

TEN FABULOUS FESTIVE FIZZES FOR UNDER £20

HERE'S a bit of festive cheer if you're struggling with a budget this Christmas: in a blind taste test by consumer champions Which?, supermarket champagnes soundly beat the big brands.

After all, being seen with the 'right' label is scant comfort if you've just shelled out £29 on Moët & Chandon only to find out (as the Which? tasters did) that you detect a 'slightly medicinal' smell in your glass.

What's more, many supermarket varieties are made from exactly the same grapes as the likes of Moët and Veuve Clicquot. To celebrate the supermarkets' triumph, we've rounded up the top six bottles under £20, as chosen by the Which? panel, plus four more other types of sparkling wine for under £10.

Guide prices are included — but many stores have special offers on, so you might be able to bag even more of a bargain.

FELICITY CLOAKE

CHAMPERS

1. Sainsbury's Blanc de Noirs Champagne Brut NV, £15.98

This came top of the supermarket brands, and second overall in the Which? taste test (just behind Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label Brut, which is twice the price). Made from 100 per cent black grapes, this has a rich, mellow fruitiness which means it goes well with food.

Try it with full-flavoured starters such as smoked salmon, or even the turkey itself.

2. Les Pionniers Brut NV, The Co-operative, £15.55

This delicate blend of pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay has so much life that one Which? taster likened it to 'popping candy for grown-ups'. A perfect choice for drinks parties.



3. Oudinot Brut NV, M&S, £19.99

A crisp, citrusy wine with lively bubbles which would make an elegant aperitif or, with its subtle hint of minerals, complement a seafood starter.

4. Comte de Brismand Brut NV, Lidl, £13.99

Tangy with touches of lime and sherbet, this is an uncomplicated fizz which is great fun to drink, but would be easily overpowered. Best as an aperitif.

5. Veuve Monsigny Champagne, Aldi, £9.99

Not for the faint-hearted, this is bracingly tart, like biting into a crisp green apple. If you like your champagnes drier than a martini in the Sahara, you'll love it.



6. Tesco Finest Premier Cru Brut NV, £18.99

Tesco's own brand is fruity with hints of pear, and a delicate creaminess which means it pairs beautifully with richer starters such as soufflés or warm cheese salads.

OTHER FIZZES

Bluff Hill Brut, M&S, £8.99

This Australian chardonnay/pinot noir blend was the top-rated sparkling wine under £10 in the Which? test. It's got a satisfyingly savoury, toasted character, and enough body to drink with seafood or cheese-based starters.

Griffith Park Sparkling Brut, Asda, £5

A crisp, slightly herbaceous fizz from



Australia made from two of the same grapes (chardonnay and pinot noir) used in champagne. This has a much fresher, zestier character though, and would make a refreshing pre-dinner drink.

Asda Extra Special Extra Dry Prosecco, £5

Although this is an unusually dry example of the Italian favourite, it's still got that typical Prosecco softness to it, and fruity, aromatic flavours that would work well in a Christmas morning Bellini.

Cava la Rosca NV, Waitrose, £5.99

Many cheap cavas can be aggressively acidic, but this nicely-priced example has bags of character, with lively citrus notes balanced by a touch of honey and a crisp finish. Great before dinner with a few tapas-style bites.

