

The most exciting wines of 2018

Decanter's experts from around the world named the bottles under £60 that impressed them most this year. After tasting a selection of the nominated wines, our judges compiled the ultimate top 50, across all styles. Tina Gellie reports

UNLIKE OTHER END-OF-YEAR summations that compile the highest-scoring or 'best-ever' bottles, *Decanter's* annual round-up of Most Exciting Wines of the Year is exactly that: wines that really made an impression for their ability to stand out from the crowd, whether that be through quirkiness or classicism.

'It was a deliciously diverse array of wines – all different, all memorable,' enthused Sarah Jane Evans MW. Oz Clarke was equally 'thrilled' by the line-up. 'Each glass forced me to realign my tastebuds and refocus my expectations. So many different grape varieties, countries and wine styles. This is what our Brave New World of Wine is all about!'

As in the previous two years, we asked *Decanter* World Wine Awards Regional Chairs, key contributors and *Decanter* staff to name the wines they most enjoyed over the past 12 months – each wine's 'champion' is included at the end of the tasting notes. Even with a price limit of £60, there are wines for every budget: 19 at £25 or under, from just £10.40.

The wines were tasted blind, with only the grape variety and vintage disclosed. They were scored out of 100 and also rated for their complexity, harmony and wow factor, with value being taken into consideration. We particularly wanted to reward wines with real individuality and a great drinking experience.

Diversity and intrigue

A remarkable 88% of entries scored an average of 90 points or above (those rated 92 points or more are listed here) displaying an impressive array of styles, with 17 countries and 37 different grapes represented.

Australia and Spain each have six listings in our top 50, with France and South Africa close behind, and amazing entries from Greece, Georgia, Hungary, England and Canada among others. And while classic varieties led the way – Chardonnay dominant in nine wines and Pinot Noir in five – we were charmed by more unusual grapes, including Garganega, Grecanico, Hárslevelű, Kisi, Rkatsiteli, Schioppettino and Xinomavro.

For Evans, welcome surprises were from Greece and Georgia, plus the 'glamorous' Douro sparkling 'and the fact I put a Soave and a Pinot Gris in my top 10'. She also highlighted the South African Albariño ('convincing, for a Spanish wine lover'), Vasse Felix's Heytesbury Chardonnay (repeating the success of the 2014 vintage in last year's line-up) and stand-out Pinot Noirs and Garnachas.

Clarke's honourable mentions went to the Sherries, a 'remarkable' Bierzo, 'stunning' South African Cinsault and an 'astounding' Canadian Sauvignon Blanc. 'But I'm going back to the Old World for my favourites: Vassaltis' brilliant Assyrtiko from Santorini; a Vinho Verde I'd like to drink all summer, from Soalheiro; and the crunchy red Corbières from Domaine Le Champ des Murailles, the kind of red I long for in winter.'

As always, 'exciting' can mean different things to different people, but we hope you recognise some old favourites and enjoy making a few new discoveries among the following 50 wines.

What wines have excited you over the past year? Let us know at editor@decanter.com



Oz Clarke is an award-winning communicator. His latest book is *Red & White* (Little Brown, £12.99)



Sarah Jane Evans MW is DWWA co-chair, past chair of the Institute of Masters of Wine and an award-winning writer



Tina Gellie is *Decanter's* associate editor, and has worked in the wine industry for more than 15 years

