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It Asda be these reds

SYRAH, syrah on the wall...who is the fairest-priced wine supermarket of all?

In reality, they're all partial to serious discounting on some exceptional wines - and spotting these short-lived, eye-catching offers can bring a smile to the face of anyone from occasional drinkers to connoisseurs.

For consistently low prices plenty has been said and written about Aldi and Lidl and much of it's true. They both offer some good value wines that stay at bargain prices.

However a few years ago I proclaimed Asda the best-value wine supermarket and despite a few hiccups I've seen little to change that opinion.

Its latest crop of own-label wines includes a cellar full of awards winners and today I bring you three 'Extra Specials' that are all selling for just a fiver.

I start with the excellent International Wine Challenge (IWC) silver-medal winning **Asda Extra Special Barbera d'Asti 2013**. It's made by large-scale Piedmont co-operative Araldica which specialises in wines native to the northern Italian region and supplies a number of UK supermarkets.

Their star is rising and they've played a blinder with this one - managing to tame the grape's natural acidity enough to make it an easy-drinking, crowd-pleaser with bags of character. It's loaded with cherry aromas and flavours up front. But it goes on to reveal real depth and spice which balance beautifully with the wine's juiciness. It's a booze-laden (14.5%) steal for just £5.

Next up (or down) is a brace

ANDREW CAMPBELL

ON WINE



from Portugal, starting with **Asda Extra Special Douro 2014**, made by big-time producer Falua. That's the award-winning company that brings us the familiar Tagus Creek

label and, like Araldica, produces several UK supermarket own-brand wines.

Asda's Douro is made from touriga franca, touriga nacional and tinta roriz (tempranillo) grapes which are also used in the production of the region's better known offering, Port.

Aromas of dark cherry lead to a full-flavoured mix of cherry, violets, lavender, fresh herbs and a hint of vanilla. It's seriously tasty and not a million miles from the £8-a-bottle **Morrisons Signature Douro Red 2013** that I reviewed a few weeks back. That was also made by Falua and collected an IWC bronze - although it was a different vintage.

Falua is also responsible for **Asda Extra Special Dao 2013** which is crafted from Portugal's top red grape, touriga nacional, with some added Aragonez (yet another name for tempranillo) and Jaen (better known as Mencia over the border in Spain).

IWC commended, it's a massively herbal concoction with dark cherry flavours, hints of oaky vanilla and bags and bags of fresh herbs. It's perhaps not as good as the Douro, but I still like it -

especially with the £5 price tag.

Now for three Australian offerings from Asda, all for a fiver or less - starting with the excellent **Zilzie Shiraz Viognier 2014** which is just £4.75 a bottle.

Bronze medallist at the International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC), this is exceptional value for a seriously juicy, easy-drinking party wine. It's got all those typical Australian shiraz features: plenty of creamy oak and spice but coupled with masses of dark fruit and plum flavours.

Reduced to just £4 is the ubiquitous **Banrock Station Shiraz Mataro 2014**. Produced by Accolade Wines (better known as Hardy's), this is a consistently good wine given its bargain-bucket price tag. Clean dark fruit aromas lead to black cherry, blackcurrant and spicy plum flavours including cloves and pepper. How do they grow vines, harvest, ferment, bottle, ship across the world, pay tax and still make money on this very commendable wine?

Quality-conscious South Australians of Venetian descent, De Bortoli, win a mass of awards every year - particularly for their sweet wines - and are another supplier to many UK supermarkets. Lucky us.

Asda is selling the highly-consistent DB Family Selection range for £5 and the **2013 Cabernet Merlot** is good at the price. Smoky blackcurrant, mint and vanilla aromas lead to juicy dark fruit flavours with plenty of herbs and dusting of spice.

So there you have it... six top value reds from Asda and not a white in sight.



» Silver-medal winning Asda Extra Special Barbera d'Asti 2013