# My top 30: Languedoc whites



the region out now, Rosemary George MW picks 30 of the best to try difference to your summer white wine selection. With her new book on intriguing blends and alternative wine styles that will add a real point of France's far south is home to an abundance of traditional grape varieties

as its own grape variety, Bourboulenc concentrated on red and tended to ignore of red wines. With the exception of Clairette du depending on the maritime influence as well also developed a distinctive identity, 2005. La Clape, another coastal region, has became an appellation in its own right in a small pocket of white wine, and indeed Languedoc, Picpoul de Pinet was recognised as until 2005. In the extensive Coteaux du their white counterparts were not created appellations for red wine in 1982, whereas white wine. St-Chinian and Faugères were Languedoc, all the region's early appellations TRADITIONALLY THE LANGUEDOC is a region

observes: 'There is a whole history to build for of Languedoc grows. As Béatrice Fillon from coolest and highest of the whole region. Any discover and develop, and a growing choice of white wine. It will take time, with new areas to Le Clos du Serres in the Terrasses du Larzac to change, as appreciation of the white wines AP Languedoc. But all that may well be about (indication géographique protégée) or plain white wine from those areas will either be IGP the fact that those vineyards are among the Terrasses du Larzac, are for red only, despite recently created appellations, Pic St-Loup and In surprising contrast, the two most

Limoux is the other appellation where

Infinite Ideas)

in April 2018 (£30, Languedoc, published book is Wines of the

> those, accompanied by a growing list of Roussanne and Vermentino contribute to true focus of the Languedoc, providing in IGP Pays d'Oc, but do not contribute to the white wine came first, after sparkling, in pioneered by Laurent Miquel in the high hills recognised variety of the Pays d'Oc, Albariño, Petite Arvine and even the most recently possibilities. You may find Gros Manseng, original and eclectic flavours. Marsanne, ignored but are now being appreciated anew Clairette, Grenaches Blanc and Gris, and originality of the Languedoc. That comes from varieties Chardonnay and Sauvignon feature well as Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc; the Terret, to name but a handful, which were varieties of the region, such as Carignan Blanc, the reassessment of some of the original grape élevage in oak. Elsewhere, the international appellation is unusual in demanding an 1993, focusing on the traditional Mauzac, as Blends rather than varietal wines are the

above the Corbières village of Lagrasse.

simply were not submitted for tasting. currently not on the market or their wines Some of the big names are missing; they are available on the British wine market this diversity and originality of the Languedoc, Maison de la Région Occitanie in London. summer, based on an extensive tasting at the What follows is a snapshot of the wonderful

and judge. Her latest wine writer, author is a widely published

Rosemary George MW

# Château Rives-Blanques, Dédicace Chenin Blanc, Limoux 2016 96

1 £12.50 The Wine Society

nose and palate with fine varietal character. Well rounded with From a leading estate in Limoux. Light in colour, dry honey on Limoux. Drink 2018-2028 Alcohol 13% arguably more successful and original than Chardonnay in fresh acidity on the finish. A wine with ageing potential – and

# Clos Centeilles, Mosaïque de Centeilles, Côtes du Brian 2015 96

the Languedoc, both red and white. The colour of this blend is Patricia Domergue is an enthusiast for the lost grape varieties of £21.75 Terroir Languedoc

with good acidity and length. A lovely, original wine, showing the

golden, the nose rich and leesy, and the palate ripe and textured,



#### 'Mas Champart, Blanc, Pays d'Oc 2015 96

 $^{\prime}$ £15.16 Berry Bros & Rudd, Fields

established track record for white wines. intriguing finish. Drink 2018-2025 Alc 14% weight with mineral fruit. A long and palate, satisfying texture and some Good stony mineral fruit on the nose and making for wonderfully original flavours. A blend of 70% Terret with Grenache Gris, This St-Chinian estate has a well-

> £24.50 The French Wine Project Languedoc 2016 95 Borie la Vitarèle, Le Grand Mayol

I finish. **Drink** 2018-2025 **Alc** 13% with fresh herbal fruit and a long, lingering Roussanne. Depth and intriguing nuances, Clairette and Vermentino, it takes a widow Cathy. Equal parts Bourboulenc, courageously run by Jean-François Izarn's Languedoc AP for its lack of Marsanne or This leading St-Chinian estate is now

Grand Vin, La Clape Château d'Anglès,

Richly textured, its weight and length Merchants, Pierre Hourlier £17.99-£19.99 cambridge Wine **2016** 95

Drink 2018-2028 Alc 14.5% ➤ now successfully run by the Fabre family estate for white La Clape in the 1980s. It's Rivière-Haute, this was the pioneering from the same property. As Château la contrast nicely with the fresher Classique

#### £12.99-£14.95 cambridge Wine Merchants, Domaine des Trinités, L'Imaginaire Roussanne, Pays d'Oc 2017 95

from a leading Faugères producer. Drink 2018-2022 Alc 14% balancing acidity, elegant freshness. A successful interpretation Depth of colour, some ginger notes with a streak of tannin. Good An original Roussanne, given several days of skin maceration.