Thank you to the following experts who contributed their recommendations: Jane Anson, Tony Aspler, Tim Atkin MW, Pedro Ballesteros Torres MW, Paolo Basso, Richard Baudains, Jim Budd, James Button, Bob Campbell MW, Tom Cannavan, Ferran Centelles, Ch'ng Poh Tiong, Alistair Cooper MW, Natalie Earl, Sarah Jane Evans MW, Simon Field MW, Elizabeth Gabay MW, Michael Garner, Tina Gellie, Rosemary George MW, Rebecca Gibb MW, Caroline Gilby MW, Richard Hemming MW, Michael Hill Smith MW, Huon Hooke, Andy Howard MW, Justin Howard-Sneyd MW, Susan Hulme MW, Jane Hunt, Andrew Jefford, Roger Jones, Richard Juhlin, Panos Kakaviatos, Anne Krebiehl MW, James Lawther MW, Paz Levinson, David Longfield, Nico Manassis, Caro Maurer MW, Richard Mayson, Elin McCoy, Fiona McDonald, Chris Mercer, Thierry Meyer, Michaela Morris, Peter Richards MW, Anthony Rose, Ronan Sayburn MS, Julie Sheppard, Joanna Simon, Stephen Skelton MW, Walter Speller, Steven Spurrier, John Stimpfig, Patricio Tapia, Matt Walls, Amy Wislocki, Simon Woolf, Simon Wright



Gusbourne Estate, Blanc de Blancs, Brut, Kent, England 2013

94 **Oz Clarke** 95
Sarah Jane Evans 95
Tina Gellie 92
£39.99-£50.50 **Exel, Gusbourne Estate, Harvey Nichols, Highbury Vintners, Jeroboams, Museum Wines, Noble Green, Tanners Wines, The Oxford Wine Co, WoodWinters**

OC Full and dry, with a telling streak of mineral stoniness softened by creamy hazelnut which will increase with age.
SJE Clean, punchy delivery, with vibrant and thrilling freshness. Finely balanced. The finish is tight, but promises well with time.
TG Ripe mango, yellow apple and floral notes. Zingy and fresh, with an elegant finish.

Drink 2019-2024
Alcohol 12% **Nominated by Stephen Skelton MW**

Vértice, Pinot Noir Bruto, Douro, Portugal 2007

94 **OC** 92 **SJE** 96 **TG** 94
£52.56 **Portugal Vineyards**
OC Very full, leesy style, almost oaky, but still packed with flavour. For me it is just probably a little heavy and strong on the phenols.

SJE Complex aromatics. Finely smoky and toasty, with developing maturity adding complexity to the palate. Fine backbone of acidity, with delicate mocha, roasted fruits. Long, considered finish.
TG Classic spiced honeyed apples and toasty digestive biscuit aromas and flavours on a creamy palate – this is very pretty. Great acidity and a long, toasted brioche finish.

Drink 2019-2023
Alc 12.5%
Tom Cannavan

House of Arras, Grand Vintage Brut, Tasmania, Australia 2007

93 **OC** 95 **SJE** 90 **TG** 92
£35.65-£50.40 **Accolade Wines, Bottle Apostle, Exel, Highbury Vintners, Liberty Wines, Oz Wines, The Australian Cellar, The Old Bridge Wine Shop**

OC Classically aged, dry chocolate and a hint of cocoa powder mixed with hazelnuts. Lovely if you like your fizz aged.
SJE Subdued aromas, with light herbs. Bright and fresh in the mouth, but with a defined mushroom undertone.
TG Showing its age but still very classy. Creamy, yeasty aromas and soft, buttery red apples on the palate – earthy but still fresh. Lovely to enjoy now but will keep.

Drink 2019-2022
Alc 12.5%
Julie Sheppard

Ferrari, Perlé Zero, Cuvée Zero 11, Trento, Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy 2011

93 **OC** 95 **SJE** 91 **TG** 93
£43.70 **Winemust**
OC Fresh; proudly dry, almost austere, but it works because the wine has a deep, nutty warmth and good lean, but chewy apple fruit.

SJE Plenty of fizz retained in glass. Bright smoky aroma, lightly toasty. The palate arrives with a buzz of sparkles; vivid and racy. Creamy richness, but always fresh. An almost metallic, salty sign-off.
TG Lovely fine mousse and a firm, taut, bone-dry palate of tart green apples, a herbal anise edge and a steely tang. The acidity is piercing – this will age well.

Drink 2019-2024
Alc 12.5%
Anne Krebiehl MW

Brokenwood, Indigo Vineyard Chardonnay, Beechworth, Victoria, Australia 2016

95 **OC** 95 **SJE** 95 **TG** 95
£35 **Exel**
OC Classic, struck-match Chardonnay, but this has enough fruit character to match the smoke and create a delightful nutty, balanced style.

