

WWW

what women want

Drink less – but enjoy it more...

Tipple safely says Preston wine taster Emma, writes **ELAINE SINGLETON**



TIPPLE: Above, wine taster Emma Bailie; below (from the left), Skillogalee Riesling 2005, Clare Valley, Australia, £9.18, Booths; Lambrusco Rosé Dell'Emilia, £2.79, Marks and Spencer; Philippe Michel Crémant de Jura, £6.99, Aldi and Colomin, Tannat 2008, Calchaqui Valley, Argentina, £10.49, Marks and Spencer

We're well into 2011 and the new year is but a distant memory along with the majority of resolutions, including all those made to cut back on the booze.

If you're fed up of drinking litres of water and the halo is starting to slip, there is help at hand.

You don't have to leap on the wagon entirely if you don't want to. You can still enjoy your favourite wine without going all prohibition says Emma Bailie, a Preston-based wine expert who hosts wine tasting parties.

She says: "I love wine and wouldn't dream of cutting it out completely, but I've got some tricks up my sleeve that could help cut down without feeling deprived."

Firstly, delay popping the cork. It's all too easy to polish off a couple of glasses of wine while you cook the tea.

Emma suggests you put off opening a bottle as soon as you get home from work.

Brew up a hot drink instead or pour a soft drink into a wine glass. And don't believe what anyone else says – size matters.

Wine glasses seem to be getting ever bigger, some of them gulping almost an entire bottle of wine.

Go retro and use a small 125ml glass. Then only half fill it.

"It doesn't take long to break the habit of filling a large glass to the brim," says Emma.

If medium or dry whites or reds are your tipple of choice, then she suggests a radical change and the choosing of a sweet treat.

"Stick to water through your

meal but have a glass of sweet wine with dessert.

"Most sweet wines come in half bottles that you can reuse, so next time you open a full bottle of wine, fill the empty half bottle and save it for the following night."

Checking the percentage is all important.

Emma said to look for the alcohol percent on the bottle's label before you buy or try.

"Some wines reach 15%, the same as sherry. Sparkling wine like Cava or Prosecco often has a lower alcohol content of 11% or 12%."

"Have the decadence of a glass of fizz without a fuzzy head."

Keeping cool has the effect of diluting your alcohol intake if you know how.

Rosé wine is all the rage in the South of France and to keep it cool, the French pop a couple of ice cubes in the glass. The ice melts, says Emma, slowly diluting the wine, and you really don't notice.

And the glugging has got to stop. Return to the delicate sip for the sake of your health.

Emma said: "Many big brand wines have a residual sweetness which makes them too easy to drink without thinking."

"It's hard to glug a very full bodied, complex red or white wine that demands your attention."

Finally, what's the best way to drink less and have more fun?

Invite more friends to share a bottle!

EMMA SUGGESTS SOME WINES TO TRY:

SWEET WINE

Jurancon Ballet d'Octobre moelleux, £8.30, Barrica at Huntley's Farm Shop, Samlesbury. A half bottle of luscious sweet wine with good acidity and apricot and honey notes.

SPARKLING

Philippe Michel Crémant de Jura, £6.99, Aldi. A 12% dry, sparkling Chardonnay with crisp citrus taste and delicate toasty finish.

ROSÉ

Lambrusco Rosé Dell'Emilia, £2.79, Marks and Spencer. A medium sweet semi-sparking rosé that's pretty, pink and you'd never guess it was just 4%.

BIG WHITE

Skillogalee Riesling 2005, Clare Valley, Australia, £9.18, Booths. Full bodied, heavy white with strong mineral tones.

BIG RED

Colomin, Tannat 2008, Calchaqui Valley, Argentina, £10.49, Marks

and Spencer. Dense and black, with cassis and liquorice notes.

■ Emma Bailie runs The Wine Taster, a company that hosts wine and whisky tasting parties in your own home and corporate tasting events. www.thewinetaster.co.uk

