



Jamie Goode

Our expert picks his top 30 white wines

Last week I took you through my 30 favourite reds, all in the shops this Christmas. This week it's the turn of the whites – and a pretty lip-smacking selection they are. This is purely a personal list, with some regions and varieties over-represented, but there are plenty

of interesting varieties for you to try out. From the sharp Chilean Pedro Ximenez to a sophisticated viognier that's under £5, there's something here to suit all palates and pockets. And I'm pretty confident that if I like them, so will you.

**STAR
WINE**

The Liberator The Francophile #2 2008, Stellenbosch, South Africa £9.95, The Wine Society (01438 741177, www.thewinesociety.com) 13.5% alcohol

This is a fine expression of the viognier grape, offering excellent value for money. It shows rich pear and peach fruit with a hint of apricot. The perfect partner for roast chicken.



Bellingham The Bernard Series Hand-Picked Viognier 2011, Coastal Region, South Africa

£10.99, Majestic, 13.5% alcohol

A rich, ripe viognier with apricot, pear and toast flavours, this also has appealing spice and vanilla notes from ageing in oak barrels.



Thierry Delaunay Sauvignon de Touraine 2010, Loire, France

£7.99, Majestic, 12% alcohol

Watch out New Zealand! This is a ripper of a sauvignon from the Loire, with fresh grassy, grapefruit and gooseberry character. It's lively and pure.



Thornbury Riesling 2008, Waipara, New Zealand

£10.99, Tesco, 12% alcohol

Wonderfully intense citrus fruits dominate this zippy white, together with peach and pear richness and a hint of sweetness. It would even work with belly pork.



Torres Viña Sol 2010, Catalunya, Spain

£4.48, Asda, 11.5% alcohol

Viña Sol is a reliable, quite delicious Spanish white from Torres, offering bright citrus and white peach fruit with good acidity. It's slightly lower in alcohol, too.



Asda Extra Special Fiano 2010, Sicily, Italy

£5, Asda, 12.5% alcohol

If you're looking for a characterful white with lots of flavour, this is for you. It has a beguiling perfume of nuts, wax, peach, pear and spice, and is rich and soft-textured in the mouth.



Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc Private Bin 2011, Marlborough, New Zealand

£9.99, Majestic, Waitrose, Booths, Budgens, Spar, 13% alcohol

A highly aromatic sauvignon with passion fruit and grapefruit, as well as a fresh, herby edge, this is lively and crisp.



Bellingham The Bernard Series Grenache Blanc Viognier 2010, South Africa

£10.99, Tesco, 14% alcohol

This sophisticated white has lovely aromatics: peach, pear and coconut. In the mouth it's generous and complex with rich fruit and some spicy oak notes.



Quinta de Azevedo Vinho Verde 2010, Portugal

£7.49 or £6.99 each for two, Majestic, 11.5% alcohol

From the Vinho Verde region on the northern Atlantic coast of Portugal, this is a light, refreshing and fruity wine with attractive notes of lemon and white peach.



Zalze Bush Vine Chenin Blanc 2011, South Africa

£6.99, Tesco, 13.5% alcohol

Chenin blanc is South Africa's speciality white grape, and this is a deliciously fresh wine with herb, citrus and pear flavours. I'd try it with garlic roast chicken.



Tons de Duorum Branco 2010, Douro, Portugal

£8.49, The Real Wine Company (0800 322992, www.therealwineco.co.uk), 13% alcohol

A deliciously fresh white with notes of herb, grapefruit pith and lemon, this has very pure fruit and plenty of personality.



Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2011, Marlborough, New Zealand

£18.99, Waitrose, Majestic, 13.5% alcohol

This helped put New Zealand sauvignon blanc on the map and is back on form with superb grapefruit, white peach and elderflower flavours.



Tim Adams Clare Valley Riesling 2009, Australia

£10.29, Tesco, 11.5% alcohol

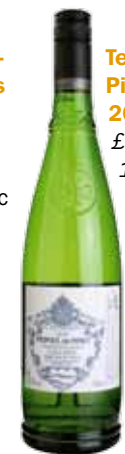
This is a million miles away from sweet German riesling – it's tight, pithy, lemony and bone dry with high acidity. It will certainly wake up your taste buds.