SJE Struck-match is the key aroma here. The lime and pomelo palate develops into a smoky richness, and finishes with a punch of freshness. Impressive.
TG Full-frontal aromas, in that lean Australian Chardonnay style. Toasty, nutty oak joins punchy flavours of nougat, spiced apples and sharp grapefruit.

Drink 2018-2024
Alc 12.5%
Roger Jones >



DeMorgenzon, Reserve Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2017

95 OC 95 SJE 95 TG 95
£28.50-£35 Dunells, Frontier Fine Wines, Harvey Nichols, Martinez Wines, Mr Wheeler Wines, Noel Young, Seckford Agencies, Slurp
OC Rich style: oaky, full. Nuts, honeysuckle and syrup. It's decent now, but will be even more exciting in a few years.
SJE Aromas of honeyed apples. Palate is ripe and buttery with a lovely edge of lemon zest, plus nutmeg and cinnamon spice.
TG Full-bodied enough to carry its alcohol and oak. Apple crumble, lemon and stone fruit on the nose and palate. Characterful.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 14.5%
Simon Field MW

Vassaltis, Assyrtiko, Santorini, Aegean Islands, Greece 2016

95 OC 96 SJE 95 TG 94
£25-£31.99 Alliance, Roberson Wine, The Oxford Wine Co, Wimbledon Wine Cellar
OC Serious, attention-seeking wine. Sun- and wind-blasted fruit; salty, nutty and rocky in a furious embrace.
SJE Aromatically more Riesling than Assyrtiko, with its creamy smoky notes. Gloriously explosive palate, with ripe lemons, saltiness and full-bodied stone fruit and greengages.
TG Wow! Expressive, almost smoky petrol nose leads to a lean, savoury palate with complex oxidative notes. A diva of a wine.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 13.5%
Jim Budd

Ata Rangi, Lismore Pinot Gris, Martinborough, Wairarapa, New Zealand 2017

94 OC 94 SJE 94 TG 94
£22.50-£30 Carruthers & Kent, Highbury Vintners, Liberty Wines, Noel Young, The New Zealand Cellar, Vinvm
OC Honeysuckle notes; full and ripe, with pear flesh, a little warm dust and good, savoury, nutty creaminess.
SJE Tempting aromas: orange peel, kumquats, honey. The palate offers the same intensity, developing a silky richness. Smooth finish.
TG Musky apricot nose leads to a full, soft jasmine and peach palate. The racy acidity and nutty length makes this a lovely food wine.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 13.5%
Roger Jones

Bosman, Fides Grenache Blanc, Wellington, South Africa 2016

94 OC 96 SJE 94 TG 92
£17.99-£19.99 Bosman Wines, Handford Wines, Harvey Nichols
OC Fascinating amber wine; rich, chewy, with the scent and bitterness of tamarind and orange pith, and a dusty roast almond smokiness.
SJE Burnished colour. Tertiary palate of roasted and toasted flavours, with a tinge of bitter orange zest. Long, intense finish.
TG Clearly an orange wine on the nose: toasted nuts, spice and burnt orange peel. Lean, firm and drying on the palate. An individual style that will divide opinion.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 14%
Sarah Jane Evans MW

Haywire, Free Form Sauvignon Blanc, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, Canada 2016

94 OC 96 SJE 92 TG 93
£38.60-£44 Le Vignoble, Red Squirrel
OC A blast of squirted lemon juice, grapefruit pith and greengage skin. Flesh, skin and pith; ebullient palate.
SJE Charming, creamy, elderflower florality. Starts light and fresh, then shows flower meadow complexity. Plenty of energy.
TG Cloudy in the glass but not on the nose: bright, fresh aromas. Vibrant palate has mouthwatering acidity, with mandarin, mango and hay. Unlike any Sauvignon Blanc you've tried before.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 13%
Tina Gellie & Joanna Simon

