

Pickering Mixed Case

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This month's Pickering Mixed Case combines some deliciously approachable reds with fresh whites that would be perfect for the season's first al fresco lunches. You may never have come across Sylvaner before, but this little-known grape variety is a treat in the right hands. If you can, try the two Chardonnays alongside each other – Pandolfi Price's Larkün is a Chablis-inspired style, linear and mineral, that will prove an interesting contrast to Olivier Merlin's example from the Mâconnais. For May's reds, we've chosen our own-label Chianti Classico – a hard-to-beat example of juicy Sangiovese, a generous Languedoc red and a cool, crunchy Cabernet Franc from the Loire.

2017 PANDOLFI PRICE, LARKÜN CHARDONNAY



The Pandolfi Price family bought an exceptional site in the cool Itata Valley in 2002. Twenty-five hectares of dry-farmed Chardonnay vines had been planted there since 1992 and grapes were sold to other companies until 2007. Realising the high quality of the site's *terroir*, the family started making its first wines in 2008.

Crisp notes of lemon and grapefruit dominate the nose, with subtle lemon pâtisserie hinting at a slightly richer mouth-feel – a result of 18 months on lees. On the palate, this richer texture is well-balanced by the fresh acidity which maintains the clean, energetic style of this wine. Drink now to 2021.

Food matches	Grilled fish with creamy sauces, sushi or goats' cheese
Price	£15.95 per bottle
How to serve	Serve chilled
Region	Itata Valley, Chile
Grape variety	Chardonnay
Product code	V7131B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied white wine
Terroir	Volcanic clay soil
Buyer	Catriona Felstead MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

CHABLIS, NEW ZEALAND CHARDONNAY OR ALIGOTÉ

2017 SYLVANER DE MITTELBERGHEIM, DOMAINE LUCAS & ANDRÉ RIEFFEL



The Rieffel family has been producing wine since the 1940s from selected parcels and Grand Cru sites around the town of Mittelbergheim. Following in his grandfather's and father's footsteps, Lucas Rieffel now heads up the estate, bringing a dynamic energy and meticulous attention to detail. The estate achieved organic certification in 2012 and remains a small team of just three people.

Made from Lucas's favourite grape variety, Sylvaner, this is classically proportioned and expressive, with excellent balance. Pale lemon in colour with flecks of gold, it offers lifted aromas of quince, red apple and honeysuckle. The palate is dry with white pepper spice and a pithy fruit character from 10 months spent on its lees. Drink now to 2020.

Food matches	Roast chicken with garlic and rosemary potatoes
Price	£17.95 per bottle
How to serve	Serve chilled
Region	Alsace, France
Grape variety	Sylvaner
Product code	V7507B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied white wine
Terroir	Chalk and clay on steep southerly slopes
Buyer	Katherine Dart MW

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like: PINOT BLANC

2016 MÂCON-LA ROCHE VINEUSE, VIEILLES VIGNES, OLIVIER MERLIN



Located in the south of Burgundy, the Mâconnais is an excellent source of good-value white wine, typically offering a sunnier and fruitier style of Burgundy. Olivier Merlin set up his *domaine* from scratch in the late 1980s with his wife, Corinne. He quickly established himself as one of the best winemakers in the region.

Vibrant pale lemon in colour, this wine sees between 10 and 15% new oak during the *élevage*, which serves to add a touch of complexity and breadth to the vibrant citrus fruit. There is excellent concentration and a focused, mineral purity which shines through. Drink now to 2022.

Food matches	Goats' cheese tart
Price	£22.50 per bottle
How to serve	Serve lightly chilled
Region	Burgundy, France
Grape variety	Chardonnay
Product code	E2983B
Style	Dry, lightly oaked, medium-bodied white wine
Terroir	Old vines
Buyer	Adam Bruntlett

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

COOL-CLIMATE NEW WORLD CHARDONNAY

2016 SAUMUR-CHAMPIGNY, TRADITION, CLOS DES CORDELIERS



The cultivation of vines here dates back to 1630, and the name of the vineyard refers to the Cordeliers de Saumur, Franciscan monks who acquired the estate in 1696. Cabernet Franc has been grown here since the 19th century and the Ratron family bought this property with its beautiful walled vineyard in 1932.

Mid-ruby in colour, aromas of pencil shavings, red fruits and sweet spices waft from the glass. In the mouth it is fresh, vibrant and energetic with black berries and griotte cherry. Despite the absence of oak, the finish has a touch of subtle spice and chalky, refreshing tannins. Drink now to 2024.

Food matches	Lamb kofta
Price	£14.95 per bottle
How to serve	Try serving it slightly chilled
Region	Loire, France
Grape variety	Cabernet Franc
Product code	V6544B
Style	Dry, unoaked, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	From a walled vineyard on tuffeau soil
Buyer	Adam Bruntlett

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

CHINON OR BOURGUEIL

2017 CHÂTEAU CESSERAS, CUVÉE OLRIC, MINERVOIS



Brothers Jean-Yves and Pierre-André are the sixth generation of Ournacs to produce wines at Château de Cesseras. Like other growers in the area, they have progressively replanted their vines over the last 15 years, and are constantly active in the vineyard. They produce hearty, *terroir*-driven wines including a *cuvée* from the La Livinière C *cru*.

This generous red initially delivers lots of plum and blackcurrant fruit, building to a finish laden with herbal notes and sweet spice. Medium-bodied and with plenty of freshness, this is a very quaffable wine which is great with food. Drink now to 2021.

Food matches	Try with sausage and bean stew or lamb tagine
Price	£13.95 per bottle
How to serve	Decant for 30 minutes and serve at room temperature
Region	Languedoc, France
Grape variety	Syrah 50%, Carignan 25%, Mourvèdre 25%
Product code	V8470B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	Clay-chalk soils
Buyer	Fiona Hayes

Tasting notes

If you like this, you might like:

OTHER ROUSSILLON REDS SUCH AS CORBIÈRES OR FITOU

2016 BERRY BROS. & RUDD CHIANTI CLASSICO BY BADIA A COLTIBUONO



Located in Gaiole-in-Chianti, Badia a Coltibuono's history dates back to 1051, to the Vallombrosan order of monks, whose fine abbey ("*badia*") still stands proud at the heart of the wine property. *Coltibuono* means "good crop" by the way. Current owners, the Stucchi Prinetti family have only been in residence since its purchase in 1846. The present generation, siblings Emanuela, Roberto, Paolo and Guido, now run the show, bringing this most traditional of wine estates up to date. At 74 hectares, it's no garage operation, but owns some excellent vineyards.

Perfumed aromas of red cherry, wild herbs and a spicy complexity lead to a dense palate laden with ripe fruit, savoury depth and freshness. The tannins are integrated and polished, framing a generous finish. Drink now to 2024

Food matches	Grilled meats, tomato-based pasta dishes or hard cheeses
Price	£15.95 per bottle
How to serve	Room temperature
Region	Tuscany, Italy
Grape variety	Sangiovese
Product code	V6091B
Style	Dry, medium-bodied red wine
Terroir	260 to 370 metres above sea-level on clay and limestone
Buyer	Matt Smith
Tasting notes	

If you like this, you might like:

SANGIOVESE BLENDS, TUSCAN REDS OR BORDEAUX BLENDS