

# Wine Notes - Valentines

## Day 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Wines chosen to complement a traditional Valentines dinner

Starter

**Oysters**

Main

**Steak**

Dessert

**Chocolate**



# Starter - Oysters

## Taittinger Brut Reserve Champagne N.V.

### Stats:

Price	£48 (£35 mix 6 at Majestic)
Alcohol	12.5%
Stockist	Majestic, Asda, Sainsburys, Tesco
Grape	Chardonnay
Country	France, Champagne region



### Notes:

Taittinger is one of the biggest champagne producers and today is one of the last big independent, family-owned Houses. Produced each year from 95% first pressing of the grapes, this is the definitive cuvée of Champagne Taittinger. Their Brut Reserve is 40% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, plus Meunier, blended from over 35 different plots and including 30% reserve wine to ensure consistency in the House style.

Prior to release, Taittinger Brut Réserve NV is aged for 3-4 years giving the wine depth whilst allowing the component parts to become fully integrated.

### Described as:

- It pours a pale yellow, with a particularly fine and strong stream of bubbles
- On the nose, it smells strongly of lemon peel, ripe pear, crunchy red apple with hints of peach, yeasty bread dough and nuttiness
- The taste – strong in lemon and lime notes and high in acidity. Also some floral undertones, with some green apple and creaminess
- The finish is long and fresh as this wine likes to cling to your tongue. On the palate it has considerable depth, yet is quite light in style

**Reviews** are generally favourable - a refined and well-balanced champagne experience.

### Food Match:

It is fairly high in acid, as most good Champagnes are, so it can hold up to salty and savoury foods like oysters or scallops.

# Cremant de Bourgogne Brut

## Stats:

Price	£13.50
Alcohol	12%
Stockist	Sainsburys
Grape	Chardonnay, Aligoté, Gamay, Pinot Noir
Country	France, Burgundy Region



## Notes:

Slow pressing using pneumatic presses; only the highest quality batches are selected for the final blend using a malolactic fermentation in stainless steel tanks.

The second fermentation takes place inside the bottle generated by the addition of yeasts and sugar. The wines are then aged on their lees between 14 and 16 months.

## Described as:

- Bursting with aromas of apple brioche and white flowers
- Crisp, limey flavours
- Golden in colour with buttery and creamy bubbles
- Dry with flavours of apple/peach

**Reviews:** Such good value for something that tastes really luxurious

**Food Match:** Delicious with fish and chips

## Champagne Versus Cremant

Champagne can only come from designated vineyards within the Champagne region in northern France

Crémant sparkling wines can only come from specific regions, too – our choice tonight was from Bourgogne.

Champagne and Crémant wines get their sparkle from the ‘traditional method’, which involves creating the conditions for a secondary fermentation inside the bottle, also known as the ‘Champagne method’.

Prosecco, for example, is better known for using the pressurised ‘tank method’, also known as the Charmat method.

Bottles of Crémant and Champagne must also be aged ‘on lees’ for minimum periods, which can bring extra body and complexity to the wines. Lees, which are essentially dead yeast cells left over from fermentation, can also bring brioche and bread-like aromas to a sparkling wine.

Rules stipulate at least nine months of lees ageing for Crémant

# Main - Steak

## Chronic Cellars 'Sir Real' Cabernet Sauvignon 2020/21

### Stats:

Price	£18.99 (£15.99 mix 6 at Majestic)
Alcohol	14.5%
Stockist	Majestic
Grape	Cabernet Sauvignon
Country	USA, California



### Notes:

The quirky Chronic Cellars brand was founded by brothers Josh and Jake Beckett in 2004. They were born into a winemaking family in Paso Robles, so they spent their early years helping out washing barrels down and working on the bottling line. The brothers' long-standing local connections gives them access to the best Paso Robles fruit which is carefully selected by Josh for his delicious blends. The finishing touch is their characterful labels which were designed by a childhood friend and talented artist.

### Described as:

- Intense ruby with light purple reflections
- On the nose tones of black cherries, blackberries, currants and plums accompanied by herbaceous notes with touches of toasted spices, chocolate and suave smokiness.
- On the palate, silky tannins are harmonious with the acidity, with a full and juicy body with a finish of medium persistence

**Reviews** of this wine - sure to please lovers of big reds with a generous full body, smooth tannins and a well-built structure

**Food Match:** The hearty flavour profile makes this a great partner for rib eye steak, beef stews or rich vegetarian dishes like aubergine parmigiana.

