y5659B
Style	Dry, rich, full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Clay and limestone
Buyer	Mark Pardoe MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

RIOJA RESERVA OR GOOD QUALITY CHILEAN MERLOT

2008 ERMITAGE, LES DIONNIÈRES, DOMAINE FERRATON



An undiscovered gem, Ferraton own some of the prime vineyards on the famous (and famously small) hill of Hermitage. Now owned by Michel Chapoutier and loyal to his rigorous biodynamic philosophy, Ferraton is nonetheless run independently, and the wines have a distinct and distinctly impressive house style.

Dionnières is a mid-slope granitic vineyard, the fruits of its 35-year-old vines treated to 18 months in *barrigue*, a third of which are new. Haunting aromatics of violets, red fruit and spice seduce and lead to a palate which is generous, richly fruity and bristling with potential. Drink now to 2020.

Food matches	Game pie, grouse, beef casserole, guinea fowl
Price	£51.10 per bottle
How to serve	Decant an hour or two before serving
Region	Rhône, France
Grape variety	Syrah
Product code	75828B
Style	Dry, full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Solid granite with a top soil of clay, pudding stones and alluvial deposits
Buyer	Simon Field MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

ST JOSEPH OR CORNAS

2011 LE SOULA ROUGE, CÔTES CATALANES



Deep in the rugged Côtes Catalanes of Roussillon, the village of St Martin de Fenouillet is home to this outstanding winery, created a decade ago by local legend Gerald Gauby and farmed on organic principles. A healthy cocktail of altitude and old vines underpin the quality here.

Low yields and 80-year-old Carignan vines have conspired to fashion a superb illustration of Roussillon's burgeoning reputation. Red berry fruits dominate the nose with layers of complexity supported by hints of spice, mint and black olives. Firm, grainy tannins and a silky texture are held in perfect counterpoint by elegant balancing acidity. Darkly seductive. Drink now to 2022.

Food matches	Duck with olives, beef stroganoff, risotto, guinea fowl
Price	£24.95 per bottle
How to serve	Decant an hour before serving at room temperature
Region	Languedoc-Roussillon, France
Grape variety	Carignan 60%, Syrah 35%, Grenache 5%
Product code	Z1003B
Style	Dry, full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Decomposed granite and black schist
Buyer	Simon Field MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

COTEAUX DE LANGUEDOC REDS

2014 ISABEL ESTATE PINOT NOIR



Isabel Estate was established in 1980, when Marlborough was still unknown to most British drinkers. The first plantings were of Chardonnay, followed by Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Pinots Noir and Gris. The estate's wines are today made by Jeremy McKenzie and Carlos Orgiles Ortega, a dynamic duo who, between them, have worked in virtually every major wine-producing country on Earth.

Aromas of fresh cherry mingle seamlessly with cedar and sweet spice (the oak influence is impeccably judged), while the concentration of fruit on the palate speaks of the vineyard's rich clay soils. This is drinking beautifully now, but has the structure to age gracefully, exchanging its bright primary fruit for more complex, savoury characteristics. Drink now to 2024.

Food matches	Poached or grilled salmon
Price	£21.85 per bottle
How to serve	Serve just below room temperature; no need to decant
Region	Marlborough, New Zealand
Grape variety	Pinot Noir
Product code	Y3772B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	The estate's most clay-rich soils
Buyer	Will Heslop

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

RED BURGUNDY OR CALIFORNIAN PINOT NOIR

2014 VIÑEDOS ALCOHUAZ GRUS



The Viñedos de Alcohuz project began a decade ago, a collaboration between the flamboyant Flaño family and ace winemaker Marcelo Retamal, who shared a vision of crafting world-class wines at a magical site (untouched by viticulture or anything else) some 2,000 metres above sea-level in Chile's Elqui Valley.

Ripe red fruit aromas positively erupt from the glass. There's a distinct "wet rock" mineral character to the palate, whose silky texture is the result, in part, of 12 months' maturation in concrete eggs. The finish has a saline lick which makes you want to ride this roller-coaster of a wine again and again. Drink now to 2022.

Food matches	Cazuela of chicken or beef
Price	£21.95 per bottle
How to serve	Serve just below room temperature
Region	Elqui Valley, Chile
Grape variety	Syrah 50%, balance made up by Grenache, Malbec and Petite Sirah
Product code	Y5071B
Style	Dry, medium to full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Rocky soils with low fertility
Buyer	Will Heslop

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

SOUTHERN RHÔNE REDS

2014 ROSSO DI MONTALCINO, LISINI



The Lisini estate has been in the Clementi-Lisini family since the 16th century. The vines are exceptionally well located in the southern half of Montalcino, just north of the village of Sant'Angelo in Colle and overlooking the Val d'Orcia. This glorious location, combined with south-facing vineyards, results in full-bodied, age-worthy, rich wines.

This wine has a bright cherry perfume with a sweet core that persists on the finish. Wild berries and herbs give additional complexity and interest. The tannins are quite firm, but the juicy concentration helps soften their appearance. Drink now to 2022.

Food matches	Rabbit stew, parmesan cheese, lasagne
Price	£22.00 per bottle
How to serve	Decant 30 minutes before serving at room temperature
Region	Tuscany, Italy
Grape variety	Sangiovese
Product code	Y2897B
Style	Dry, full-bodied red wine
Terroir	Marne and iron-rich red silt soils
Buyer	Katherine Dart MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

CHIANTI CLASSICO