

White under £10

2010 Les Terrasses, Grenache-Sauvignon, Vignerons Ardéchois, IGP Ardèche, France

Yapp Brothers (01747 860423) £7.75

Another terrific southern French white, an indication géographique protégée bottle, the new term for a vin de pays-level wine. Both terms continue to pop up on labels. Never mind, concentrate on this Vin de Pays des Côtes de l'Ardèche's delicious, soft, ripe, smoky, spiced peach and Braeburn apple flavours. This festive satellite Rhône Valley white is a blend of grenache, ugni blanc and clairette grapes.



2010 Taste the Difference, Alsace Gewürztraminer, Cave de Turckheim, France

Sainsbury's £7.99

Any of you planning an ambitious smoked salmon and prawn terrine or a smoked trout salad for a festive season starter will need a punchy, perfumed white. Alsace gewürztraminer is one of the few French whites that can cope with oily smoked fish and the best supermarket own-label versions are great value for money. Sainsbury's Taste the Difference 2010 gets my vote – its spicy, floral fruit and rich lychee, citrus and pineapple fruit is just the ticket.



2010 Finest Del Rios Vineyard Chardonnay, Victoria, Australia

Tesco £9.99, down to £7.99 until January 3

The ABC (anything but chardonnay) club may give Aussie chardonnay a miss this Christmas, but with big festive food that would be a pity, as its big, bold, buttery fruit makes it one of the few whites that can cope with turkey. Tesco has long had a good run of Aussie whites and reds, including this new Finest chardonnay from a prime western Victoria spot.



2009 Maçon-Cruzille, Le Chanay, Caves de Lugny, Burgundy, France

Majestic Wine £10.99, or buy two for £8.99 each until January 30

2009 was a mixed year for burgundy, but in the right hands and from the right spot, some glorious, early maturing wines have been made. Serve this one, containing lots of vibrant, light, leafy, floral fruit with everything from salmon cutlet to a creamy chicken dish.



Best buy

2010 L'Orangerie, Cepage Jacquère, Philippe et François TOLLIER, Vin de Savoie, France

Yapp Brothers (01747 860423) £9.50

Wine drinkers may be tempted to dismiss this as one of those quirky mountain whites that taste glorious on holiday but thin and weedy at home. Far from it. The Savoie's jacquère grape, vinified at low temperatures in stainless steel, has a fine floral bouquet and some unusual tart, lemon peel, Cox's apple and kiwi fruit flavours. Serve this restrained (1 per cent alcohol) white as an unusual aperitif.



2010 Reuilly, 'La Ferté', Sauvignon, Alain & Matthieu Mabillet, Loire, France

The Wine Society (01438 741177) £9.50; Goedhuis (020-7793 7900) £10.50

Forget saucerre and speriad five or less on this sauvignon with almost as much zingy fruit as the original. Reuilly is the smallest and least well-known of the Saucerre satellites and, as such, delivers more bang for your buck. Love this wonderful, racy, white currant, glacé fruit and bitter lemon-spiked sauvignon – and so will you.



2009 Château de La Grave, Grains Fins, Côtes de Bourg, Philippe & Valérie Bassereau, France

The Wine Society (01438 741177) £9.50

Before the modern era, whites from this appellation were often nasty, flabby, urine-coloured offerings. Fortunately, times change and this cracking dry, barrel-fermented bordeaux, bursting with bold, spicy, buttery fruit and a long smoky, nutty finish, makes a fine, big food white. This one is made from an unusual mix of 70 per cent sémillon, topped up with 30 per cent colombarid.



2010 Pecorino Colline Pescaresi, Rocco Pasetti, Abruzzo, Italy

Marks & Spencer £9.99

One of 2011's supermarket themes has been windfalls of sparky, food-suitable Italian whites, and this perfect pecorino is a brilliant example. Rocco Pasetti shunned the traditional hardy, red Montepulciano vines his family had always planted for white pecorino. The switch was worth it as this higher altitude pecorino oozes gorgeous, light, zesty, green apple fruit and makes a juicy partner for festive seafood platters.



2010 The Lodge Hill Dry Riesling, Jim Barry, Clare Valley, South Australia

Co-op £9.99; Tanners (01743 234455) £12.30, down to £10.80 until January 1

One of the riesling grape's top spots, outside of Germany is the Clare Valley. Renowned for its steely rieslings that, with age, take on some of the kerosene and lime zest flavours of a distinguished German, 2010 is one of Clare's best years for this variety. Jim Barry bought The Lodge Hill vineyard, convinced that it was right for riesling. Anyone testing its tangy, floral fruit and brown bread-scented finish will agree.



2010 Mad Bay, Unwooded Chardonnay, Western Australia

Tesco £9.99

A top-drawer Aussie chardonnay makes a terrific festive white, happy as Larry with turkey and all the trimmings. Christmas 2011's best bottle for under a tenner is this delicious ripe, creamy, melon and lemon-stashed 2010 Western Australia Winery Howard Park. Unoaked and more restrained Aussie chardonnays continue to make a welcome change from the heavy, toasty-oak versions.



Best with turkey

White under £13

2009 Chablis Premier Cru, Domaines Brocard, Burgundy, France

Co-op £12.99, down to £10.99 from December 7 to January 3

The Co-op's Christmas present to the nation is this steal of a fancy premier cru chablis that made mincemeat of the sub-£12 competition. Jean-Marc Brocard has been joined by young Patrick Puze, whose own gorgeous new wines (under £25 section) hit British shelves last year. 2009 is a mixed chablis vintage, but this swanky, unoaked, superior premier cru heaves with deliciously rich, verdant, cabbagey, cheesy fruit.



2007 Kaefferkopf Riesling, Grand Cru, Henri Ehrhart, Alsace, France

Tanners (01743 234455) £11.20

Trade up to a great grand cru single-vineyard Alsace such as this delicious riesling from a top granite, limestone and sandstone-studded vineyard in Ammerschwihr. Quite why none of you drink riesling is a mystery when this elegant, zesty, verdant, 2007, already showing some fancy kerosene scents of age, is so darned delicious. Again, serve this cool with fishy starters.



2009 Hochgewächs Riesling Trocken, Theodorus Weingut, Pfalz, Germany

Armit (020-7908 0660) £11.40

Everyone should have at least one thrilling German riesling in their festive wine rack, and this delicious 2009, one of the Pfalz's best vintages in recent years, gets my vote. Off-dry rieslings, including this dryer trocken-style edition, are perfect festive food whites, equally happy with ham or goose, accompanied by a fruity sauce. Or you could serve this elegant, steely 2009 with a twist of lime peel on the finish with a Thai-inspired stir-fry for an alternative festive menu.



2009 Domaine Zind-Humbrecht, Pinot Gris Réserve, France

Majestic Wine £14.99, or buy two for £11.99 each until January 30

I will not get through Christmas without a big wedge of home-made chicken liver-layered pâté and several bottles of this gorgeous, spicy, Alsace white. Tailor-made for meaty starters, sip this white cool so that its fat, off-dry, spicy, rose, violets and glacé fruit flavours are at their best.



2010 Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernetts, Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-sur-Loire, France

Stone, Vine & Sun (01962 712351) £12.75

This smoky, gun flint-scented pouilly-fumé packs a sparky sauvignon punch to lift everyone's spirits at aperitif time, even on the third day of the festivities. The finest pouilly-fumés, such as the rich, gooseberry, green grape and white currant-stashed 2009 from the Blanchets' limestone-flecked vineyards, marry brilliantly with milder, smoked salmon cures, creamy seafood dishes and cheese fondue.