Vasse Felix, Heytesbury Chardonnay, Margaret River, Western Australia 2016

94 OC 93 SJE 96 TG 94
£45-£51.40 Christopher Piper, Fells, Noble Green, The Australian Cellar
OC Gentle, mellow, nutty and round with a hint of struck match.
SJE Beautifully controlled Chardonnay. The palate is ripe but carefully overlaid with fine oak, bright acidity. Gloriously long, juicy finish. Notes of lime and pineapple highlight.
TG A serious, Burgundian-style Chardonnay with toasty, nutty oak that's balanced by lemon acidity and breezy, ripe yellow apples. Long and complex; will age well.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 13%
Michael Hill Smith MW

Errazuriz, Las Pizarras Chardonnay, Aconcagua Costa, Chile 2015

93 OC 93 SJE 92 TG 94
£55 Atlas Fine Wine, Farr Vintners, Goedhuis & Co, Z&B Vintners
OC Pale, green, salty fresh with a delightful yellow peach skin and just a little chewiness.
SJE Full, broad and bursting with flavour. A forthright style, with developing tertiary characters. Delicate lift of freshness at the end.
TG Evolving, savoury style, boasting flinty minerality and bold, pure apple flavours. Excellent, fresh acidity with gentle and well-balanced oak. I'd happily have another glass.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 13%
Alistair Cooper MW

Famille Perrin, Château de Beaucastel, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Rhône, France 2016

93 OC 94 SJE 93 TG 92
£48 Jeroboams, Liberty Wines, Montrachet Fine Wine Merchants, Vinvm
OC Delicious, soft, ripe. Not that aromatic or fruity, but with a warm nutty core and a streak of mineral freshness.
SJE Opulent aromatics of sweet spice, dried herbs, wood smoke. Equally plush mouth, lifted by bright acidity, and wrapped in a coat of cream and spices.
TG Weighty, peachy and rounded palate – very Rhône-like, full of nutty, ripe, apricot fruit and spicy oak. Plush, supple and creamy with a long, oily finish.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 14%
Matt Walls

Gini, Contrada Salvarenza Soave Classico, Veneto, Italy 2014

93 OC 92 SJE 95 TG 92
£23.40 Justerini & Brooks
OC Reasonably bright yellow apple and golden gage plum fruit, now losing a little freshness but gaining attractive soft maturity.
SJE Alluringly apple on the nose, with notes of honey and nutmeg. Silky entry, luxurious development. Notes of pink grapefruit, honeyed lemons – a reminder that Garganega is well worth revisiting.
TG Honeyed, ripe and friendly nose leads to a creamy palate of apple and peach, with a spicy edge and just enough acidity. Nice for its age but one to drink now.
Drink 2019-2020
Alc 13%
Michael Garner

Kikelet, Kassai Single-Vineyard Hárslevelű, Tokaj, Hungary 2015

93 OC 94 SJE 91 TG 94
£18 Wanderlust
OC Round and soft. Dusted lightly with baking spices and infused with the gentle citrus richness of boiled lemons softened with a dash of hazelnut cream.
SJE Ripe, rich, succulent wine. All bruised apple and custard; a fine blend of ripeness with refreshing acidity.
TG Complex mineral, spiced yellow apple, quince and rich honey characters. Elegant, savoury and beautifully made: lemon freshness and a toasty length.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 12%
Caroline Gilby MW >



Kusuda, Riesling, Martinborough, Wairarapa, New Zealand 2015

93 OC 93 SJE 92 TG 94
£35-£38.99 **Berry Bros & Rudd, Handford Wines, The New Zealand Cellar**
OC Citrus, lime zest, almost petrol but with very good, soft texture, a touch of leather and long, lingering, lime freshness.

SJE Developing the lovely signs of Riesling age on the nose. By contrast, the palate remains youthful. Punchy acidity, stony impression and a long, lean finish.

TG Gorgeous, waxy lime and slatey mineral aromas. Showing some petrolly signs of age, but still vibrant, pure and youthful. Super vitality, freshness and length.

