



Bosky bouquets

Christine Austin looks forward to uncorking the fragrant autumn aromas of Pinot Noir as the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness finally takes hold.

I HATE to mention climate change but the weather has been a bit odd this year. We seem to get summer in small doses, while there is always the threat of rain, and even hail, when we least expect it. But perhaps now is the genuine start of autumn. There may be a few more warm days but essentially the nights start to close in from this point and I find my hand moving to the Pinot section of the wine rack.

I have enjoyed summer whites and rosés on my travels and at home, and will continue to delve into Chardonnays, Albariños and Rieslings as the food on my plate demands but there is something about the bosky, fragrant aromas of a good Pinot Noir that suits autumn.

As the sun goes down and the aroma of dinner is in the air, this seemingly delicate grape has enough power and finesse to settle itself around a wide variety of foods, and complement them, without dominating proceedings.

Light enough to enjoy with fish, especially when there are mushrooms, a sauce or even some roasted vegetables on the plate, it is big enough to match with pheasant and duck, and it can easily take a thyme-stuffed roast chicken in its stride. And while delicate Burgundies and Martinborough Pinots may struggle against a steak, there are bigger more powerful Pinots from Otago that can manage to accompany beef, and still be happy in the glass when the cheese comes around.

The great thing about Pinot is that if the day is warm, you can give the bottle just half an hour in the fridge to add freshness to the flavours, but on a cooler evening, pouring the wine at room temperature produces more depth and complexity.

Like all grape varieties, the style of wine changes, depending on where it is grown and how those grapes are made into wine. There has been an explosion of Pinot Noir plantings around the world and even with the rise in

duty rates there are some tremendous bargains out there.

If you are planning your weekend menus, here are a few suggestions.

■ **Lateral Pinot Noir NV, Central Valley, Chile, Tesco, £4.39:** With duty costing over half the retail price, plus VAT and various margins for producers and retailers, I have no idea how Tesco manages to get this wine on the shelves at such a low price. It is a simple, fruit-driven, rounded Pinot, true to type and perfectly good enough for Monday to Thursday drinking.

■ **Cono Sur Bicicleta Pinot Noir, Chile, Booths, down from £8.50 to £6.75 until October 24:** This is my all-time favourite bargain entry-level Pinot, and the offer price makes it a must-stock item. It provides lightweight, strawberry, cherry and plum fruit with just a hint of spice on the finish and is equally happy when served slightly chilled with fish or at room temperature with chicken, roasted fish or light pasta dishes. However, I have recently been impressed by the higher-intensity, well-flavoured Organic Cono Sur Pinot Noir, currently on offer at Sainsbury's, down from £8.25 to £8 until October 17. Sustainability is a way of life at this Chilean estate. That's why there are bicycles on the labels, which is how the workers get around the vineyards.

■ **Albert Road Pinot Noir by Savage and Louw 2021, Western Cape, South Africa, Waitrose, down from £9.49 to £6.99 on a 25 per cent mixed-six deal until Tues-**

day: Get your skates on, or even easier, order online at Waitrose Cellar by Tuesday to stock up with Waitrose wines at 25 per cent off. You have to buy a six pack of wine which can be mixed, and the deal applies only to wines over £5. Albert Road is a terrific wine made by two outstanding winemakers. It has soft juicy, red berry fruit and a touch of herbs and it is definitely worth its full price.

■ **Zana Pinot Noir 2021, Romania, Sainsbury's, down from £8.25 to £7 until October 17:** A full-flavoured Pinot with black cherry, raspberry and cinnamon spice that comes from the best winery in Romania. Run by a Brit, originally from Bristol with an Australian in charge of winemaking, this is the company that has put top quality Romanian wines on our shelves.

■ **The Best Single Vineyard Pinot Noir 2022, Aconcagua Costa, Chile, Morrisons, £11.50:** One of the best supermarket Pinots on the shelves, from the cool coastal vineyards of Aconcagua. A deep-flavoured style with bramble and cherry fruit, a touch of spice and a structure that is big enough to partner game or even a chicken casserole.

■ **Villa Wolf Pinot Noir 2020, Pfalz, Germany, York Wines, £11.99:** A light, bright style of Pinot Noir from the rolling hills of the Pfalz region in Germany, where summer temperatures are warm enough to ripen it fully. This has rounded black cherry-fruit with an edge of spice and complexity from 12 months ageing in French oak. Great value and a fresh style.

■ **Creation Pinot Noir 2022, Cape Coast, South Africa, Marks & Spencer, £15:** I am delighted that Creation wines are now available from a mainstream retailer. I have loved these wines for years. The property is fabulous, the wine is excellent and so is the food in the on-site restaurant. The winemaker is Jean-Claude Martin, from Switzerland, married to Carolyn from South Africa and the wine reflects the blending of their two cultures. Bright, positive fruit with complexity and elegance – a perfect food wine.

