



Sisters are brewing it for themselves

WOMEN are taking over the world of wine! Female producers are making waves and creating some absolutely stunning wines. So it's a pleasure to feature a women-led column ahead of International Women's Day on Monday. Vitalie Taittinger, current president of the historic French Champagne house, says: "There are more opportunities in every business now for women. Champagne is no different. We have women in all disciplines from viticulture and winemaking to export, sales and marketing. There are no boundaries."

Taittinger is the first Champagne house to plant vines in the UK (in Chilham, Kent) in a joint venture with wine agents Hatch Mansfield. Vitalie adds: "I learn something new every day about the fascinating world of Champagne and the challenges we face. The way of getting into wine is very long. You have many things to learn, understand, and turn your hand too. It has to be a passion!"

Helen Morrison, chief Marlborough winemaker at Villa Maria, one of New Zealand's most prestigious producers, agrees. "Multi-tasking is the name of the game, especially during the harvest when there are so many chores at the same time," she says. "There are many romantic ideas about winemaking, most of it is physical hard work, but it's the camaraderie of working with fellow-minded people and the excitement of crafting individual wines with their own characters that balances this out." Let's raise a glass this week to brilliant women winemakers. Enjoy some stunning examples below.

SIX FAB FEMALE-FACING WINES

1 Christine Cabri La Charme Sauvignon Blanc (£7.99, 11.5%)

A lovely dry white from winemaker Christine Cabri of Plaimont Producteurs, a cooperative in South-West France, this sauvignon blanc is crisp, zesty and fresh, bursting with flavours of lime, cut grass and just a hint of gooseberries. An absolute steal at the price. Available from House of Townend.

2 Ormarine Conchylia Picpoul de Pinet 2019 (£9, 12.5%)

Fruity, fresh and lively, this dry white made from 100 per cent picpoul grapes is definitely one to try. Created by Marie Lefebvre, who made her first wine aged 12, and Virginie Berthuit who is in her 15th vintage, it's a brilliant yellow with delicious aromas and citrusy flavours and floral notes. Available from M&S.

3 Les Jamelles Viognier 2019 (£7.35, 13.5%)

A stunning, great value pale gold viognier bursting with freshness, it's succulent with notes of peach and apricot and tantalising floral notes. This wine is by Cathérine Delaunay, who co-founded Badet Clément, which now

sells 16 million bottles a year. Available from the Co-op.

4 Clavel 'Syrius' Cotes du Rhone Villages St Gervais 2017 (£10.99, 14%)

Winemaker Claire Clavel is the latest of a French family to work this Rhone Valley vineyard since 1640. A blend of grenache, syrah and carignano combine to create a fruity nose and rounded palate. Available from Ake + Humphris.

5 Vasse Felix Shiraz (£12, 14%)

A delicious Australian shiraz. Juicy and ripe with flavours and scents of raspberry, liquorice, black cherry and white pepper. Created by Virginia Willcock on the Margaret River estate in Western Australia. Available from Tesco.

6 Finca Constancia Entre Lunas Organic Moon Wine 2018 (£10, 14%)

Created by leading Spanish female winemaker Beatriz Paniagua Ortiz at Finca Constancia near Toledo, this tempranillo has a mellow, rounded palate with ripe fruit and hints of vanilla and spice. Available from Sainsbury's.

Share your own drink-related tips with matt.nixson@reachplc.com