Drink 2019-2024
Alc 12.5%

Elin McCoy

Newton Johnson, Albariño, Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, Walker Bay, South Africa 2015

93 OC 91 SJE 95 TG 94
£17.95-£19.99 **Dreyfus Ashby, Handford Wines**
OC Good, full, round. Lees-aged and nutty with ripe fruit and a hint of cocoa. Quite rich.

SJE Subdued on the nose. The palate is memorable, with a fine blend suggesting sea, stones and sunshine. The extra age brings fine complexity, and a bright, fresh ending.

TG Nutty, yeasty and savoury nose. Flavours of cooked yellow fruit, bright acidity and a saline touch. Complex, rounded mouthfeel with a lovely creamy length. Very tasty.

Drink 2019-2021
Alc 13.5%

Fiona McDonald

Orgo, Rkatsiteli, Kakheti, Georgia 2016

93 OC 95 SJE 92 TG 92
£22-£23.40 **Clark Foyster Wines, Hedonism, Highbury Vintners, Roberson Wine**

OC Bitter stone notes; dry and chewy, with tamarind, peach skin and apple pips.

SJE Sumptuous auburn colour. Subtle aromas of roasted fruits and nuts. The palate is driven by texture rather than fruit, with a slight rasp of tannin. Notes of mint and eucalyptus.

TG Amber hue. Mellow, roasted pear and fresh green apple aromas. More nutty and woody than the textured, grippy palate. Contemplative and food-friendly, but not for everyone.

Drink 2019-2024
Alc 13%

Andrew Jefford

Santa Maria La Nave, Millesumare Bianco, Sicily, Italy 2016

93 OC 93 SJE 92 TG 93
£39.99 **Hallgarten**

OC Haughty, solitary kind of flavours – with an intriguing scent of barely ripe lemon and moist blossom rubbed on pale linen. Unusual, fascinating.

SJE A touch reduced on the nose. A smoky edge takes down the overt fruit. Stony freshness. Individual, with a slow burn to develop its full flavour. An elegant finish.

TG Definitely more mineral and smoky than fruity, with lots of oyster shell notes. Very appealing, fresh and food-friendly with excellent acid balance.

Drink 2019-2021
Alc 13%

Julie Sheppard

Soalheiro, Primeiras Vinhas Alvarinho, Vinho Verde, Monção e Melgaço, Portugal 2017

93 OC 96 SJE 93 TG 91
£27 **Highbury Vintners, Raymond Reynolds, The Good Wine Shop**

OC Irresistibly aromatic; curls of lemon zest twined with pear and white peach fruit. Utterly drinkable.

SJE Rose petals and violet aromas. Typically Albariño with a balance of grapefruit and creamy richness. Long, intense finish. Bring on the razor clams!

TG Classic Albariño: sea spray plus tropical and exotic fruit salad notes. Still young, but a great food wine.

Drink 2019-2021
Alc 13%

Richard Mayson

Weingut Bründlmayer, Terrassen Grüner Veltliner, Kamptal, Niederösterreich, Austria 2016

93 OC 91 SJE 94 TG 92
£21.75 **Berry Bros & Rudd, Fields Morris & Verdin**

OC Quite lean, showing lemon and apple peel fruit, with a fresh flash of green leaf.

SJE Slight hint of white pepper on the nose. From this subdued beginning blossoms a bold and generous wine: golden peaches, ripe lemons, cream and a delicate texture. Impressive Grüner.

TG Classic, stone fruit and white pepper on a weighty, textured palate. Fresh lemon acidity. Well made and drinking nicely.

Drink 2019-2022
Alc 12.5%

Jane Anson

Arnot-Roberts, Trout Gulch Vineyard Chardonnay, Santa Cruz Mountains, California, US 2016

92 OC 93 SJE 92 TG 91
£49 **Roberson Wine**

OC Full, rich, golden style. A big, salty, nutty, mineral wine, streaked with lemon zest. Still young and needs two to three years to develop.

