

## Barr Fly: Everybody loves strawberries

Red alert: When it comes to savouring our summer fruit, strawberry yields for ever

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Everybody loves strawberries. OK, maybe you can take them or leave them, but everyone else adores them. We always have. It's 500 years since Hieronymus Bosch painted his fruity Garden of Earthly Delights, and if you feast your eyes upon it, you'll spot a group of men and women sitting in a circle, worshipping a gigantic strawberry. Naked. It's hard to imagine anyone stripping for a gooseberry.

This weekend is the pinnacle of strawberry season — Spanish interlopers have been banished from supermarkets bursting with British berries. Now is the moment to pick your own. With bumper crops predicted, you can justify one-for-me, one-for-the-basket and still have plenty for the men's final at Wimbledon this afternoon.

As a fruit, the strawberry rules. As a flavour, it is too often too sweet and debased by being chucked in everything from salad dressing to condoms. So-called wine made from actual strawberries is, like an ugly child, loved only by the person who made it.

If you want to use actual fruit, make a cocktail. Stray from your G&T with a refreshing and aromatic Cocchi Rosa spritz – one third Cocchi Rosa vermouth (£27, Selfridges) topped up with tonic water and garnished with strawberry slices, a couple of basil leaves and a pinch of black pepper. For something darker and spicier, mix a strawberry mint julep using Jim Beam Double Oak **(1)**.

When it comes to rosé, strawberry can flirt or flaunt. Satisfy even sophisticates with crisp, clean Champteloup Rosé d'Anjou 2014 **(2)**. Several shades pinker, a lot louder and much sweeter – but all joyfully so – is Waitrose Californian Pink Fruity and Luscious (£5). This zinfandel blend would be perfect by the pool at the Barbie house.

Fleurie is a place, not a grape, and, although the B-word is not on the label, it's a beaujolais. Here, perfumed gamay grapes are used to make vibrant but supple and silky red wines. Basically, it's everything that beaujolais nouveau dreams of being. Flush your cheeks and rouge your lips with Fortnum & Mason Fleurie 2014 **(3)**.

Berry good show.