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# Wine buys

You can't have a party without bubbles, so **Matt Skinner** rounds up the best sparklings of the season.

## A TASTE OF ITALY

### 2009 BROWN BROTHERS LIMITED RELEASE PROSECCO, \$19

Brown Brothers has long experimented with alternative varieties, and this King Valley example of prosecco (native to Italy's north-east) provides brilliant, affordable drinking. Expect smells of lemon rind and green apple, while in your mouth it's delicate, clean as a whistle and beautifully balanced by a charge of tiny bubbles. **Drink with** Ross' pea salad (p86). **Contact** [www.brownbros.com.au](http://www.brownbros.com.au) or 03 5720 5500.



## BRUT FORCE

### NV LANSON BLACK LABEL BRUT, \$70

For a special occasion, this is one of the best value non-vintage French Champagnes around. Expect a nose full of ripe citrus fruit, fresh baked sourdough and spice. The palate has terrific drive and intensity. **Drink with** steamed scallops (p75). **Contact** [www.danmurphys.com.au](http://www.danmurphys.com.au) or 1300 723 388.

## VALUE FOR MONEY

### NV YARRA BURN PREMIUM CUVÉE BRUT, \$20

Yarra Burn's vintage offerings rank as some of the most consistent sparkling wines in the country, and this basic Victorian blend also lives up to the mark. It's packed with rich citrus-like fruit and finely balanced bubbles. **Drink with** Kylie's seafood salad (p100). **Contact** [www.yarraburn.com.au](http://www.yarraburn.com.au) or 131 492.



## RIDDLE ME THIS

### NV AD HOC THE RIDDLER CHARDONNAY PINOT NOIR, \$22

From the cool of WA's Pemberton region, the Ad Hoc range continues to impress. This rose-gold drop has a pretty nose of spring blossom, musk and ripe apples. There's plenty of fruit on the palate, the bubbles are tiny, and the finish is long, fine and dry. **Drink with** Manu's cucumber with salmon tartare (p70). **Contact** [www.larrycherubino.com.au](http://www.larrycherubino.com.au) or 08 9382 2379.

## FRENCH CONNECTION

### NV DEUTZ MARLBOROUGH CUVÉE BRUT, \$27.50

This is a cracking Champagne look-a-like from New Zealand, made from the finest Marlborough fruit and French techniques, and offering jaw-dropping value for money. Smells of citrus fruit, toast, honey and spice are all present on the nose, while in your mouth it's broad and rich with plenty of tiny bubbles, cleansing acidity and a clean, drying finish. **Drink with** Sophie's honey & lavender chicken (p58). **Contact** 1300 363 153.

## SPARKLING SPANISH

### NV VALLFORMOSA MVSA CAVA BRUT, \$22

This cava from Penedes, Spain, is made using similar production methods employed by those in Champagne, France. Expect a compact nose of preserved lemon, beeswax and minerals, while in your mouth a charge of tiny bubbles and great length of flavour round things off nicely. **Drink with** George's crispy whitebait (p52). **Contact** [tsa@the-spanishacquisition.com](mailto:tsa@the-spanishacquisition.com) or 03 9495 6373.

## SWEET SURRENDER

### NV ZONIN ASTI DOLCE, \$11

Taken from high up in the chilly hills of Italy's north and fermented under pressure, this is a delicious moscato. Bright and aromatic, expect plenty of green apple and musk smells, while the palate hits foamy and sweet with a charge of tiny bubbles and a simple drying finish. **Drink with** apricot & raspberry tart (p44). **Contact** [www.danmurphys.com.au](http://www.danmurphys.com.au) or 1300 723 388.



**NEW WAVE** The holy grail of bubbles is Champagne in France, where a fragile climate and chalky soil produce incredible wines from pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot meunier. But long, costly production methods and limited supply mean these wines will rarely, if ever, be cheap. Cava from Spain, prosecco from Italy, and top-end sparkling wines from Australia and New Zealand are now enjoying their time in the sun. And given the level of investment that has taken place recently in greater expertise, producing better grapes and cleaner practices, the timing is perfect.