# Dark Horse Cabernet Sauvignon 2022

## Stats:

Price	£10.75 (£8.75 with Nectar)
Alcohol	14.5%
Stockist	Sainsburys, Waitrose, Asda
Grape	Cabernet Sauvignon
Country	USA, California



## Notes:

The grapes for Dark Horse Cabernet Sauvignon are harvested at optimum ripeness for easy and early extraction of rich colour and velvety tannins in the fermenters. Warmer fermentations (88F - 92F) result in more intense flavours and fruit forward aromatics. Post fermentation, the wines are aged to add complexity and balance to the wines.

## Described as:

- Bold flavours of blackberry and cherry supported by firm tannins, brown spice and a dark chocolate espresso finish
- Rich, jammy vino with strong fruit flavours; featuring predominately cherry, there is a strong blackberry flavour that runs underneath, establishing a rich, smooth flavour
- Tannins are strong and yet not harsh.
- The velvety finish hints at cocoa and spice
- The nose is full fruit; the colouring a dark purple.

**Reviews** of this wine are mixed – from liquid jam to delicious and full-bodied. **Gold award winner** at Vienna AWC International Wine Challenge 2024.

# Dessert - Chocolate

## 3 Finger Jack Zinfandel 2022

### Stats:

Price	£17.99 (£15.99 mix 6 at Majestic)
Alcohol	15%
Stockist	Majestic
Grape	Zinfandel
Country	USA, California



### Notes:

In the mid 1800s, thousands flocked to California to chase the gold rush. One treasure-seeker in particular has been elevated to legend status – a bold gunslinger known throughout the region as 3 Finger Jack. The Delicato family, who have crafted wine in California for three generations, created this lively Zinfandel as a homage to him. Lodi is widely hailed as the Zinfandel capital of the world. Perched between San Francisco Bay and the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Lodi's long, sunny days encourage grapes to reach their peak ripeness. The cool nights that follow lock in the rich flavour and help retain a refreshing acidity – producing world-class Zinfandel.

### Described as:

- Notes of ripe blackberry, dark cherry, plum, roasted coffee and toasty oak
- Aromas of raisins, black fruits, smoke and leather
- Smooth and luxurious, with a velvety texture that coats the tongue with significantly less tannins and less spice than typical examples from Lodi

**Reviews** Big, bold and beautiful

**Food Match:** The smooth tannins and bold, jammy flavours make it a great partner for pulled pork.

# Luis Felipe Edwards Gran Reserva Merlot 2022

## Stats:

Price	£10.00 (£9.00 Tesco Clubcard)
Alcohol	14.5%
Stockist	Tesco, Majestic
Grape	Merlot
Country	Chile



## Notes:

The history of Viña Luis Felipe Edwards dates back to 1976 and it has since grown to be the largest 100% family-owned wine company in Chile. Colchagua is well known for its vineyard quality and terroir diversity. Vineyards are planted in soft hills, flat areas or steep slopes with Andes or marine influence and mainly well drained soils with good structure and texture making this region unique and highly suitable for white and red varieties. Luis Felipe Edwards' vineyards are at a particularly high-altitude, 900 meters above sea level, which creates a slightly cooler micro-climate. Ideal conditions for Merlot. This particular wine is aged in French and American oak.

## Described as:

- Aromas of strawberries and plums black cherry and cassis bramble fruits, blueberry and winter spice
- Silky tannins velvety texture
- Great body on the palate, and a persistent finish

**Reviews** of this wine are mixed – Watery and flavourless. Fantastic consistent fruity smooth merlot

**Food Match:** Steak, roast beef and lasagne

## Zinfandel and Merlot – why a match for dark chocolate?

It's somewhat challenging to pair wine and chocolate together. For example, if you taste a delicious glass of dry red wine alongside a hunk of dark chocolate, the wine will start to taste bitter and sour. The taste imbalance is coming from the heightened levels of flavanols (different types of tannin) found in both chocolate and wine that end up clashing against each other on your tongue.

It's the bitterness in dark chocolate we have to balance out with a properly selected wine pairing - match the acidity of the wine with the acidity level of the chocolate.

Wines from warmer climates will generally be juicier, fruitier and have gentler tannins that will effortlessly complement chocolate.

**Zinfandel** checks off all the boxes: fruity, spicy, full-bodied, and just enough sugar to keep things sweet (the extra alcohol percentage doesn't hurt either).

**Merlot**, it's a winner. Full of sweet, plum notes that are almost chocolate-like, the pairing is utterly decadent.