■ **Louis Latour Les Terrasses Pinot Noir 2019, France, Ocado, £17.50:** Not Burgundy, although it comes from one of the famous Burgundy producers, but there is definitely a Burgundian style to the wine. Gentle red cherry and ripe strawberry fruit, and earthy, herbal notes.

■ **Ghost Corner Pinot Noir 2020, Elim, South Africa, Waitrose Cellar, down from £19.99 by 25 per cent until Tuesday:** A top-notch wine from the southernmost tip of South Africa where the winds keep yields low and flavours fresh. Tasted last week in SA and the 2022 vintage was sensational with a long, lifted pure fruit style, with cherry and raspberry notes, elegant and long. The 2020 should be even better. Only available online.



OFF THE SHELF



Bruce Jack Sauvignon Blanc 2022, South Africa, 13%, Co-op £7.75 buy any three bottles and save £5 until 17 October, members only: A bright and breezy Sauvignon with gooseberry and passionfruit flavours. It is definitely worth joining the Co-op membership scheme to get the deals.



Paul Mas Auromon Chardonnay 2021, Limoux, France, 13.5%, Waitrose £12.99 down to £9.74 on a 25% off mix-six deal until October 3: Rush to Waitrose to get the best deals on a mixed six-bottle purchase. Try this elegant Chardonnay for its ripe peach and pear flavours wrapped in toasty brioche notes.



Taste the Difference Calatayud Old Vine Garnacha DO 2021, Spain, 14%, Sainsbury down from £10.50 to £9 until 17 October: Old vines give deep flavours, and this wine is packed with plum and dark forest fruits overlaid with peppery spice. Team with spicy sausages.



Botham Series 79 Malbec 2020, Mendoza, Argentina, 13.5%, Booths, down from £11.50 to £9.50 until 24 October: Deep and chunky, this is packed with cherry and blackberry flavours with supple tannins that can stand up to a steak or the first of the autumn casseroles.



Yorkshire Post Wine Club
See the advert in today's Magazine or visit www.houseof-townend.com/yorkshire-post-wineclub

GRAPEVINE

Wine Dinners: At the time of writing there are two tickets left for the Bordeaux wine dinner to be held at the Devonshire Arms, Bolton Abbey on Thursday October 5. Master of Wine John Atkinson will host a tasting of top-notch wines from this classic region, including Ch. Tertre Rôteboeuf 2012, Ch. Léoville-Poyferré from St. Julien and Ch. Clerc Milon, plus other wines, alongside a five-course dinner. The dinner costs £250 per person and there is an overnight accommodation package available. Ring 01756 718155 for details.

On Tuesday October 24, Luis Marcoleta of Rioja Vega will be at Grantley Hall Hotel, Ripon to show his Rioja wines alongside a four-course dinner prepared by Fletcher's Restaurant Head Chef, Craig Atchinson. The dinner and wine costs £110 per person, ring 01756 620070.

Wine Tastings: On Tuesday October 12, starting at 6.30pm, Bon Coeur Fine Wines will present a tasting of South African wines from Franschoek Cellars and Fryer's Cove. Both estates make terrific wines, with Fryer's Cove in par-

ticular reflecting its edge-of-the-sea position with precise, complex flavours in its Chenins and Sauvignons. The tasting will be held in the tasting room in Melsnby and tickets cost £45. Ring 01325 776446.

Bon Coeur will also hold a Rioja Masterclass on Thursday October 26 when several wines from this glorious region will be tasted and unravelled, focusing on grape varieties Tempranillo and Garnacha. Tickets cost £55.

Bon Coeur will hold a tasting of Gosset champagnes on Wednesday November 22 (tickets £65). Gosset is a fabulous Champagne house, making exceptional cuvées.

Wine Blending: A twist of pepper, a sprinkle of herbs or a splash of cream can change the taste and texture of a dish. But how do you blend a wine – and why would you do it? Samantha Bailey has been blending wines for one of the UK's biggest companies for decades. She will lead tasters through the art of blending. Houltis in Huddersfield is the venue, 6.30pm, tickets cost £25. Tickets are available on Eventbrite, or ring Rob on 01484 510700.



JUST TASTED

Purato Nero d'Avola 2022, Sicily, Italy, Ocado £10.50: The dry, breezy climate of Sicily is ideal for organic cultivation of grapes but this range of 'Purato' wines takes ecology to another level. Made from organic grapes with carbon neutral production, vegan friendly and packaged in recycled glass. And the taste? Delicious, juicy dark cherry and plum fruit with a dash of black pepper and supple tannins. Try it with meaty pasta.