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For that magic, bargain price of more than £10 but less than £20 you can get some absolute corkers from Sicilian organic and vegan wines to French crémant and Provence style rosé with bubbles

Terry Kirby | Friday 9 August 2019 23:00 |



Something to celebrate this summer? Or just celebrating summer itself with a barbecue, dinner in the garden or a picnic on the beach? For any of these occasions, a bottle of sparkling has an enlivening effect – just the sound of the cork popping usually does it, even before you get to the bubbles...

So, here are some sparklers that don't require much in the way of cash outlay, nor do they necessarily involve fine foods. Forget vintage



champagne, these sub-£20 sparklers are beach and garden ready, for lazy summer drinking, with or without food and whether it's rain or shine.

A lot of otherwise very fine English sparkling may not be quite within our budget here but a new English sparkler from Denbies at Dorking in Surrey is priced at a more attractive level for casual drinking. Denbies was one of the original English vineyards and has now produced a terrific sparkler using the bacchus grape, which some are backing as the best grape for domestic conditions.

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I'd say the **Denbies Sparkling Bacchus 2016 (£16.95 denbies.co.uk)** is actually closer to a British version of a French crémant – light, creamy and undemanding, with crisp apple flavours and a touch of elderflower on the nose and, therefore, just perfect for summer.

French crémant is made in the champagne style, but with different grapes in different regions, giving a distinct individual quality. The **Kuehn Brut Cuvee Prestige Crémant D'Alsace NV (£12.99 virginwines.co.uk)** from Alsace is also light and fresh with apple and pear flavours, but has a little more than this going on, perhaps a nutty or spicy hint, due to it being made with the pinot blanc grape. Both these wines are ideal aperitifs with snacks or canapés.

Now down to southern France and Provence for another sparkler but this time made by a winemaking concern owned by English couple Stephen and Jeany Cronk. The Mirabeau brand, based in gorgeous Cotignac, makes exceptionally fine and award-winning rosés in the Provençal style – very pale, with orange, red fruits, citrus and herb flavours and a hint of spice – and also have a brilliant pink sparkler. The **Mirabeau La Folie (£10.99 normally £14.99 until August 13; waitrose.com)** is as delicious and stylish as anything out of Provence and is fabulous on its own, but is also a great match with seafood such as lobster or crab. And the current discount really does make it a great bargain.



France is awash with pink sparklers, but they seem less common in an Italy dominated by prosecco. However, Sicilian winery Santa Tresa has now produced a lovely pink sparkler made from the local frappato grape, the **Il Frappato Di Santa Tresa Spumante (RRP around £14.00; various independents)**. It is claimed to be the only sparkling organic and

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various suspensions), it is claimed to be the only sparkling organic and vegan-friendly frappato on the market, which is admittedly a fairly narrow field, but it's very good nonetheless, with vibrant red berry fruit flavours and it's the kind of ideal wine for a summer beach picnic.



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If you really must have a prosecco, there are loads to choose from, but as I have said before, you need to go above the £10 benchmark and look for wines marked Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) to show they are of a certain standard to find decent examples. The **Il Fresco Villa Sandi Prosecco Brut DOC (£12.50 bellavitashop.co.uk)** has lovely flowery, summer's day aromas, apple flavours and, unlike a lot of prosecco, a clean dry finish. A perfect party wine or a simply lovely accompaniment to fish and chips.

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Spanish cava has always come second to prosecco when it comes to everyday sparklers, but there is much to be discovered out there, once again ignoring the sub-£10 corner shop versions and going to something like the Cava Brut Reserva NV Savia Viva (£16.95 davywine.co.uk). This is a superior cava from Penedès in Catalonia

and made with the macabeo, xarel·lo and parellada grapes, it is both organic and vegan. Refreshing, creamy citrus flavours, it shows the drier, cleaner style of cava off to perfection.

Finally, and just staying within our price range, the **Brown Brothers Sparkling Brut, (£19.99 sandhamswine.co.uk)** from the Victoria region in southeastern Australia is made in the classic champagne method from pinot meunier, pinot noir and chardonnay. It shows how the Aussies can do European sparkling with style and keep it to a price that is just about fine for a special picnic on the beach but would not disgrace the dinner table.

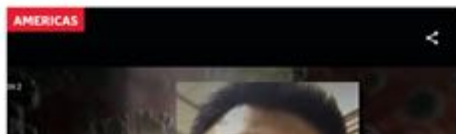
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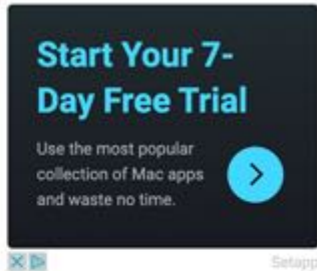
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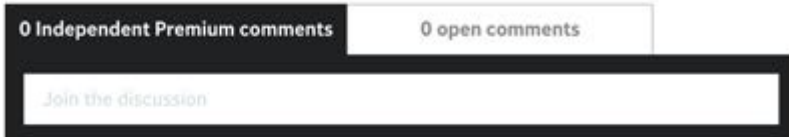
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