Jean Dumont Pouilly-Fumé Les Charmilles 2010, Loire, France

£8.99, Co-op, 12.5% alcohol

A brilliantly aromatic sauvignon with crisp green apple, blackcurrant and passion-fruit flavours, which combine well with subtle herbiness. It's top class.



Tesco Finest Picpoul de Pinet 2010, France

£7.29, Tesco, 12.5% alcohol

Picpoul is a southern French white known for its affinity with seafood, which it matches superbly. This is crisp and fresh with citrus and pear fruit.



Marlborough Sounds Sauvignon Blanc 2011, Marlborough, New Zealand £5.49 until January 3, Co-op, 13% alcohol
Grassy and assertive, this is benchmark New Zealand sauvignon with lovely balance and some subtle green pepper notes as well as ripe fruit.



Terredora Falanghina 2010, Italy £10.49 or £8.49 each for two, Majestic, 12.5% alcohol
Falanghina is the grape variety here, and it makes fine wine: this example shows bright, lemony fruit with nutty notes, as well as a hint of saltiness.



Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Albariño 2009, Rias Baixas, Spain £6.99, Sainsbury's, 12.5% alcohol
I really like this expression of the famous Spanish grape albariño. It shows fresh peach and white pear fruit with a nice mineral streak.



Château La Rezé Organic Minervois Blanc 2010, France £8.99, Tesco, 13% alcohol
Here's a brilliant organic white with flavours of peach, pear, almond and citrus. Textured, broad and mouth-filling, this would be a dream with fish and chips.



Asda Extra Special Gewürztraminer 2010, France £7.87, Asda, 13.5% alcohol
Attractive and just off-dry with a hint of sweetness, this has grape and lychee flavours and a spicy finish. Not many wines suit Asian food but this one will.



Muga Rioja Blanco 2010, Spain £10.99 or £8.99 each for two, Majestic, 13% alcohol
Most people think of Rioja as a red wine region, but it does make good whites, such as this fresh, vivid, taut example that has just a hint of spicy oak in the background.



Asda Extra Special Viognier 2010 Pays d'Oc, France £4.50, Asda, 13% alcohol
Here's a classic expression of the viognier grape, with peach and pear fruit flavours as well as a subtle hint of vanilla. It's a very decent wine at a quite exceptional price.



Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Gavi 2010, Italy £8.29, Sainsbury's, 12% alcohol
This gavi is a fresh northern Italian white, offering plenty of citrus and white plum flavours, plus a hint of what I can only describe as talcum powder. Lovely stuff.



JJ McWilliam Verdelho 2010, southeast Australia £6.99, Sainsbury's, 13.5% alcohol
A lively white with exotic apricot and peach fruit, finishing spicy, this is a nice interpretation of the relatively rare verdelho grape and a good match for chow mein.



Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Muscadet Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie 2009, Loire, France £6.99, Sainsbury's, 12% alcohol
Most muscadet used to taste a bit like battery acid, but the quality is higher and this apple and citrus-fruited example is delicious.



Forrest Estate Semillon 2010, Marlborough, New Zealand £14.99, Adnams (www.adnams.co.uk, 01502 727272), 13% alcohol
Semillon isn't usually found in New Zealand, but this is a brilliant, fresh wine with smooth peach and green pepper notes.



Mayu Pedro Ximenez 2011, Elqui Valley, Chile £5, Asda, 13% alcohol
Made from grapes grown in the far north of Chile, this is a laser-sharp, fresh, bright white that's packed with pure citrus fruit flavours. It's an ideal partner for white fish.



Rustenberg Chardonnay 2010, Stellenbosch, South Africa £12.49, Waitrose, 14.5% alcohol
A lovely bold chardonnay with notes of peach, vanilla, coconut, spice and nuts. It's very rich but still balanced, and a great companion for roast chicken.



Tesco Finest Vinho Verde 2010, Portugal £7.29, Tesco, 11.5% alcohol
If you've not tried the new vinho verdes, which are a vast improvement on the older, fizzy style, here's a good place to start. It's floral and aromatic, with citrus, pear and peach fruit, plus good acidity.



Morrisons Touraine Sauvignon 2010, Loire, France £6.45, Morrisons, 12% alcohol
A good alternative to more expensive sauvignons from the Loire, such as Pouilly-Fumé and Sancerre, this is lively, with taut, herby, grassy fruit plus attractive green notes.

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