

## Lidl Christmas Selection

As I am closely involved with Lidl, I am normally reluctant to trumpet their wines too loudly in case it sounds as if the trumpet I am blowing is my own. However, I have to say that this selection of wines for Christmas is the best we have yet offered. What can I say but buy, drink and be merry.....? The Christmas Wine Tour will be in store from Thursday, November 21st and I have tried to distill my favourites down to those below:

### Sparkling

**91 Forget Me Not Sparkling Sauvignon**, Slovenia - £9.99 - Delicious, finely scented, dry Sauvignon with beautifully balanced fizz. Mark my words, we will hear a lot more about Slovenian wine in future. Aperitif; canapes.

**88 Crémant d'Alsace** - £8.29 - Well-priced, versatile, easy-drinking sparkler. Aperitif; canapes, smoked fish.

**90 Champagne Comte de Senneval Vintage 2013** - £19.99. Good price for richly flavoured vintage Champagne. Brunch, gravlax.

### Dry Whites

**86 Forget Me Not Sauvignon Blanc/Pinot Grigio**, Slovenia - £6.49 - With lovely depth of flavour for a wine relatively low in alcohol (11.5%). Might be a useful pick-me-up over Christmas, on its own or with light fish dishes.

**90 Von Göler Riesling Trocken**, Germany - £7.99 - Similar attributes to the above, good, refreshing white and significantly drier than many might expect. Smoked fish, onion and goats' cheese tart.

**89 The Second Fleet Tasmanian Riesling** - £9.99 - Not cheap but if you want to drink a fine, dry flavoursome white that typifies so much of what is good about both Riesling and Australia, this is the one! Perfect for the turkey sandwiches. Also canapes.

### Dry Rosé

**90 Tavel Rosé, Rhône** - £7.99 - Not for the faint-hearted, this is real, traditional, dry French rosé - incredibly versatile with food and packs quite a punch for a rosé. Salmon, pork.

### Reds

**86 Corbières Domaine Crués du Chêne Languedoc-Roussillon 2018** - £6.99 - Attractive, juicy smooth red with much more character than one could reasonably expect at this price. Turkey curry, vegetable stew.

**90 Vacqueyras Les Gabets Rhône 2018** - £9.99 - Perfect winter red, rich and warming - ideal for the dinner table and as something special to take round to friends. Winter stews, steak, nut roast.

**87 Rosso di Montepulciano Tuscany 2018** - £6.99 - Another red, this time Italian, that punches well above its weight/price. Salami, some vegetarian dishes.

**85 Passo Mastro Negroamaro / Primitivo Puglia 2018** (£5.99), pizza, chili con carne, and

**88 Passo Mastro Frappato / Syrah Sicily 2018** (£6.99), chili con carne, pasta putanesca - Two southern Italian reds that have plenty of flavour and are ideal for those who like their reds not too dry.

**91 Outlook Bay Central Otago Pinot Noir 2017** - £9.99 - Wonderful red for turkey, gammon, cold meat. Best served from a decanter or carafe.

**90 Te Mata Cabernet / Merlot Hawkes Bay 2017** - £10.99 - From one of New Zealand's most respected wine producers, this is high class red made from the classic red grapes of Bordeaux. Beef Wellington, nut roast.

### Sweet Wines

If there is one time of year when you can indulge in a glass of something sweet and delicious with dessert or as a digestif, surely it is over Christmas? Plenty of choice at Lidl.....

**90 Tokaji Szamorodni Grof Degenfeld** - £7.99/50cl, ABV12% - Beautiful sweet Hungarian wine, best served lightly chilled at the beginning of a meal with devils on horseback, or dried fruits & nuts, panettone, blue stilton.

**90 Pacherenc de Vic-Bilh**, SW France - £7.99 ABV 12% - one of France's more curiously named wines, but hard to imagine a better value wine this Christmas. Sweet, luscious and seriously classy. Hard cheese, pate.

**93 Passito di Pantelleria 2017** - £11.99/50cl - Rare sweet wine from the Mediterranean island of Pantelleria, off the Tunisian coast. If you deserve a treat, this is the one - astonishing fruit intensity and depth of flavour, genuinely complex. Blue cheese, Christmas pudding.

**Pedro Ximenez** - £5.99/50cl - tastes like liquid Christmas pudding and is actually rather delicious poured over vanilla ice cream.....

**95 Riesling Icewine Pillitteri Estates**, Canada - £13.99 (37.5cl), ABV10.2% - Once again, Lidl are offering this rather wonderful Icewine, nicely gift-packed so ideal to take/offer as a present. With stunningly pure aromas, discover notes of stewed apple which would pair beautifully with apple crumble or tart lemon cheesecake.

**88 Armilar 10 year old Tawny Port** - £10.99 - beautiful, oak-aged Port, best enjoyed lightly chilled. Aperitif or mince pies.

Happy drinking!

**Richard Bampffield MW**