



Jamie Goode

Uncork the finest fizz with our expert's guide to sparkling wine

You can't have Christmas without a bottle (or preferably more) of bubbly. There's still nothing quite like a really good champagne but people are now realising that prosecco, cava and New World sparklers aren't

just budget substitutes for the "real thing", but excellent drinks in their own right. So here's my bumper guide to festive fizz, with styles and prices to suit all tastes and pockets. Let's hear those corks popping on the big day!



STAR WINE
Champagne
Gosset Grande
Millésime 2000, France
£70, Berry Bros & Rudd
(0800 280 2440,
www.bbr.com), 12% alcohol
One of the best champagnes I've
tried this year, combining rich
toastiness with vibrant
citrus fruit.



Camel Valley Brut 2009, Cornwall, England

£22.99, Waitrose, 13% alcohol

Unusually for top-quality English fizz, Camel Valley's brut is not made using champagne grape varieties. But it works brilliantly, with lively herb-tinted citrus fruit and a touch of toastiness.



Jacob's Creek Sparkling Shiraz NV, Australia

£7.99, Sainsbury's, 13% alcohol

And now for something completely different. Sparkling red wine is an Australian oddity but this rich, berry-fruited fizz with a hint of sweetness is truly delicious. Serve chilled, straight from the fridge.



Valdo Oro Puro Prosecco Superiore NV, Italy

£12.99, Waitrose, 11% alcohol

Italian fizz prosecco is booming as new converts discover its delicious fruitiness and sensible price. But this lovely peachy example is worth paying a little extra for.



Asda Cava Demi Sec NV, Spain

£4.49, Asda, 13% alcohol

If you like your fizz with a little more sweetness, this could be for you: it's an off-dry cava with a smoky edge to its melony fruit. You could even try serving this over ice.



Champagne Taittinger Brut Reserve NV, France

£25, Majestic (special offer), 12% alcohol

I really like Taittinger – it's a fresh, elegant, fruity style of champagne with plenty of class, and at the current special offer price it's pretty good value. Not to be missed.



Follador Prosecco Valdobbiadene Extra Dry 2010, Italy

£14, Oddbins, 11.5% alcohol

This is a high-end prosecco that adds extra refinement to the trademark fruitiness. It has lovely precise apple, pear and white peach flavours with no rough edges.



Brancott Estate Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc NV, New Zealand

£9.99, Majestic, 12.5% alcohol

I don't know who first had the mad idea of making fizzy sauvignon blanc, but it works. This is a delicious, fruity, grassy fizz with a hint of melony sweetness.



Tesco Finest Blanquette de Limoux 1531 NV, France

£9.99, Tesco, 12.5% alcohol

Sealed with a "zork", which is re-usable if you don't drink the whole bottle, this shows lively, citrus fruit with a touch of herbiness. Tasty.



Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Chardonnay Brut Reserva NV, Chile

£9.99, Waitrose, 12% alcohol

From well-known producer Concha y Toro, this is delicious fizz with fresh, ripe fruit flavours complemented by notes of toast and herbs.



Graham Beck Pinot Noir/Chardonnay Brut NV, South Africa

£12.99, Waitrose, 12% alcohol

South African fizz deserves to be better known here. This is one of their finest: complex, rounded and toasty with lots of flavour and good balance.



Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte 2004, France

£20, Majestic, 12% alcohol

Taut, crisp and fruity, this is a stylish vintage champagne showing some pleasingly toasty richness. It has a lovely fruit focus and at this price, it's good value for money, too.



Arrestel Cava NV, Spain

£4.24, Lidl, 11.5% alcohol

This is probably the cheapest decent sparkling wine on the market, and is perfect for parties. It's clean, correct and tasty, with nice fruity flavours.



Champagne Laurent-Perrier NV, France

£25, Majestic, 12% alcohol

I like this brut from Laurent-Perrier – it's fresh and elegant, with nice citrusy freshness and subtle toasty notes. It's a lovely precise wine that's hard to fault.



