



IT SURE IS COLD OUT THERE

Full bodied and robust wines are called for during the icy winter months, says expert *Jane Cuthbertson* - here are her suggestions

I don't know about you, but I'm getting a bit tired of all this cold weather which seems to be made much worse by all the financial gloom and doom we're being faced with everywhere we turn.

So, if like me, you've decided to bravely soldier on, here are some affordable suggestions which are sure to keep the cold out, and cheer you up in the process!

This sort of weather calls for comfort food which will bolster you up for the bitterly cold days we seem to be having at the moment. Rich, flavoursome casseroles and hearty roasts are the order of the day in our house.

The wines needed to stand up to this type of food tend to be full bodied and robust. Wines with lots of fruit and flavour need a balance of alcohol and tannin or acidity to

prevent them tasting too jammy or like over stewed fruits.

Chapel Hill Bush Vine Grenache (£13.60) from McLaren Vale in Australia is a wine which fits the bill perfectly. Ripe and smooth black fruit backed with soft tannins and a whack of alcohol at 15.5%, but without the spirituous bite which is all too often present on the finish. Great with venison, but with or without food, it's sure to warm the cockles of the heart.

Domaine de Brescou Carisma (£6.75) is a blend of Merlot, Carignan, Syrah and Grenache and hails from the Cotes de Thongue, part of the Languedoc region in the south of France. For those who haven't yet visited us at Barrica Wines, it's worth a trip to pick up one of the Wild Boar Casserole packs from the butchers' counter, especially if it's been made by

Danny! Add red wine or cider to the casserole, bang it in the oven on low heat for 2 – 2 ½ hours and serve with this great value for money wine for a perfect pairing which won't break the bank.

"Carlos" tinto (£7.25) from the Julian Reynolds stable in Alentejo, Portugal. Julian has been making wines of individuality and quality for some years and this is no exception, a young red wine to curl up in front of the telly with and cuddle! Made from two Portuguese varieties, Alfrocheiro and Touriga Nacional and fermented and aged in French oak barrels for 12 months. Full and juicy fruit with a mouthwatering finish not often found in red wine.

But if white is your fancy, stay with Portugal and try something different in Encruzado (£14.00)

from Quinta dos Roques in the underrated Dao region.

Encruzado is an indigenous grape variety, fresh and lean, with lemon and herby notes on the nose but with some attractive nutty notes. Quite lean and savoury, with well-integrated oak.

If none of the above works for you, Sloe Motion Sloe Gin (£15.00 37.5cl), is the perfect pick me up to keep to hand and just treat yourself to a small glass each evening. Close the curtains, light the fire, and enjoy. ■

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