

## 2019 Bottega 'Il Vino dei Poeti' Prosecco Rosé Brut (£12.99; GP Brands)



This hot off the press, pink Prosecco has only just been sanctioned by the Consorzio Tutela Prosecco and given Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) status. Produced by the Bottega family – winemakers since 1635 – this ridiculously tasty example is a seductive pale salmon pink, thanks to its canny blend of 85 per cent (white) Glera and of 15 per cent (red) Pinot Noir. It should be essential fare for New Year's Eve, being full of ripe wild strawberries, raspberries and white peaches on both nose and palate and a delectably fresh, creamy mousse.

## 2018 J.J. Prum Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett, 9%vol, (£19.68; Justerini & Brooks)



I always have fine German Riesling tucked away in the fridge for New Year's Eve not only because it's zesty, refreshing and invigorating but also because it's commendably light in alcohol, thus allowing one's liver to regroup as you pause, recalibrate and re-polish your drinking boots. I can't think of a finer example than this from JJ Prüm in Wehlen, one of the world's greatest Riesling producers. Lemon-fresh with green apple and honeysuckle, it's concentrated and intense with a tight mineral core and an everlasting, racy, slightly salty finish.

## 2019 Sancerre Léon Vatan 'Les Chanvrières' 13%vol (£14.99; Aldi)



Aldi is on something of a roll when it comes to wine and, having found that punters have become more knowledgeable about vino and more adventurous in their choices during the blasted lockdowns, has launched its most

sophisticated and interesting range of bottles yet. This classic Sancerre from the Loire Valley is one of the standouts. Made from 100 per cent Sauvignon Blanc – natch – it’s fresh and lively with nervy citrus, gooseberries and fresh cut grass in the mix. It has body, too, and for less than £15 is something of a bargain.

PUBBLICITÀ

## 2016 Private Cellar House Claret, 13.5%vol (£12.90; Private Cellar)



Fine house claret is the perfect go-to wine for the New Year celebrations, when you’re not sure what you want to eat or when or even how many of you there will be. No faffing around letting it ‘breathe’ or trying to find a decanter: just pop the cork and pour. It’s got to be good though and this is a belter, a bona-fide Bordeaux Supérieur from Ch. Argadens, owned by the fabled Sichel family of Chx Angludet and Palmer fame. A classic blend of Merlot and Cabs Sauv and Franc, it’s richly flavoured with ripe, juicy hedgerow fruit and long, soft, savoury finish.

## 2018 Balfour Winemaker’s Collection ‘The Suitcase’ Pinot Noir, 12.6%vol, (£29.99 if you mix 6; Majestic)



Brand spanking new this and really rather wonderful: an English Pinot Noir with panache. Our native sparklers are famously fine – as good as any in the world – but our still wines have lagged far behind, especially our reds. This, made by father and son team Owen and Fergus Elias in Kent – is set to change all that. It's pricey but – gosh – it's tasty! Soft, smooth, supple with dark, earthy autumnal fruit, it slips down so easily and – whatever one's views – is the perfect home-grown wine with which to enter our now very real post-Brexit world.

## Ambriel English Reserve Demi-Sec NV, 13%vol (£32.95; Corney & Barrow)



You have to have something fine and fizzy with which to herald the New Year – and we need to make 2021 feel as welcome as possible – and this, from West Sussex, is spot on, one of my all-time favourite fizzes. Produced in the champagne method from single vineyard Pinot Noir, it spent over 3 years on the

lees and is weighty, toasty and complex. In classic demi-sec style, it's sweet, too, the vibrant fruit enhanced with a dosage of some 32 grams per litre of sugar. It's a complete and utter joy and I've yet to meet anyone who doesn't fall for its charms and simply lap it up.