



## Barr Fly

Cool reds to get you through a hot summer



DAMIAN BARR

**B**ox sets in January. Snowdrops in February. Daffodils in March. Chocolate and lambs in April. And general elections in May. Every month has something unique to offer. In June, it's Wimbledon and English strawberries. It's gin weather, we hope. When it comes to wine, you're probably not thinking red. But you should be.

So keen are we to throw off our woolly jumpers and gloves that we cast aside our other chief comfort: red wine. I am all for seasonal sipping, but there is no rule that stipulates we should only drink white from June to September. We should at least show the reds a little gratitude for getting us through the winter.

When choosing summer reds, go lighter and fruitier: garnet rather than amethyst; pinot noir, not shiraz. And chill it: yes, put it in the fridge. You've long since freed yourself from the red/meat white/fish trap, so don't fear *rouge froid*. And while you're at it, stop cryogenically freezing champagne — subzero is almost as bad as tepid.

The temperature of the wine in your glass has a measurable impact on the way it smells and tastes. If you're just nodding along at the back,

### THE CO-OPERATIVE TRULY IRRESISTIBLE CASABLANCA VALLEY PINOT NOIR 2012

Truly cherry and irresistibly priced for a pinot. The colder the better for this one. Everyone will think you've spent more. £8.99, [supermarketwine.com](http://supermarketwine.com)

### ZAMBARTAS ROSÉ, AKAMAS LAONA, CYPRUS 2013

Technically a rosé, but very dark — it's 85% lefkada (no, I'd never had it either) and 15% cabernet franc. Just sweet enough with pomegranate and cranberry crispness; perfect with a long sunset.

£14.35, *Berry Bros & Rudd*



### Craggy Range Te Muna Road Pinot Noir, Martinborough, New Zealand 2012

Te Muna means "secret place" in Maori, but everybody loves this single-vineyard triumph. Morello cherries, nutmeg and sunbaked soil. £25, *Majestic*

try it for yourself — sample the same red wine after it's been in the fridge for 30 minutes and again half an hour after you've taken it out. The colder glass has more evident fruit and perfume. The warmer glass will be more obviously boozy and the flavours will seem jammy and muddled. If you're having a barbecue you need bigger, meatier wines such as malbec, which can hold their own. The sturdier and drier the wine, the warmer you should serve it.

In the spirit of adventure, I tried Hush Heath Manor Pinot Noir from Kent, which only proves what a long way English pinot noir has to go (£22, [hushheath.com](http://hushheath.com)). Get a fun fix of raspberry and cranberry from the Sicilian favourite Frappato (£8, M&S). Cabernet franc is also excellent chilled, and I took time to savour the leather and spice of Château de Targé 2012 (£9.99, *Majestic*).

This summer, I'll be going red (and not just because I'm Scottish) ■

### SECOND HELPINGS

#### THREE OF THE BEST CONVERSIONS

##### THE LIBRARY RESTAURANT, NORWICH

This converted library in a listed building features original bookcases and juicy wood-grilled steak.

4A Guildhall Hill, Norfolk NR2 1JH; 01603 616606, [thelibraryrestaurant.co.uk](http://thelibraryrestaurant.co.uk)

##### AT THE CHAPEL, BRUTON

An immaculately restored chapel that buzzes with bonhomie, serving unpretentious, delicious food all day long.

High Street, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0AE; 01749 814070, [atthechapel.co.uk](http://atthechapel.co.uk)

##### MALMAISON, OXFORD

French fare with a twist in a converted Victorian prison within a medieval castle.

Oxford Castle, 3 New Road, Oxford OX1 1AY; 0844 693 0659, [malmaison.com](http://malmaison.com)



hungry is my advice: the menu changes daily.

Pudding was a super-creamy, salty chocolate pot with peanut rubble on top, and meringue with strawberries and vanilla cream; very nice, but I don't find puddings that interesting. The cheese, though: hello! This was the best-selected, most *à point* choice I've had in ages. It was so good that I asked about it: they are supplied by a London cheesemonger called Mons, which I urge you to seek out if you're in any way cheese-crazed.

We had a Langres, an unpasteurised cow's cheese with a washed rind, wrapped in grape skins, a Pouligny St Pierre — a sublime goat's cheese — and a Persillé du Beaujolais, a blue cheese I didn't know that has catapulted itself to the top of my blue-cheese hit parade (a crowded field).

Of course, not that many people go out to dinner only for the food: you could eat amazingly somewhere grim and not necessarily go home whooping about your brilliant night. Working alongside the chef, David Gingell (ex-Wright Brothers — yum), is the manager, Jérémie Cometto-Lingenheim, whose past employers include Mark Hix, Bistrottheque and the Galvin brothers — all places, and people, who understand conviviality better than most. And that's what Primeur is: fantastically convivial, in an apparently effortless, artless way that belies the fact that, from the kitchen down, everybody knows exactly what they're doing and why they're doing it. Service is super-friendly and well informed.

Also, we ate a monumental amount of food and drank copiously, and the bill was £120. Two normal people who weren't reviewing the place would spend considerably less.

A couple of things to note: Primeur is in a residential area, so those lovely folding doors have to fold forwards at 10pm — irrelevant in winter, but it makes a difference now. For the same reason, no carousing ate into the night: they stop serving drinks at 10.30pm. Other than that, Primeur is pretty much my idea of the ideal restaurant: not one iota of ghastliness, and a long, long way from Mayfair ■

LA Gill is away

#### Primeur

116 Petherton Road  
London N5 2RT  
020 7226 5271, [primeurn5.co.uk](http://primeurn5.co.uk)  
Tue-Thu: 5pm-10.30pm; Fri-Sat:  
noon-10.30pm; Sun: noon-5pm