

# FOOD & DRINK

raise a  
glass with Jane Clare



TO Spain this week, and a tapas of tipples. I'll throw in an Irish comedian for good measure.

This month, October, has been Shop Rioja month and retailers across the UK have been celebrating all things Rioja with events, tastings, dinners, winemakers' evenings and promotions.

Which got me a-thinking. Do you know what you're buying when you're staring at those tempting Spanish bottles? Here's a quick breakdown to help you understand the rioja styles you'll see on labels.

**Joven:** These are young wines. They're in their first flush of fruity youth and haven't seen any oak aging. Simple style, easy drinking for an uncomplicated glass of midweek something.

**Crianza:** We're moving up into the teenage years. These wines have spent a minimum of one year aging in oak and another in bottle. So they've started to pick up flavours from the wood such as vanilla and a hint of toastiness.

**Reserva:** Now we're talking, these guys have a bit more life experience.

They've been aged for a minimum of three years, with at least one in casks.

You might find savoury notes, tobacco, caramel and toffee.

Finally...  
**Gran Reserva:** These have spent at least two years in oak casks and three in the bottle. They're firm, confident, the powerhouse of them all. They're only made from exceptional vintages, so if you see one, doff your cap.

If you're a rioja novice, then Marques de Valido Rioja Reserva 2010 (reduced to £5.99 from £8.99 at the Co-op until November 3) is a decent starting point. It has a smoky suggestion on the nose, with vanilla coated red fruits waving a flag saying don't forget us! It sips with fruit at the fore, though I'd like a bigger punnet.

There's other super-market offers around this month on rioja, including Faustino Vil Tinto, down to a fiver at Asda from £7.48 this weekend and Sainsbury's Taste the

Difference Cepa Alegre Rioja Reserva, down from a tenner to £7 until October 27.

In my glass ... let's stick with Spain.

The Duke (Morrisons, RRP £7.99) does exactly what it says on the tin - except it comes in a bottle. The label proclaims this Spanish blend of tempranillo, shiraz, merlot and garnacha to be a 'Big, Big, Big Red Wine' - you might think that's overdoing it a bit on the marketing front and, in fact, The Duke doesn't need to be 'bigged' up at all. This is an easy-drinking, full-bodied wine, packed full of fruit and easily one of the best reds under a tenner I've tried this year.

#### ■ Breaking News:

This week it was announced that Irish comedian Graham Norton has launched his own wine. He's created a sauvignon blanc with the help of New Zealand winery Invivo, which has partnered with Graham since 2011. Have you seen the wines in the background of Graham's BBC late-night chat show?

That's Invivo Awatere Sauvignon Blanc.

Majestic exclusively stocks the Awatere and is also now exclusive retailer of the new wine, cannily called Graham Norton's Own Sauvignon Blanc 2015

(available in all Majestic stores and on majestic.co.uk, at £8.99, multi-buy price).

The wine won a silver medal at the International Wine & Spirit Competition in London last month and Tim Lightbourne, co-founder of Invivo, sums up Graham's blend: "The classic tropical flavours of the stony Wairau soils have blended exceptionally well with the punchy, vibrant and herbaceous characters of the more rugged Awatere Valley - something not always easily done!"

Graham himself says: "My perfect blend...and it's lovely. Tropical fruit, a bit of zing...cheers to that!"

All of Graham's royalties from sales will go to the Dogs' Trust.

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■ Graham Norton's own Sauvignon Blanc 2015

He may have French blood in his veins, but Michel Roux Jr is currently championing good old British bangers. Ahead of British Sausage Week, he tells **ELLA WALKER** why you can't beat a nice bit of sausage at home

**M**ICHEL Roux Jr loves sausages. He really, really loves sausages, so it makes sense that he's signed up to be the face of this year's British Sausage Week (November 2-8).

"Even though I have got French heritage, I was born in England and brought up on the great British banger," explains the chef, who heads up his family's two-starred Michelin restaurant, Le Gavroche, in London.

His current go-to sausage recipe is definitely on the gourmet end of the banger spectrum though: a take on beef bourguignon, it's pork sausages grilled and cooked like a stew in red wine sauce, and served with mashed potato.

So no, you won't often spot him tucking into a ketchup-dripping sausage booty down his local caff...

"I do occasionally, very occasionally, go to a greasy spoon. I'm more of a sausage at home man," he says with a rueful laugh. "For me, they're a comfort food."

In between cooking up a storm on the sausage front and leaving MasterChef: The Professionals in 2014, the 55-year-old has been braving budding cooks, ranging in age from nine to 12 years, in First Class Chefs on the Disney Channel UK.