SJE Roasted peaches on the nose; brisk and punchy in the mouth. The palate develops richly and is balanced by a note of bitterness, Long, persistent finish.

TG Very overt and concentrated stone fruit – almost extracted. Youthful, tight palate with sharp acidity. This needs time.

Drink 2020-2023
Alc 13%

Ronan Sayburn MS

Domaine William Fèvre, 1er Cru Montée de Tonnerre, Chablis, Burgundy, France 2016

92 OC 92 SJE 92 TG 92
£43.99 **Albany Vintners, Berry Bros & Rudd, Bl, Clarion, Davy's, Private Cellar, The Wine Society**

OC Pale, lean and very clear-eyed. Bone-dry with lean lemon fruit, a hint of blossom and a flash of struck match.

SJE Singing purity – a Chardonnay that's all about freshness. Some tropical fruit on the nose and palate. Plenty of youthful acidity to give energy to the style.

TG Bright, light and fresh in a Chablis style. Nutty creaminess and tart green apple with brisk lemon acidity.

Drink 2019-2023
Alc 13%

Rosemary George MW

Sandhi, Rita's Crown Chardonnay, Santa Rita Hills, California, US 2014

92 OC 94 SJE 91 TG 91
£45 **Roberson Wine**

OC Round, soft and mellow with a charming gentle maturity of cream and roasted nuts, freshened up with lemon zest acidity.

SJE Lean, clean wine. Smoky reductive notes lead to a clean, linear palate. Fruit is subdued; the palate is developing notes of stony purity. Elegant and refined.

TG Quite smoky and reduced on the nose. The palate is grippy, lean and tight with savoury mineral notes and hints of confit peach. A very New World Chardonnay.

Drink 2019-2021
Alc 13%

Chris Mercer

Vita Vinea, Kisi Amber Dry, Kakheti, Georgia 2016

92 OC 94 SJE 90 TG 92
£22 **Clark Foyster, Oddbins**

OC Pretty full style; dusty, clay-scented, with a little pale orange and apricot fruit, dried out but there, to soften the bitter bite.

SJE Brilliant gold with yellow lights. Delicately smoky aromatics. A rasp of tannin gives a drying note. The freshness lifts the weight of tannin, and offers light orange notes. Long spicy finish.

TG Burnished gold colour. Aromas and flavours of smoky toasted nuts and tart greengages on a grippy palate with dusty tannins and savoury, fresh acidity. Intriguing.

Drink 2019-2022
Alc 13%

Anthony Rose >



Weingut Knewitz, Riesling Trocken, Rheinhessen, Germany 2017

92 **OC** 92 **SJE** 92 **TG** 92
 £10.40 **Howard Ripley**
OC Full, direct orange zest and soft apple core, with a little leather and mineral stones.
SJE Lively aromatics with honey and fennel. Super-clean and vivid Riesling. Delicate in weight, but punchy and bold nevertheless. It would be cradle-snatching to drink now.
TG The aromas seem quite simple – peaches, marshmallows and honeysuckle – but the palate is more austere: tight and fresh with citrus blossom, stone fruit and apple. Youthful, lively acidity.
Drink 2020-2024
Alc 12.5%
Anne Krebiehl MW



Bodegas Roda, Roda I Reserva, Rioja, Spain 2011

95 **OC** 95 **SJE** 95 **TG** 95
 £40.50-£56 **Cru, Exel, Farr Vintners, Hedonism, Le Vignoble, Majestic, Mentzendorff**
OC Good: full, ripe and serenely balanced, the tannin nips just enough to enliven the rich strawberry and cranberry fruit, with hints of spicy scent.
SJE Textbook: fleshy Tempranillo blend, with Graciano ensuring the freshness. Aged in oak, now reaching a fine equilibrium with a delicate grain of tannin.
TG Classic Rioja: coconut and vanilla oak spice deftly balances savoury, leathery red berry fruit. Drinking well now but will age.
Drink 2019-2031
Alc 14.5%
Joanna Simon