### d'Argent, Languedoc 2014 93 Château de Lascaux, Les Pierres

£20 James Nicholson, St John Wines

and Marsanne. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 13.5% nuances from the diverse blend, which is based on Roussanne appellation. Elegant and fresh on the nose and palate, with subtle white wine and provides an argument for the creation of a white This Pic St-Loup estate has a well-deserved reputation for its



Grande Cuvée, Val de Montferrand 2015 93 Domaine de l'Hortus,

diversity of grapes. Rich and leesy on the £22-£24.50 Bancroft, Concept Fine the palate. Drink 2018-2022 Alc 13.5% nose, with dry honey and fresh acidity on Manseng. Lots of nuances from the Viognier, Sauvignon Gris and Petit An intriguing blend featuring Chardonnay, The Beckford Bottle Shop, The Wine Library Wines, Dulwich Vintners, Terroir Languedoc,

> **2016** 93 Cabretta, Faugères Mas d'Alezon,

#### £20 Terroir Langue doc

characterful. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 12.5% rich fruit and a long finish. Intensely nose and a rounded, textured palate, with Blanc. Some depth of colour, quite a rich Roussanne with Clairette and Grenache A satisfying blend of predominantly

Boulevard Napoléon,

Blanc (the former often being more £20.45-£26.99 Exel, Liberty Wines, distinguished). Textured, with ripe fruit and for separating its identity from Grenache Gris is to the Languedoc, and an argument A lovely example of how suited Grenache Nickolls & Perks, Noel Young, Vin Cognito Pays d'Herault 2015 92 Grenache Gris,

good acidity. Drink 2018-2022 Alc 14.5%

## Château Rouquette sur Mer, Cuvée Arpège, La Clape 2017 92

£14.99 The Oxford Wine Co

oak-aged Cuvée Henry Lapierre. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 13.5% finish. Contrasts nicely with this producer's more serious Bourboulenc with Roussanne. Light in colour, a fragrantly fresh From a long-established estate in La Clape, a blend based on herbal nose and good salty acidity on the palate, with a refreshing

) Frontignan Muscat, Terres Blanches Muscat Sec, Pays d'Oc **2016** 92

£10 vinothentic, Askewine

This really does taste grapey. Drink 2018-2020 Alc 13% an appellation. Very perfumed, with great varietal character. improvement in the quality of dry Muscat, as an IGP rather than The declining fortunes of sweet Muscat have resulted in a vast



Minervois 2013 92 Les Nonnes,

£18.95 slurp

Drink 2018-2023 Alc 14% notes on the nose and a rounded palate golden colour in the glass, with dry herbal Roussanne with 20% Clairette. Light length, then a youthful lift on the finish. with herbal fruit, and satisfying depth and An intriguing blend of Grenache Blanc and

Hegarty Chamans,

La Clape 2017 91 Les Pinèdes Blanc, Château de Marmorières,

£14 Made in Little France

reputation. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 13% palate with fresh acidity on the finish. Very Roussanne and Vermentino. Light, fresh estate that is beginning to regain its saline with good grip. From an old family herbal notes on the nose; a salty elegant Bourboulenc and Grenache Blanc with

> 2015 91 Cistus, Faugères Château la Liquière,

£22 Humble Grape

fruit. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 14% > flavours and a satisfying concentration of nose and palate, with understated blend is unusual. Firm and stony on the Bourboulenc in this Roussanne-based Faugères. The inclusion of 10% One of the original pioneering estates of

# Château Petit Roubié, Picpoul de

firm salty notes on the palate. Good depth, maybe from the extra year of bottle age. Picpoul should always have a benchmark Light golden colour. A soft, rounded nose with good acidity and £9.99 - £12.50 Terroir Languedoc, Vinceremos

saline quality. Perfect with seafood. Drink 2018-2019 Alc 12.5%

Mauzac Blanc, Limoux 2016 91 <sup>7</sup>Château Rives-Blanques, Occitania

Merchants, Tanners, The Oxford Wine Co £14.50-£18.99 cambridge Wine Merchants, CH Wine

often-decried grape variety. Drink 2018-2022 Alc 13% palate, with the typical bitter finish of Mauzac. Fine example of an wine. A fresh nose with some herbal notes, and salty fruit on the A rare example of the traditional grape variety of Limoux as a still



