

Yes, a girl can still find a decent tipple for a fiver

EMMA BAILLE finds some budget summer wine which even the poshest palates couldn't object to

A fiver is roughly what most of us feel comfortable spending on a bottle of wine. Any more and we'll stop to think about it first.

But in a world where £5 won't buy you two lattes and biscuit, it seems to be getting harder to find good wines that are consistently £5 or less, promotions and offers aside. So I asked myself, *Sex and the City* style: 'Can a girl still find a decent bottle for a fiver?'

On a £5 bottle of wine, only about £1 goes to the wine producer, so we're not really spending our money on wine, we're covering the cost of shipping, storage, tax, marketing and retail mark up.

It's not surprising that some cheaper wines aren't great; you wouldn't touch a bottle that cost just £1, but effectively that's all the wine is worth. Many retailers, especially supermarkets, will take a slim profit or even a loss on wine, just to get us through the door. But Tesco recently announced they back government plans to stop using alcohol as a loss leader and other supermarkets are sure to follow.

We'll have to wait and see how this affects wine prices and our purses. In the meantime, here are some wines I'd be more than happy to crack open for even the most discerning wine buff... and all for a fiver or less.

WHITES
Bushland Estate Chardonnay, £4.99 Aldi. A lightly oaked Australian Chardonnay that doesn't scream oak. Makes a great accompaniment for food like chicken salad or grilled fish.

La Chasse du Pape Chardonnay - Vlognier, £4.50 Asda. The Vlognier grape gives this dry white wine a peachy, floral twist. Perfect for salads or party buffets.

REDS
Ile La Forge Merlot, £4.99 Aldi. A full-bodied red with plummy tannins that would go well with red meat, especially steak.

Down Under, Brumby's Track Cabernet - Shiraz, £5 Barrica Wines, Huntley's Farm, Samlesbury. Deep colour with an easy drinking, juicy bramble taste. Let this one breathe before drinking, and at 14.5% it's got a kick.

Castillo del Moro Tempranillo - Syrah, £4.50 www.turtonwines.co.uk This is a great mid-week wine; fruity and full bodied, perfect with your mid-week spaghetti Bolognese.



SPARKLING
Tesco Cava Brut £4.29 Excellent price for a very decent bottle of fizz. It's dry, fruity and nutty and the bubbles aren't too big and aggressive.

THE DAY BEFORE PAYDAY
Tierra del Sol Merlot, £3.49, Aldi. A medium bodied red wine with soft black fruits and a hint of vanilla at an unbelievable price.

Tierra Del Sol Sauvignon Blanc, £3.49, Aldi. A fresh, zesty white wine with a slight gooseberry aroma typical of the Sauvignon Blanc grape.

Emma Baille, above, from Preston 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

FROM TOP LEFT: Bushland Estate Chardonnay, Aldi
Tesco Cava Brut
La Chasse du Pape Chardonnay, Asda
Ile La Forge Merlot, Aldi

The larder route to looking yummy

DIY doesn't have to mean paint stripping and fitting shelves - raid the kitchen cupboards at home and concoct your own beauty delicacies. Janey Lee Grace, author of *Look Great Naturally... Without Ditching The Lipstick*, argues you can still look uber-glam without the latest It products by embracing natural beauty.

BEAUTY FEAST

You don't need exotic ingredients to kick-start your own larder of super-fresh beauty remedies.

"You'll soon realise that it's easy-peasy to replace the suggested ingredients

with whatever you have lying around," Janey explains, suggesting cucumber, honey and oats as perfect examples.

"It's usually best just to make enough to use straightaway; if you want to keep for use later, then remember if no preservatives are added you will need to store in an airtight container and usually in the fridge."

Janey recommends treating natural handmade skincare as you would fresh foods without preservatives.

And if you really don't want to get your hands dirty, Beauty Kitchen (www.beautykitchen.co.uk) uses 100% natural ingredients handmade to the customer's specific recipe choices.

NATURAL KNOW-HOW

Don't panic if you've run out of your essential beauty products, Janey's quick-fix, all-natural products should see you through any skincare emergencies.

■ **Olive oil** works a treat as an emergency cleanser and eye make-up remover. "It could be a little heavy for use twice daily, though," Janey warns.

■ **Pure floral water** works well as toner, according to Janey. As an alternative, for normal or combination skin, try fresh cucumber juice but peel first. To tone oily skin, Janey recommends diluted lemon juice or cooled chamomile tea.

■ **A simple cleansing wash** can be made using 50ml of Castile liquid soap with 10 drops of essential oil of your choice. "Shake it up and it's ready to use. You can also add almond oil for dry skin," Janey suggests.

■ **Make a gel-based moisturiser** using organic aloe vera gel. Janey says: "This can be used on its own; it makes a great moisturiser and also a shaving lotion for your fella, too."



COOKING UP A LOOK: natural