



IT'S A MAN'S WORLD!

With Father's Day fast approaching wine expert *Jane Cuthbertson* advises on what to choose for a great gift

There was a time when the entire wine world was dominated by men. I learned this the hard way a number of years ago when I was invited by a male colleague in the trade to attend a very exclusive and prestigious tasting of classed growth Bordeaux at a swish hotel in London.

We duly arrived suited and booted, to experience what was for me, one of the most exciting of days. It's very rare that you get the chance to taste wines of such calibre in direct comparison and the event was not a disappointment.

At one point as I was pouring myself a sample of Chateau Leoville Poyferre 1995 (very nice!), I was joined by a gentleman who obviously thought I was there not as a guest but a member of staff. He was the epitome of the then wine trade, checked trousers, striped shirt and spotted cravat,

all finished off with a Henley Regatta-type blazer. He was astounded to find that I had also been invited as, not only was I a mere female but I was "only a gal!"

Before I had the chance to put the gentleman right, I was swiftly and firmly directed away by the elbow by my nervous companion. Apparently he thought I was about to lamp him!

I'm pleased to say that this sort of attitude is now quite rare, ladies in the wine fraternity are commonplace and taken seriously – and long may it remain so.

In the interests of diplomacy and the approach of Fathers' Day on Sunday 21 June, I am willing to forgive any past issues and suggest gifts for spoiling the men in our lives, if only for a day!

Gentilium Langhe Rosso 2005 (£19.75) is a superb wine from Piedmont in North West Italy.

Made from the Barolo grape variety Nebbiolo, by a producer in the same region but without the fashionable name on the label, and the fashionable price tag.

Domaine de Brescou Prestige Cabernet Sauvignon (£15.75) is a big, beefy red with lots of concentrated blackcurrant fruit and full tannins. A real man's wine and not for the faint hearted!

Why not show him how much you appreciate him with a classic Chateauneuf du Pape from the Beaucastel stable. The 1999 vintage (£46.00) is showing depth of flavour and maturity typical of one of the top estates in the southern Rhone valley. Based on the Mourvedre grape rather than the Grenache as with most Chateauneuf du Pape wines, it's a rustic yet full and rich meaty wine which will drink well over the next three to four years.

Port lovers can't go far wrong

with a choice from the range of Niepoort wines and fortifieds ranging from £8 to £80. Dirk Niepoort is a maverick and traditionalist in one with an uncompromising approach to individuality and quality. His Ruby Dum and Tawny Dee ports (£13.00) are a perfect illustration of age and youth and make a perfect gift.

At Barrica Wines, we can make up bespoke hampers and gift packs to your specification or advise you on a choice to appeal to most palates. We also have in stock a range of wine and spirit gifts and accessories to suit any taste and budget. So spoil him – it IS only one day! ■

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