**St-Chinian 2017** 91 Clos de ma Mère, Clos Bagatelle, Le

£20.99-£25 Boutinot, Nickolls & Perks

estates of St-Chinian. Lightly herbal nose and elegant palate; white blossom notes, Vermentino from one of the old family Carignan Blanc, Grenache Blanc and An intriguing blend of Roussanne,

> Réserve d'O Blanc, Réserve d'07, Domaine de la

£21.95 Lea & Sandeman St Guilhem le Désert 2017 91

the nose, rounded fruit and firm acidity on and Roussanne. Fresh savoury notes on equal proportions with Grenache Blanc intriguing blend includes Chenin Blanc in From a Terrasses du Larzac estate, this

2016 91 Gayda, Figure Blanc, Pays d'Oc Libre Chenin

£17.99-£18.25 cambridge Wine Merchants, James Nicholson

south. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 12.5% Shows the success of Chenin Blanc in the dry honey of Chenin Blanc. The full palate Quite a rich nose, with the characteristic is rich and honeyed with youthful acidity.

> Gayda, Figure Libre d'Oc 2016 91 **Freestyle Blanc, Pays**

£14.95 - £15.50 ac Gallie, Cambridge Wine Merchants, Fenwick, James Nicholson, Love Wine, St Andrews Wine Co, The Good Spirits Co,

The Leamington Wine Co

areas. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 13% estate in one of the Languedoc's coolest develop with bottle age. From a pioneering A stylish blend. Nuances of flavour will

> La Croix Chaptal, Languedoc 2016 91 Clairette du

£13.99 France Domaines

**Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 13% why Clairette deserves more recognition.

palate and layers of flavours. Illustrates danger of disappearing, but for the efforts Languedoc's oldest white appellation is in remaining independent grower. A rounded of Charles-Walter Pacaud, its one

Mas la Chevalière, Peyroli, Pays d'Oc 2016 91

£17.99 Liberty Wines, Nickolls & Perks

and structure. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 13% Advini. Textured fruit, with good acidity Laroche of Chablis, and now part of estate initially developed by Michel vineyards, in the hills above Lunas - an one of Languedoc's highest and coolest An out-of-the-ordinary Chardonnay from



2016 91 Costes, Minervois

£10.70 Pierre Hourlier

and stony, with fresh herbal notes and Grenache Blanc and Vermentino - is firm intriguing and original blend - largely well in bottle. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 13% some white blossom. It should develop winemakers in the Minervois. This Pierre Cros is one of the most original

Languedoc 2017 90

d'Ensérune, Calcaires

£10.95 stone Vine & Sun

white La Clape. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 12.5% doesn't have Bourboulenc, so can't make rising La Clape producer, who sadly Roussannne-Vermentino blend from a

a fresh finish. A successful example of a Fragrant fruit on the nose and palate, plus

£10.50 Perfect Cellar, Sippwine

**du Pont du Gard 2017** 90

Illustrée, Coteaux

Le B Collection

properly. **Drink** 2018-2012 **Alc** 13% >> produce really appealing wine if treated decried grape variety, Ugni Blanc, can stony finish. This shows how a onceand good acidity on the palate and a dry Rounded, dry, leafy nose, with firm fruit

fresh acidity. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 13.5%

the palate. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 14%



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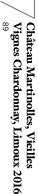












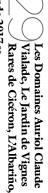
 $\pounds 12.95 - \pounds 14.99 \text{ Jeroboams, Rude Wines, Soho Wine Supply}$ 

acidity. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 13.5% nutty fruit on both nose and palate, alongside good balancing of Domaines Paul Mas. Oak aged, with light golden colour, firm Languedoc, made by a pioneering Limoux estate that is now part A convincing Chardonnay from one of the cooler areas of the





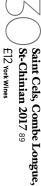
and good depth. **Drink** 2018-2020 **Alc** 13% the nose and a ripe, peachy, rounded palate. Beautiful balance within the appellation of Picpoul de Pinet. Herbal, peachy fruit on A beautifully expressive example of Viognier, from an estate



£16 Available via UK agent Myliko Wines Aude 2017 89

notes. Nicely balanced, a good aperitif. Drink 2018-2019 Alc 13% delicate with a perfumed palate, fresh acidity and lightly peachy A grape variety we're likely to see more of in Languedoc. Nose is





mouthfeel and a firm finish. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 13.5% **D** and texture on the palate. Intriguing nuances with satisfying Vermentino, making for a nicely rounded nose, with good weight A blend of 50% Grenache Blanc, 30% Roussanne and 20%



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