

Star buys: August 23

Jane Macquitty

2007 La Baume Winemaker's Selection Viognier, Vin de Pays d'Oc, France, Waitrose, down to £14.49 until August 26.

Last chance to lap up this spicy, peachy, Languedoc viognier from a hot vintage but without the bitter flavours that this modish white grape suffers from in the heat.

2007 La Baume Winemaker's Selection Merlot, Vin de Pays d'Oc, France, Waitrose, down to £14.49 until August 26.

La Baume is one of the better big southern French names and with its viognier sister will make a terrific Bank Holiday duo, with this ripe, plummy merlot hitting the spot.

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2004 Cliff Edge Shiraz, Mount Langi Ghiran, Grampians, Victoria, Australia, Majestic Wine Warehouses, £11.99, or buy two for £8.99 each.

Majestic's late-summer Aussie wine sale is worth plundering, and this creamy, 14.5 per cent alcohol shiraz has lots of rich, velvety, black pepper, cherry and berry fruit and is perfect for the barbecue.

2007 Paulets Polish Hill River, Clare Valley Riesling, South Australia, Majestic Wine, £9.99 or buy two for £7.49 each.

£1 cheaper than it was earlier this summer and such good quality I could not resist putting this lively, fat, spicy, sparky lime zest-spiked riesling in again.

2007 Auzells, El Vilosell, Tomàs Cusiné, Costers del Segre, Spain, The Wine Society (01438 740222), £10.95.

A decade or so ago, a contemporary Spanish white from the northeast, heaped high with complex, ripe, juicy, yellow plum and lemon zest fruit, would have been unthinkable. Dig in.

2006 Seresin Leah Pinot Noir, Marlborough, New Zealand, The Wine Society, £14.95.

Pinot noir is not Marlborough's strongest suit but in the right hands, such as Seresin, aged in French *barriques*, the result is a spectacular, smoky, gamey red with fine red fruits on the finish.

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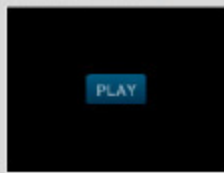
Jane Macquitty is The Times wine critic



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