

Client: Tagus Creek
Source: The Observer (Food Monthly)
Date: 20 May 2012
Page: 49
Reach: 273015
Size: 490cm2
Value: 8565.2


Tagus Creek

 Jubilee special

Raise your glasses

Throwing a jubilee bash? Here's OFM's top bottles for under £10. By **David Williams**



S However you feel about the monarchy, you have to admit that the Diamond Jubilee's four-day weekend is a fine excuse for a party. And whether it is a genuinely patriotic celebration, an ironic throwback to the street parties of 1977, or a punky republican riposte, you're going to need some wine to help things along.

That's not as easy as it sounds: party wines are tricky to get right. If you're having friends round for dinner, then you can take the food as your cue, matching a wine to each course. However, if you're having a party of any scale, it's likely that you'll be laying on nibbles or a buffet rather than sitting down to a meal, and that spread is likely to include a diverse range of flavours, from salty crisps to smoked fish to fatty and spicy meat. You'll also have a range of tastes to cater to, from those who drink nothing but rosé to the serious wine buff with a liking for tannic Bordeaux. And since you'll be stumping up for several bottles, you'll need to do all that on a budget.

The key is to locate the middle-ground without falling into the middle-of-the-road. You're

looking for wines that favour fruit and refreshment over tannin, acidity and complexity, crowd-pleasing wines with a bit of character but not too many rough edges.

For whites, my standby would be a decent sauvignon blanc, which has just the right mix of crisp acidity and generous fruit flavour. Something like Villa Maria's consistently excellent passionfruit-scented Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand 2011, which is widely available at just under a tenner (£9.49 at Tesco, for example), would be ideal.

But for a slightly leaner, more citrusy, budget alternative, Aldi's Bordeaux Blanc (£4.19, Aldi) is a white-grapefruit-driven blend of sauvignon with a pinch of sémillon which, served stone-cold, doubles up nicely as aperitif.

When it comes to reds, I'd generally go for lighter wines with little or no oak and an abundance of juicy fruit. Beaujolais does this well, and Georges Duboeuf's Beaujolais Villages 2009 is a succulent berry-fruited example (£8.99, Waitrose). From the Rhône Valley, Domaine La Roche Costières de Nîmes, France 2010 (£7.50, Adnams, cellarandkitchen.adnams.co.uk) is a grenache-syrah blend that performs a similar trick with a bit more depth and sunny ripeness, while from further south, Marks & Spencer has a pair of excellent Sicilians in Popolino Rosso 2011 and Sicilia Shiraz 2011 (£4.99 and £5.99).

No party is complete without

Party wines are tricky. You'll have a range to cater to, from those who only drink rosé to the serious wine buff

a bit of fizz, although the cheaper end of champagne (under £20) is one of the wine world's more miserable places. Fortunately, there are plenty of other French fizz options. Owned by the classy champagne house Taittinger, Bouvet-Ladubay's Saumur Brut uses the same methods as champagne with a different grape (chenin blanc) in an elegant, punchily fruity and affordable fizz (£9.99 if you buy two bottles, Majestic, majestic.co.uk). Outside France, both the Tesco Finest Bisol Prosecco di Valdobbiadene and Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Prosecco Conegliano are charmingly sherbety, sub-£10 fun. But the truly patriotic might prefer to push the Diamond Jubilee barge out and bust the £10 budget for a top-flight English fizz such as Ridgeview Cuvée Merret Bloomsbury, West Sussex 2009 (£21.84, Waitrose), a sophisticated wine that will appeal to roundhead and cavalier alike. **OFM**
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Red Tesco Finest Central Otago Pinot Noir, New Zealand 2010
(£9.99, Tesco)

Well-made Kiwi pinot noir is one of the world's most enjoyable reds, all silky texture and succulent, juicy red berry fruit. It is generally expensive, but this abundantly fruity version is great value at this price.



Rosé Cerasuolo Vigna Corvino Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Italy
(£7.25, The Wine Society, thewinesociety.com)

The best affordable reds of Montepulciano d'Abruzzo are all about abundant juicy dark cherry fruit. This rosé is similar, though with ripe red cherries accompanied by a twist of fresh herbs.



White Tons de Duorum Branco, Douro, Portugal
(£7.95, Tanners, tanners-wines.co.uk)

There is a totally tropical taste to this white blend of local varieties, but that's where any similarities with a certain soft drink begin and end. Whistle-clean with subtle notes of white flowers, it's very easy to drink.



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Sparkling Lindauer Rosé, New Zealand NV (£7.99, Majestic)

Consistently one of the best-priced New World sparklers around, this classic – a blend of the champagne varieties chardonnay and pinot noir with a little pinotage – is a refreshing mix of strawberry and cranberry flavours.



Sparkling red Brown Brothers Cienna Rosso, Victoria, Australia NV (£9.49, Waitrose)

A sweet red fizz from Australia sounds a bit too out there to be a crowd pleaser. But everyone I've served this low-alcohol oddball to has been won over by its joyously explosive cherry flavours. It works with chocolate, too.



Sparkling Prosecco Valdobbiadene Brut Jelo Bisol NV (£10, thechampagnecompany.com)

More than champagne – which can be acidic – prosecco is the party wine par excellence. This is a slightly more serious example, with a slightly more serious price, but it's worth it for the extra elegance and appley fruit.

KATHERINE ROSE