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## SPECTATOR MINI-BAR | SIMON HOGGART



**T**his week's mini-bar, from the adventurous Wrightson's in North Yorkshire, includes four delicious French wines. All are somewhat off the beaten track, but all are very good value.

The white Bordeaux is a 2010 from Franck Couturier's Château Robin St Denis (1): an unusual combination of half Sauvignon Blanc and half Sauvignon Gris instead of the more usual Sémillon. Sauvignon Gris is a pink-skinned grape, little known but used by some of the more astute winemakers to add elegance and backbone. The result is just as scrummy, with all the finesse you hope for in a fine dry white Bordeaux, at a very reasonable £7.25. A lovely aperitif, perfect with fish, chicken, salads and so forth.

Here's a terrific rosé, just in time for spring. Or rather, it's a gris, in which grapes are left only briefly in contact with the fermenting juice. There was a time when pink wines were decried as little better than alcoholic sherbet water. Then the people in Bordeaux started making them with Cabernet Sauvignon and imparting fleshy, juicy flavours to wines that remained clean,

clear and refreshing. Now the Rhône growers are at it too, and this Domaine du Grand Chemin, Vin Gris 2001 (2), is made from two great red Rhône grapes, Grenache and Cinsault. It too is packed with flavour — cherries and raspberries and plums — crisp and easy for glugging in the sun. It's also a beguiling salmon colour. Just £7.50.

Cahors wines are made from Auxerrois, or, as even the French are obliged to call it now, Malbec. It's a tannic grape and in the Lot valley, where it's made, the wine is often sold too young — which is a shame, since mature wines have a luscious, smoky depth. But the Filhol family at Château de Hauterive vinify their grapes to make them slip down more smoothly and agreeably. They also cunningly add a quarter of Merlot, to make them soft and accessible. The 2009 (3) is already delicious drinking. Just £7.00.

Finally a marvellous glossy red from the **Luberon**. The Domaine Chasson 2009 (4) is half Grenache and half Syrah, so it has the virtues of a Châteauneuf du Pape at a mere £8.00. I think you'll love it as much as I did.

Delivery is free, and there is a discounted sample case with three of each wine.