Comando G, Uvas Felices, El Hombre Bala, Madrid, Spain 2015

95 **OC** 95 **SJE** 96 **TG** 95
 £21.59-£23.49 **Amps, D Byrne & Co, Highbury Vintners, Houltts, Kwoff, Noel Young,**
OC Lovely round and mellow style. Ripe red fruit with sultry cake and kitchen spice, plus a nip of ripe tannin and apple pip acid.
SJE Just right! Silky, generous Garnacha lifted by a note of the zippy, blueberry fruit of Carignan. Complex, vibrant and individual.
TG Delicious easy-drinking red made with a light touch. Juicy and ripe stewed red berries and sweet spices on a supple palate enlivened by fresh, crunchy acidity.
Drink 2019-2024
Alc 14.5%
James Button



Domaine Le Champ des Murailles, Grande Cuvée, Corbières-Boutenac, Languedoc, France 2016

95 **OC** 96 **SJE** 95 **TG** 95
 £19.95 **Davy's**
OC Deep, full, dense and rich, with excellent cranberry, loganberry and red plum, plus a dash of bitter chocolate and herbs.
SJE Dark chocolate and red fruits are often a good combination – and so it proves here. The textured tannins add real interest.
TG Bold, rich and chocolatey palate showing creamy, jammy black fruits and herbal hints of rosemary. Youthful and not overly complex but very tasty.
Drink 2019-2025
Alc 14.5%
James Lawther MW



Van Loggerenberg, Geronimo, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2016

95 **OC** 95 **SJE** 93 **TG** 96
 £25-£26 **Define Food & Wine, Handford, The Solent Cellar, Vin Cognito**
OC Full style, with mature, rich red fruit. Scented strawberry and redcurrant notes with a flutter of icing sugar and a suggestion of herbs and lemon zest.
SJE Lovely to have Cinsault in this line-up! Great to see it restored to the Pantheon of grape varieties. But this is a bit too herbaceous for a top score.
TG This tastes like the Cape: fynbos herbs and crunchy, vital red and blue berries, made in a pure, hands-off style.
Drink 2019-2024
Alc 13%
Roger Jones >



David Franz, Grenache Noir, Barossa Valley, South Australia 2016 94 OC 94 SJE 93 TG 94

£25 *The Knotted Vine*
OC Light but very tasty. Scented with rosemary and mint, and with delightfully syrupy strawberry and red plum fruit on the palate.
SJE Super-pale, orange tinted, strawberry hints, and brightly fresh. Very nicely balanced: the fruit is ripe but not overbearingly sweet, and there's a savoury note at the core.
TG Light, tight and savoury red berry fruit with fresh herbs and earthy notes. Quite high-toned on the palate with firm acidity.
Drink 2019-2021
Alc 13.5%
Simon Wright

Raúl Pérez, Ultraia, Bierzo, Spain 2015 94 OC 95 SJE 93 TG 93

£39 *Fine & Rare*
OC Good and quirky red. Soft strawberry and raspberry fruit, shot through with sap, some crunchy leafiness and grippy tannin.
SJE Light in colour and on palate, with eddying flavours of redcurrants and berries, wrapped in a rasp of tannin. Loosely knit, without the usual hard hit of acidity, and with a long finish.
TG Appealingly juicy and friendly redcurrant and raspberry fruit on the nose and palate. A lovely open style, with fine weight and a nice grip of dusty tannins.
Drink 2019-2024
Alc 13.5%
Justin Howard-Sneyd MW

Blank Canvas, Pinot Noir, Marlborough, New Zealand 2015 93 OC 92 SJE 94 TG 94

£27.99 *Highbury Vintners, Liberty Wines, Noel Young, Rude Wines, Vinvm*
OC Full and ripe style. The fruit is a little skins-dominant and squeezed. Chewy oak.
SJE The very model of a modern Pinot: ethereal balance on the nose between promise of red fruits and fine oak. The palate has a delightfully juicy impression, toned down by delicate spice.
TG Dense bramble fruit, green apple acidity and gentle spice. Unusually dark and concentrated for a Pinot. Dusty tannins and some nice freshness to finish. Modern but good.
Drink 2019-2024
Alc 13%
Bob Campbell MW