Asda Extra Special Vintage Champagne 2002, France

£20.17, Asda, 12% alcohol

Don't dismiss this own-label fizz. It's actually quite serious, with concentrated flavours of toast, almonds and lovely fresh citrusy fruit.



Morrison's The Best Prosecco NV, Italy

£9.99, Morrison's, 11% alcohol
With pure pear and white peach flavours perfectly balanced by rounded texture and a bit of bite from the fizz, this shows why prosecco is becoming so popular.



Mas Miralda Cava Brut NV, Spain

£4.49, Asda, 11.5% alcohol
How do they make this so good for so little money? It's lively, fruity, bright and crisp – another perfect bottle to take to parties or buy in bulk for your own.



Lindauer Brut NV, New Zealand

£7.99 (normally £10.99), Majestic, 12% alcohol
One of the best New World sparkling wines, Lindauer's brut NV is fresh, lemony and focused, with a touch of class rare at this price.



Champagne R&L Legras Présidence Vieilles Vignes 2002, France

£39.80, Berry Bros & Rudd (0800 280 2440, www.bbr.com), 12% alcohol
Superb finesse and ripe, elegant fruitiness make this wonderful champagne well worth the price.



Champagne Le Mesnil Blanc de Blancs 2004 Grand Cru, France

£31.99, Waitrose, 12% alcohol
A fresh, complex champagne made solely from the chardonnay grape, this is vivid and citrusy with subtle toasty notes and real finesse.



Philippe Michel Crémant du Jura Chardonnay 2008, France

£6.99, Aldi, 12% alcohol
An incredible bargain: a sophisticated fizz with generous citrus, apple and pear fruit, and complexity you would expect in wines at least twice the price.



Champagne Krug NV, France

£125, Majestic, 12% alcohol
From probably the most illustrious champagne house, this iconic bottle lives up to its reputation with fabulous finesse, combining notes of citrus, peach and brioche. Everyone should try this once.



Asda Asti Spumante NV, Italy

£4.98, Asda, 7% alcohol
I reckon this is the tastiest sub-£5 bubbly there is. Low in alcohol, it's sweet, grapey and aromatic, with deliciously rounded fresh fruit flavours. Serve ice cold, and try it with fruity desserts.



Champagne Bollinger La Grande Année 2002, France

£59.99, Tesco, 12% alcohol
Everything Bollinger makes is first class, and this vintage cuvée is complex and intense, with lovely pear, apple and citrus fruit, balanced by nutty, toasty savouriness.



Morrison's Cava Rosado NV, Spain

£6.79, Morrison's, 12% alcohol
Pink bubbly is following still rosé up the popularity charts, and this is a fun fizz at a good price. It's bright pink in colour with attractively crisp strawberry notes and should be a big hit at parties.



Nyetimber Classic Cuvée Vintage 2006, Sussex, England

£29.99, Waitrose, 12% alcohol
Nyetimber has made the champagne houses sit up and take notice, and this fizz is richly flavoured with toasty, herby notes and some baked apple character.



Champagne Louis Roederer Brut Premier NV, France

£27 (normally £39), Majestic, 12% alcohol
Roederer is famous for its blingy Cristal but this is one of the best non-vintage champagnes around, with lovely precise flavours and nice toasty richness.



Champagne Moët et Chandon Grand Vintage 2002, France

£33.99, Tesco (online price), 12.5% alcohol
A rich, intense champagne with lovely citrus and peach flavours and a bit of toast, from one of the biggest names (and yes, you do pronounce the "t").



Tesco Cava Brut NV, Spain

£4.49, Tesco, 11.5% alcohol
Made using the traditional champagne method of second fermentation in the bottle, this decent cava is crisp, herby, clean and refreshing. A very drinkable wine at a good price.



Ridgeview Merret Bloomsbury 2009, Sussex, England

£21.99, Waitrose (selected stores), 12.5% alcohol
Brilliant stuff from one of the leading English producers, this is fresh, precise, lemony, balanced and bright, with subtle toasty hints. Well worth the price.

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