

LIFE&STYLE

WINE-DOWN WEDNESDAY

Wine without the snobbery, by **Libby Brodie**



IT HAS been a strange in-between time with the weather. Alternating rainstorms, sunshine, bitter chill, and fleeting heat makes it hard to know what to serve, but I have the ideal suggestions to solve this conundrum. A chilled red.

You have probably heard that red wine should be served “at room temperature” but this is certainly not the case for all of them. For years I thought I disliked Beaujolais as an insipid weaker wine, until I finally had one served lightly chilled and realised how prettily joyful it was with its light-hearted grace.

I am not suggesting you pop your oldest Bordeaux in the freezer. This is not something for aged or powerful wines. To best achieve the perfect chilled red look for lighter, fruitier styles of wine. This can mean lighter in colour too as that can imply less tannin, which causes that drying sensation on teeth and gums. Drying tannins and the use of oak in wine-making can be heightened by cooler temperatures so try to avoid wines with these.

The Gamay grape that makes the wines of Beaujolais is the flagship for this style. I love the fruit forward smoothness of Domaine Saint-Cyr or the more natural, low sulphur GAM by Domaine Lathuiliere (£14.75 Corney & Barrow). A lighter style Pinot Noir is also a treat served slightly colder, as is a South African Cinsault with its rustic floral aromas and vibrant red fruits.



Gently sweet wines work well too. One of my absolute chilled red game-changers is Pasqua’s ‘Passione-Sentimento’ Passimento Rosso (£11.99 Majestic). Made by slightly drying grapes to concentrate the sugars it results in a plush, velvety soft wine of dark fruits which is devilishly good on a warm day. It is also an exception to the light colour rule.

It is worth thinking outside the box when it comes to regions and discovering more gems. I recently poured a chilled Chateau Ksara Cuvée de Printemps 2021 (£14.99 alaboutwine.com) for wine personality Joe Wadsack who marvelled at its bright sweet fruits and called it a “Lebanese Beaujolais”. And let’s not forget Lambrusco (though many of you may want to) because this Italian sparkling red is making its come back and is on trend for picnics and parties this season.

In general, fresh, juicy young wines that still have some of their zippiness work better than older vintages and as this is all about enjoyable quaffing, I would look for wines with a lower percentage of alcohol, ideally under thirteen per cent. Bear in mind this is chilling, not freezing, which will dampen the flavours of your wine so aim for a cool ten-twelve degrees. Thirty minutes in the fridge before serving should do and let the wine gently warm up as you sip it. This approach is perfection when it comes to all this confusing weather.

WINE RECOMMENDATIONS



BODEGAS PINUAGA, 2002 CEPAS 2021
£24.76

PRIVATE CELLAR
Old vine Tempranillo makes this juicy, balanced wine with its finely honed concentration of powerful fruit and silky tannins. This is a wine that can age but I could not resist opening it with Spanish style slow cooked lamb.



WESTWELL ORTEGA 2022
£25.99

SELFRIDGES
English Ortega is such a treat and a great choice for those who like fresh, zippy, aromatic wines like Sauvignon Blanc. Floral honeysuckle hovers over precise notes of ripe white peaches and grapefruit zest. An English classic in the making.



BLACK CHALK WILD ROSE 2020
£43

LACKCHALKWINE. CO.UK
This could be my Summer sparkling rosé covered! An excellent English fizz, it is hard to fault a single thing here. Layers of ripe strawberries, raspberries and delicate pastry this is a beautiful wine of depth and complexity.



CHATEAU CHANGYU MOSER XV, PURPLE AIR COMES FROM THE EAST 2016
£200

HARVEY NICHOLS
Chinese wine is slowly breaking into the London mainstream, and this is the perfect example of their powerful but lithe take on Cabernet Sauvignon. A sophisticated red for those with a penchant for premium wines (and price points).



MAISON SAINT AIX ROSÉ
£34.99 (MAGNUM)

MAJESTIC WINE
Go big or go home with this magnum of excellent rosé, perfect for any summer socialising. A humely respected, family-owned winery the latest vintage is fresh, fruity and elegantly aromatic with a crisp cranberry tartness at the finish.

A GLASS OF WINE WITH: Shoreditch Wine Bar’s Ben Van de Meutter

BEN IS THE SOMMELIER who co-founded the Shoreditch Wine Bar. Humbly hidden down an alley just a short walk from the City, this is a secret space where people in the know can drink first growth Bordeaux.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO WINE?

When I was 15 I asked my dad to look for a job for me and he found me a dishwasher job in an Antwerp hotel. I’d go after school, sometimes sleep there. One of the owners gave me a bottle of Volnay one day and I opened it at home.

Wow! I had to know more. I was there until I was 21. I served Ralph Lauren, Tina Turner, I served Grace Jones lobster in bed. I served them all.

WHAT MAKES SHOREDITCH WINE HOUSE DIFFERENT?

We’re not just a bar, we’re a destination for people to meet. Personal service is irreplaceable. We remember what you ordered last



time. We put people in touch with each other. We have good wine, no question, but there needs to be good interaction. We have 450 wines from small growers to recognisable names and there aren’t many places in London which stock all 5 first growths

of Bordeaux.

WHAT WINE ARE YOU DRINKING NOW?

We have this great wine, Caballo Español. We ourselves drink at least two glasses of the Silver a night. It stands on its own but leads towards California. Big, bold, fruity, full-bodied with a touch of oak. Fantastic.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE FOR WINE?

Trivet. I love Turkish wine and I love their sommelier, the brilliant Isa Ball.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE RESTAURANT?

José Pizarro in Bermondsey. It is authentically Spanish and whatever I order, it’s the same as when I visit Spain.

FAVOURITE SPOT FOR A LATE NIGHT DRINK?

I ride my bike home, and take my dog to the Castle pub on the corner of Commercial Road. There’s a nightclub underneath. I go with my dog, and they know me. They play deep house and techno and it’s my 50 minutes of relaxation time.