

Client: Tagus Creek
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Tagus Creek

Jane MacQuit Testing times for wine lovers



So what's your taste in wine? Do you like crisp, tart, bone-dry whites such as chablis, or are you more of a tinned peaches and tropical fruit type, who prefers big, fat Aussie chardonnay and Kiwi sauvignon blanc? Is your taste in reds for blood, guts and thunder or do you prefer soft, silky, crowd-pleasing gluggers such as merlot from the New World? Or perhaps you have a soft spot for one of the most delicate, complex and difficult to appreciate grapes, such as Burgundy's pinot noir.

Trying to understand what prompts drinkers to pick one over another has taxed wine buyers for decades. Having seen fashions in label info come and go, with both body (A-E) and sweetness (1-8) graded, and tasting notes ever more effusive, I'm not certain how helpful any of it is.

Some labels are misleading. Why does Sainsbury's classify last week's admittedly delicious waxy, appley 2012 Taste the Difference Prosecco — magnums only now at £13.32 until Tuesday — as "crisp" when it has 14g per litre of residual sugar, compared with most non-vintage champagne at just 12g? Ditto, why doesn't Marks & Spencer's "fresh and lively" description on the label of its £7.99 2011 Côtes du Luberon tally with the contents of this splendid, medium-weight, ripe, nutty, 13 per cent alcohol southern Rhône satellite white?

The latest initiative in this tricky "what's your wine?" game comes from Morrisons and is called the Taste Test, dreamt up for it by Bibendum. It classifies drinkers' wine preferences as sweet, fresh, smooth or

intense, with 13 flavour-profile numbers shared between the four. This tool aims to take the guesswork out of wine shopping.

I'm not so sure, especially when its "science" revolves around your answer to three questions: do you add salt to food, how do you take your coffee and do you prefer full sugar or no-added-sugar fizzy drinks? Armed with your flavour-profile number, say 7 in the smooth category, you

look for similarly highlighted wines on morrisonscellar.com.

So far just one Morrisons store is arranged by these categories rather than a country-by-country display. I took the Morrisons test (morrisonscellar.com/shop/taste-test) and my espresso-addicted palate was rated "intense" — a surprise, as tub-thumping shiraz or massive zinfandel is not my favourite wine style.

I am all for demystifying wine but Morrisons has failed to take account of how everyone's palate changes according to mood, season, how many bottles are on the go and, importantly, the flavours in the food you are going to enjoy it with.

Two juicy, ridiculously cheap, easy-drinking French 2012s to come my way that I intend to buy long are the Wine Society's aromatic, smoky, nutty, apricot and hawthorn-charged 2012 Les Pierres Bordes Marsanne-Viognier, Pays d'Oc, £5.75, and the jolly, plum and raspberry spice of Waitrose's £4.79 2012 Cuvée Chasseur red, predominantly carignan and en route now. Would I describe either as "intense"? Definitely not.



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This week's best buys

and citrus-spiked spring white made from a hotchpotch of grapes.

The keeper



2005 Finca Los Altos Gran Reserva, Valdepeñas, Spain
Majestic Wine £7.49, or two for £5.99 each till April 29
Enjoy this gorgeous, ripe, sandalwood-scented, oak-aged red right now with a juicy steak.



A great vintage in Bordeaux and even this humble Médoc bursts with rich, ripe, beefy, curranty, cabernet sauvignon fruit



2011 Tons de Duorum Red, Douro, Portugal
Tanners, £8.50
Much as I admire the Douro's whites, the reds, made from the same varieties as port, are the stars of the show. This amazing, ripe, full, hearty, spiced, baked plum of a red is great value.



2011 Tons de Duorum White, Douro, Portugal
Tanners (01743234500), £8.30
Every bit as tasty as the inaugural Tons de Duorum vintages, so lap up this coriander, parsley



2009 Les Hautes Roches, Médoc, Bordeaux
Majestic Wine, £9.99, or two for £6.99 each

2010 Greywacke Marlborough Chardonnay, Kevin Judd, New Zealand
Liberty Wines (020-7720 5350), £25.99, *Colchester Wine* (01206 713560), down to £23.99
Kiwi wine wizard Kevin Judd started Greywacke in 2009 and has produced awesome wines ever since. This delicious 14.5 per cent alcohol chardonnay is fermented on its own yeast and