

# BRIAN ELLIOTT

'SYRAH, FROM ITS FLAVOUR CAPITAL IN NORTHERN RHÔNE, IS TAILOR-MADE TO PARTNER GAME'



ONE compensation for the longer nights and lower temperatures of autumn is the gastronomic delights that the game season brings, especially in Scotland. And few grape varieties are more attuned to such dishes than syrah.

I am not talking here about ripe, fruit-dominated shiraz. Good as those wines are, syrah – from its flavour capital in the Northern Rhône – is tailor-made to partner game.

That region is home to wine of substance with influences of minerality and savoury or spicy herbs, yet often with floral touches too, which all compete with the powerhouse berry fruit at its core. Inevitably, high prices apply to the region's elite wines such as the opulent Côte Rôtie, increasingly fashionable Cornas and sturdy Hermitage.

However, for an inexpensive idea of the taste – albeit with a light touch – try the benignly priced 2014 Les Petits Vallons Crozes Hermitage (£8.99 in Lidl's current "while stocks last" promotion). It has bright, soft, almost medium-bodied damson fruit, but



with those characteristic touches of cinnamon and allspice, and with fresh, acidic bite too.

Across the Rhône, however, you step up intensity levels – without necessarily stratospheric prices – among the more powerful wines of the Saint-Joseph appellation. The newer parts of this area tend to produce cheaper and less dramatic wines, but the original six communes still produce really classy fare.

Indeed, it is to one of those communes – Mauves – and to a Rhône superstar

that I go for my top pick. 2012 Saint-Joseph Domaine Jean-Louis Chave (£39 at those terrific Rhône specialists Yapp Brothers – [www.yapp.co.uk](http://www.yapp.co.uk)) has long and turbo-charged bramble and black cherry depth with skilfully balanced tannins, a savoury herbal edge yet clear-cut sweeter spices on the finish.

With a glass of this and a hearty game dish on the table, who cares about the onset of winter? □

For regular recommendations on good value wines go to my new website, [www.midweekwines.co.uk](http://www.midweekwines.co.uk)

## BEST BUYS

**2012 Georges Duboeuf Brouilly Beaujolais, France, 13 per cent**  
Of all the ten Beaujolais cru areas, Brouilly, in the south, often produces the lightest and softest wines. This version, however, also has depth and neat savoury edges to add complexity to its spicy raspberry and smooth blackcurrant fruit, and the sharp, acidic jabs that enliven it. **£750, instead of £975 until 27 October, at Sainsbury's**



**2013 Extra Special Marques de Portola Vintage Cava Catalonia, Spain, 11.5 per cent**  
Cava quality can be patchy, but this excellent vintage version is great wine at a great price. The 20 per cent chardonnay in the blend adds depth and structure, while the yeast-derived components embellish the fresh green apple-centred fruit with attractive biscuit touches. **Currently £6, instead of £798, at Asda**



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**4**  
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**4**  
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The advertised price is correct as of 7 Oct 15 and is based upon departure from Glasgow airport on 17 July 16.



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**4**  
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To book call **0131 563 5482**  
OPENING TIMES: MON-FRI 8.30-19.30 SAT 8.30-17.30 SUN 10.00-16.30

Organised by Omega Holidays plc, ABTA V4782. ATOL Protected 6081. Single supplements apply. Subject to availability. \*We have included a reasonable budget for your flights. Should the cost of these fall below or rise above this amount we will amend the holiday cost to reflect these changes and therefore the price may increase or decrease accordingly. The final price will be confirmed at the time of booking.

*Omega*