

longer. Since the mid-1970s, North American wines have broken into the premier league and the influential Steven Spurrier has become revered as “the Simon Cowell of wine awards”.

The Americans now believe that they can match the best of the old world, but on their own terms. This self-belief has gone on to inspire other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Chile to produce thought-provoking, world-class wines of their own.

I, like many others, am grateful for the ambition of the boutique winemakers of California, Oregon, Washington and New York, and now British Columbia and Niagara in Canada too. Their goal is to be the best and they buy the finest equipment to achieve that aim.

I have been to the USA on three occasions for wine trips, in 2000, 2001 and 2002, when I travelled around many of the major wine regions and visited many of the country's finest boutique vineyards. My most memorable excursion was in February 2000 when I made a road trip up the west coast from California, through Sonoma, Carneros and Napa Valley, to Oregon and then Washington State. My experiences were amazing and I still have many friends in San Francisco and Seattle. Whether you work in a vineyard or as a wine merchant or sommelier in a restaurant, they take the wine business seriously there, and it's all about making a big impact. They certainly made an impact on me.

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## SIX CALIFORNIAN WINES

### 2013 Robert Mondavi Woodbridge Chardonnay, £10.

Pristine tropical fruit flavours in a fabulous Chardonnay with a mere lick of oak. Each individual vineyard lot used for this wine is processed separately, ensuring a complex, nuanced wine.

### 2011 Chalone Vineyard Pinot Noir, Monterey, £11.99

The cool region of Monterey favours pinot noir. Chalone is based high in the mountains and has a fine reputation for producing Burgundian-style wines with great freshness and balance.

### 2011 Morgan Twelve Clones Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands, £23.99

An excellent pinot noir, combining elements of new and old world styles. It has intense, bright, cherry and red berry fruit flavours.

### 2012 Geyser Peak Walking Tree Cabernet Sauvignon, £14

This classic cabernet sauvignon has lots of dense, ripe black currant fruit with a smoky layer of oak over the top: elegant, poised, balanced, perfect with lamb or duck.

### 2012 Frog's Leap Zinfandel, Napa Valley, £24.99

Rich black-cherry aromas, sweet ripe plum flavours and a soft velvety texture. Made organically with lots of love by John Williams since 1981.

### 2011 Seghesio Old Vines Zinfandel, Sonoma, £32.99

The Seghesio family, originally from Piedmont in Italy, have been making wine for many generations at their base in Sonoma. Produced from a vineyard with old vines this wine is intense and powerful, with brambly, blackberry fruit and spicy undertones.

All wines subject to availability from Waitrose on Marylebone High Street.

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## TOP TIPPLES ENGLISH SPARKLING WINES

### CHAPEL DOWN VINTAGE RESERVE BRUT

Chapel Down, the largest wine producer in the UK, has vineyards which stretch across 22 acres of Kent countryside, as well as the bordering counties of Essex and Sussex. Its vintners have used those grapes to create a wine that's clean, crisp and slightly appley. A classic English fizz.

### REFORM SOCIAL & GRILL

Mandeville Place  
W1U2BE  
reformsocialgrill.co.uk

### RIDGEVIEW FITZROVIA CUVÉE MERRET ROSE

An impressive Sussex fizz. This rosé is one of a range of wines named after areas of London. It also namechecks Christopher Merret—the Englishman who first penned the notion of adding sugar to wine to make it fizzy. The wine is light salmon in colour and has notes of raspberry and red currant.

### THE COACHMAKERS OF MARYLEBONE

88 Marylebone Lane, W1U2PY  
thecoachmakers.com

### NYETIMBER CLASSIC CUVÉE BRUT

Based in the foothills of the South Downs, Nyetimber was one of the pioneers of the rebirth of English commercial wine production. Using a blend of classic champagne grapes—chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier—its winemakers have produced this highly regarded sparkling white: light, dry and fresh, with pleasing hints of citrus and vanilla.

### ORRERY

55 Marylebone High Street, W1U5RB  
orrery-restaurant.co.uk