"It was wonderful, absolutely wonderful," he says enthusiastically. "Having never worked with children on camera before, it was quite an experience, very heart-

## Banging the drum for bangers



warming. And it was great to see them so passionate."

He's hopeful there will be a second season, but even if there isn't, his diary is already bulging over the next few months. There's a Channel 4 series he's just finished filming called The Diner, big plans for another cook book, and then there's the success of his daughter and their joint projects to focus on too.

Emily Roux has recently been hired as a consultant by the prestigious hospitality company, Restaurant Associates.

While Roux-the-elder is suitably proud, it doesn't stop the pair clashing in the kitchen.

"Of course we do!" he shouts. "We're Rouxs! We've got certain ideas about

how food should be cooked and presented, and we're not afraid to voice our opinions.

"But it is very good," he adds sweetly, "it makes us stronger." From how he appears on TV, it's difficult to imagine Michel ever really losing his temper, whether at his daughter or his roster of top chefs.

When he does, "it's normally very short lived and I always make sure that afterwards I explain why I lost my rag," he says.

"I tend not to lose my temper because if you do, you actually lose control, and

I'm a control freak, so very rarely will I blow my top." A keen marathon runner, he has been

■ Michel Roux Jr

out of action with injury for a few months, but promises: "Next year I'll come back with a vengeance."

Aside from the obvious health benefits, he explains that mentally, running is "a great escape, and to be on my own, that's really nice. And then, because you burn off a lot of calories, you can eat whatever you want. Haha!"

Since we're talking bangers, the question has to be asked... "My first ever car was a Peugeot 104. It was certainly rough around the edges. It was even rougher when I sold it on to the next person!"

Planning your own sausage feast? Try one of these twists on a classic meal.

■ For more information about British Sausage Week (November 2-8), visit lovepork.co.uk

■ Find out more about the campaign's celebrity ambassador, Michel Roux Jr, at michelroux.co.uk

### VIETNAMESE PREMIUM SAUSAGE SANDWICH (SERVES 4)

#### INGREDIENTS

For the pickled carrot and radish:

1 large carrot  
8 radishes  
3tbsp rice wine vinegar  
1tsp caster sugar  
Salt

For the sausages:  
2tsp sunflower oil  
6 spicy sausages  
1 lemongrass stick, chopped  
2tbsp honey  
1tbsp rice wine vinegar  
Freshly ground black pepper

For the sandwich:  
1 baguette  
4tbsp mayonnaise  
¼ cucumber, finely sliced into ribbons  
3-4 pickled jalapeno chillies, sliced  
Large handful of coriander

#### METHOD

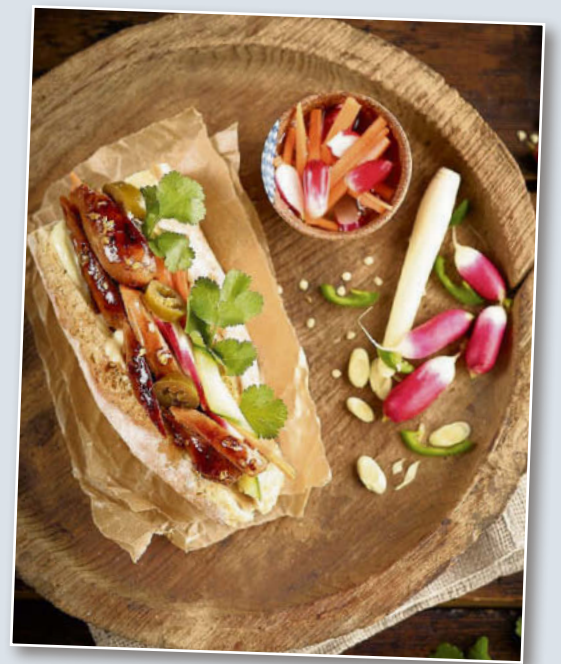
Make the pickled carrot and

radish. Finely chop the carrot into matchsticks. Slice the radish finely. Put in a bowl with the rice wine vinegar, sugar and a pinch of salt and set aside.

Heat the oil in a pan and fry the sausages for 15-20 minutes until golden all over and cooked through. Stir the lemongrass into the bottom of the pan, followed by the honey and rice wine vinegar, season and toss the sausages in this glaze. Set aside.

Slice the baguette into four pieces then split each through the middle. Spread the base of each with one tablespoon of mayonnaise. Lay the cucumber on top. Slice the sausages in half lengthways and arrange on top, then scatter over the chillies.

Top with a spoonful of pickled carrot and radish and finish with the coriander. Drizzle the sticky glaze left in the pan over each banh mi (sandwich) and serve.



» "I do occasionally, very occasionally, go to a greasy spoon" – Michel Roux Jr