

Richard Bampfield's notes for the Lidl Wine Tour for December

I write this while in the middle of a series of “wine tastings in the dark” with Lidl in Ireland. What we find is that, unsurprisingly, everyone has different tastes – especially when label, price and all preconceptions are removed by having our sense of sight temporarily removed. Therefore I am loathe to recommend “the ideal wine for Christmas lunch/dinner” because we all have different preferences – and it seems presumptuous to do so. My suggestions below all have their place in the glass over Christmas and New Year – and, in my house at least, several of them may well be open at the same time in order to stand the best chance of finding something that appeals to all!

This Wine Tour will be in store from Thursday, November 28th. Apologies in advance if not all these wines are available in all stores.

Sparkling

Codorniu 150th Anniversary Brut - £8.99 – Impressive depth of flavour for a Cava – certainly enough to stand up to salmon blinis and even pigs in blankets!

Champagne Bissinger Rosé Brut - £21.99 – Highly popular Champagne at Lidl, fashionably pale, beautifully balanced and with that hint of red fruits that marks it out as a rosé.

Whites

Sauvignon Blanc, Walter Skoff, Austria - £10.99 – From a producer clearly born to be a winemaker, this is outstanding, crisp white – at least for those who like their Sauvignon bone-dry.

Suelo Torrontes, Argentina - £7.99 (sorry if not available in all stores) – Stunning, perfumed white from a white grape only grown in Argentina. Dry, textured, unusual and appetising.

Chateau Dereszla Furmint, Tokaji, Hungary - £7.49 – Highly flavoursome for a wine with only 12% alcohol – and with the oak ageing really well handled so it genuinely adds both flavour and finesse.

Rosé

Deluxe Argentinian White Malbec - £6.99 – I must admit that not all white or rosé versions of Malbec have won me over – but this is actually rather well done in a drier style.

Reds

Gestos Malbec + Malbec - £8.99 – A welcome return for this top-class Argentinian Malbec, effortlessly combining depth of flavour, pleasure and refreshment.

Carmen Frida Kahlo Merlot Reserva - £7.99 – Worth it for the label alone, a tribute to Mexico's legendary artist Frida Kahlo, this is flavoursome Merlot with fruit and oak in good balance.

Viña Albali Gran Reserva - £7.49 – Rather exciting reminder of how a mature Spanish red can actually smell of Christmas! Not dissimilar to Rioja – and just as complex and satisfying.

Vino Nobile de Montepulciano Riserva - £9.99 – Another well-matured red, showing good complexity of flavour.

Sweet white

Passito di Pantelleria - £12.99 (50cl) – Now becoming a regular at Christmas, this is simply delicious dessert wine with enough flavour to stand up to mince pies, Christmas pudding and.....stilton!

Made by Derezsla Tokaji Aszú 5 Puttonyos - £9.99 (50cl) – Serious competition for the Passito above! A pair of cracking dessert wines – why not buy both and compare them?

Happy Christmas!