

Drink me

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Flowers turn up a lot in tasting notes, second only to fruits. Whether down to chance or something rooted in our palates, we gravitate towards those that not only smell attractive, but have culinary uses – elderflower, jasmine, rose and violet. The seed pod of an orchid – vanilla – is usually used to describe a wine that has picked up the distinctive taste from ageing in oak barrels. White grape varieties with floral notes fall under the aromatic banner, renowned for their musky smell such as gewürztraminer (rose petals), viognier (peach blossom) or riesling. One variety that almost always has a heady scent is muscat. Chilled right down, whether in a still wine or the Italian fizz, moscato d’Asti, it is a glorious aperitif. These styles make great partners to fragrant dishes. Reds garner fewer floral descriptions, but they often imply an inherent elegance in a wine. Pinot noir might be perfumed; mid-weight syrah grown in a cool spot could have violets lurking, while nebbiolo, most famed for its tannic powerful wines, can show its lighter side via rose petals.

2017 Finest Torrontés, Salta, Argentina, £7.50 down to £6 until 30 June, Tesco

Made by one of Argentina’s best producers, Catena, this is typically exuberant with spring flowers, and citrus.

2016 Piquepoul Noir, Villa Blanche, Languedoc-Roussillon, France, £8.49, Waitrose

This is the only 100 per cent piquepoul noir I have tried, so

I cannot say if they all have the extraordinary, vivid nose of roses and spice that this one does. Delicious, and suitably juicy to be lightly chilled in the summer.

2015 ‘Pétulant Naturel’ Malvasia Bianca, Birichino, Monterey, California, USA, £24, Vinoteca

This is great fun and dangerously drinkable with its floral notes, underpinned by lemon marmalade and exotic spice.