

Great whites

Party whites should be dry, crisp and not too strong – pick labels that state 2017 for bright, young, lively styles. Here are two elegant and affordable whites from France to refresh a crowd, plus some more food-friendly wines, namely a no-nonsense Aussie chardy and a pair of upmarket whites to grace the Christmas table.

Etoile de Nuit Sauvignon Blanc 2017, Vin de France Bargain alert! A lively, crisp, lemony French sauv blanc, not too strong, and on offer now – pour on its own or with light party snacks. *Asda, £5 down to £4.50 until 25 December*

Tesco Finest Côtes de Gascogne 2017, France Light and refreshing, with a lemon and grapefruit tang, and only 11 per cent,

so perfect for a big, thirsty party crowd. *Tesco, £6.50*

Burra Brook Chardonnay 2017, South Australia If you prefer your whites super-fruity and ripe, with subtle oak, go for this orange-soused chardonnay. A clever match for roast chicken or turkey and salmon. *Marks & Spencer, £7*

Berry Bros & Rudd Pinot Grigio 2017, Friuli, Italy Premium example of PG from cool north-east Italy, this tastes deliciously of pears, apples and white peaches. Chill for seafood starters. *bbr.com, £9.95*

Morrisons The Best Chablis 1er Cru 2013, Burgundy, France A fine, well-balanced Chablis is always welcome at Christmas, segueing from fishy starters to roast turkey. Here's an excellent one with a buttery finish. *Morrisons, £15*



Rich reds

I've gone for youth again with three party reds – nothing too oaky or heavy, but just rich enough to take on food too. Heading to finer reds, there's little to beat a decent bottle of Rioja at Christmas and I've got a remarkably well-priced one, as well as a versatile, delicious fine Italian.

Peuceta Primitivo 2017, Puglia, Italy A vivacious young Italian red delivering plenty of black cherry, cassis and bramble, soft enough to drink on its own or match with party food. *Lidl, £5.99*

Monte Cao 2017, Alentejo, Portugal No-nonsense, fairly hearty red from Portugal. With a sprinkle of spice over ripe blackberry fruit, it could take on wintery beef

casseroles or spicy red-meat dishes. *Aldi, £5.99*

La Cabane Reserve Grenache-Syrah 2017, Pays d'Oc, France Great value for a ripe and rounded, smooth southern French blend with black pepper in its tail. Crack open for roast pork or ham. *tanners-wines.co.uk, £7.70*

El Piadoso Rioja Gran Reserva 2008, Spain A top-notch mature Rioja, with redcurrant, strawberry and sweet vanilla oak. Snap up this offer as your ultimate cheeseboard wine. *Waitrose, £16.99 down to £10 until 12 December*

Planeta Mamertino 2015, Sicily, Italy One of the best Italian reds to come my way lately, with delectable plum and cherry fruitcake flavours – a great match for game. *greatwesternwine.co.uk, £19.95*