

It'll be all white in the end

LAST Saturday was our wedding anniversary – a whole 22 years of laughter, love and many, many happy adventures.

As we are in lockdown, we could hardly spread our wings and celebrate in our usual opulent style – when the coffers allow – so we went out for a pint and a curry.

At our advancing years, we are not talking about the wee small hours, but late afternoon beers and an Indian at 6.30pm, before all the crazies come out to play.

It was also a good test as to my wellbeing, because if a couple of ales and a fine, spicy meal at the Red Fort, Caerleon, doesn't get the tastebuds going, then nothing will.

We also enjoyed a nice, fresh bottle of South African chenin blanc, which had more than enough refreshing fruit to deal with our 'pokey' meal.

Which brings me rather untidily to tasty drops of white that can be construed as winter whites.

Now I'm sure in the coming weeks I shall be looking at other examples that are more than suitable for Christmas din-dins, but for now I'm looking at fine all-rounders that have that certain magic sparkle.

The DURUP CHABLIS 2018

(RRP £18.20, Tanners Wine Merchants) is a proper benchmark Chablis, with its component parts in all the right places. Something you would expect from one of the oldest wine-making families of this grand region.

The nose has a steely linearity to the crisp white fruits, with a little floral note fluttering in.

In the mouth, the mineral tone really gives the tastebuds a good old going-over, washing across them with the bright orchard and citrus fruit.

The finish shows a little more weight and richness as the wine develops in the glass.

This is classic stuff and a must for fans of unfussed-with chardonnay.

Another classic French wine that had disappeared from view for many decades before being revived by enterprising wine-makers in the Languedoc, who were willing to get over its shortcomings of susceptibility to disease and low yields, is Picpoul de Pinet.

And boy, has it made a return to the market, with many a

STRAIGHT OFF THE VINE

seafood restaurant having an example on their wine list.

Made from the picpoul blanc variety in the commune of Pinet, this is ideally suited to all manner of seafood and shellfish.

The VILLEMARIN PICPOUL DE PINET 2019 (£9.99, or £8.99 as part of a mix six, Majestic) has a weighty, stoney hit across the bouquet, which bodes well, as some examples, while being as fresh as daisy, can wither a little through the mid-palate.

No such problem with this wine.

This is on the tastier spectrum of Picpoul, with an initial lemon citrus hit that ticks the box for youthful exuberance, but then shifts gear with some herbal tones ambling in through the mid-palate, giving more substance to this lovely style of wine. A big favourite of Mrs Cammies.

Grab a plate of the freshest seafood you can get your mitts on, wrap yourself in a toga and have yourself a Roman feast.

Staying in that there Languedoc-Roussillon with the huge success story of Calmel & Joseph, which was founded in 1995 by Laurent Calmel and Jerome Joseph.

They travelled the region, rooting out the best vineyards to make a range of wines covering as broad a base as possible, showcasing this wonderful and diverse region.

The CALMEL & JOSEPH 'LES CRUS' SAINT-CHINIAN BLANC 2018 (RRP £13.99, Waitrose) is a rare thing indeed, with the Saint-Chinian commune being primarily a red wine area. But the

chaps have herded together a quartet of some tasty white varieties – grenache, blanc roussanne, vermentino and viognier – to create a proper tasty drop.

The bouquet has the most bounteous stone and orchard fruit aromas, which are held aloft by some savoury wood tones

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COCKTAIL HOUR... YORKSHIRE FORAGER GIN

Foraging has been a bit of a thing in the restaurant industry for many years, utilising ultra-local ingredients and seasonal produce to add to their larder and menus.

So it comes as no surprise that one of the UK's leading foragers, Alysia Vasey, has collaborated with Sunderland-based distillery Poetic License to create the Yorkshire Forager gin.

This uses douglas fir, sweet cicely and sweet flag, chosen by Alysia, to create a very interesting gin indeed.

The nose is very pronounced, with the authentic, natural wood tones mingling with coriander and crisp, citrus tones.

Douglas fir can be a very dominant flavour, but in the hands of the gang at Poetic License it creates a texture and seasoning to the gin.

In the mouth, this really is a delightful drop, wearing the over-strength alcohol very lightly, with a return to that authentic forest floor texture. There is a little sweetness in there too, adding yet another dimension to this fine addition to the premium gin canon.

I am now off to do a little 'homework' with some dry vermouths to make a blinding martini. A tough job, I know!

■ The Yorkshire Forager gin is available from poeticlicensedistillery.co.uk priced at £39.95



from the six months ageing in oak, that add a smidge of smoke to the nose.

On the palate, there is a floral delicacy initially to the peach and apricot fruit. Then, crisp citrus acidity dashes in through the mid-palate, giving the wine a freshness and elongating the time on the tastebuds. The mineral tone comes through on the generous finish in this lovely white Saint-Chinian.

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