

# Your choice between supermarket and independent

Should you buy your wine from a supermarket or an independent wine merchant? Richard Bouglet of Fife-based artisan wine importer and distributor, L'Art du Vin, explores the pros and cons in the second of his mini-series.

Wines in supermarkets are very successful for a very good reason, they are convenient as with one trolley and in one trip you can get food, vegetables, your bleach your bottle of Cola or whatever.

They have access to some good barrels but they tend to deal with much larger producers and, when you say much larger, that does not always equate with quality.

It is just the same as if you go to your local butcher, local fishmonger, or specialist cheese shop if you want top quality. You can pay a little more but you get more quality.

Wine is the same. If you are looking for something a little bit better, really good quality, go to an independent like ourselves. The other advantage is that you will get advice about the producer from an independent. Go to the counter in a cheese shop, for example, and they will know every single detail about that product.

With all respect, the people in the supermarket are unlikely

know detailed information about the wine, dry, sweet or full bodied.

Not only that, an independent will be able to assist you with information about matching which is becoming really important.

If you are having a dinner party, or you are cooking, and you go to the local cheese shop, the fishmonger or the butcher for produce, then your wine merchant will have the knowledge to tell you what to pair the food with as they had that special knowledge.

A wine club is interesting because it allows you to discover some new wines. We all like to be in our comfort zone, buying wines we know and recognise, Malbec from Argentine is a safe bet, and Sauvignon Blanc are classics, but you should try others, possibly from Chile or the Loire Valley. There are alternatives and they are often offered in wine clubs.

Now, we have wines from Georgia, from Turkey, from Morocco, countries you do not always appreciate as having good wine, there is also Lebanon. They have been making wines for many, many years, so there is a wine world out there to discover. If you go to wine shops or merchants then they can assist.

PICTURE: Richard in his office in Fife. Picture by ***Nigel Duncan***