Cristom, Mt Jefferson Cuvée Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, Oregon, US 2015 93 OC 92 SJE 91 TG 94

£31.10 *Stannary St Wine Co*
OC Ripe and soft, with even a hint of raisin, but this works well, as the richness is nicely balanced and the oak is mellow.
SJE Redcurrants and wood smoke are the profile of this Pinot, giving a brisk edge to the finish. Long and supple sign-off.
TG Vibrant but soft cherry and cranberry fruit with gentle oak spice and savoury, dusty tannins. Modern and quite complex, with some balsamic tones. A unique wine.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 13.5%
John Stimpfig

Frederick Stevenson, Dry Red, Barossa Valley, South Australia 2019 93 OC 95 SJE 90 TG 92

£24 *Bottle Apostle, Clapton Craft, The Australian Cellar*
OC Lovely, bright and lively raspberry and ripe apple, with lemon zest and a flicker of herbs. Good acidity.
SJE Aromatics are jam-packed with ripe fruits, plum conserve, fruit jellies. The palate is less expressive, but has a fine texture of tannin to contrast with the sweet fruit. Long!
TG Full-on primary fruit aromas of summer pudding and fruit pastilles. A touch jammy, but crunchy acidity refreshes. Really quaffable.
Drink 2019-2024
Alc 13%
Tina Gellie >

Matías Riccitelli, The Party, Uco Valley, Mendoza, Argentina 2017 93 OC 93 SJE 93 TG 93

£14 *Marks & Spencer*
OC Big and toasted; rich and ripe. Deep, sweet cherry and plum fruit with some scent. Fat and toasty but good.
SJE Aromatically it's roasted Victoria plums in vanilla syrup. The palate overflows with flavour too, alive with juicy Malbec plumpness and a seasoning of spice.
TG Deliciously vibrant and juicy black fruit pastille notes, with vanilla sugar. Brambly and plush with a good grip of tannins. A very moreish Malbec.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 14%
Andy Howard MW

Thymiopoulos Vineyards, Jeunes Vignes de Xinomavro, Naoussa, Macedonia, Greece 2016 93 OC 93 SJE 93 TG 92

£10.95-£17 *Booths, Roberson Wine, The Wine Society, Theatre of Wine*
OC Delightful red, bursting with blackberry and stewed black plum fruit, with high plum-skin acid. Lively and appetising.
SJE Pale in colour, but overflowing with flavour. Cherries, fresh red berries, some chocolate and sweet spice. Very appealing.
TG Very ripe, dark berries on an inky, chewy, tannic palate. Deep and rich but with a seam of refreshing acidity to balance.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 13%
Amy Wislocki

Viñedos de Alcohuz, Tocado Syrah, Elqui Valley, Chile 2015 93 OC 91 SJE 94 TG 92

£29.95 *Wine Direct*
OC Very pleasant style. Quite soft, with mild redcurrant acid, good raspberry fruit and a veneer of toast.
SJE Floral, aromatic, sumptuous Syrah; nothing too savoury here. Instead the exotic charm of the variety shines through. The richness is lifted by the line of acidity. Long and lively finish.
TG Breezy primary red fruit, mineral hints and soft, grassy, floral notes. Not overly complex but well made, with fresh acidity and fine length.
Drink 2019-2024
Alc 13.5%
Alistair Cooper MW

Burn Cottage, Pinot Noir, Central Otago, New Zealand 2015 92 OC 95 SJE 90 TG 91

£49.99-£52 *Carruthers & Kent, Hedonism, Highbury Vintners, Liberty Wines, The New Zealand Cellar, The Wine Reserve, Vinvm*
OC Delightful floral nose, tempered by sappy green notes. Beautifully balanced rosehip and cherry fruit.
SJE Fine, fresh herb edge to the red fruited aromas. Palate is full of generous juice, with a bright lively finish.
TG A vibrant New World Pinot Noir with violet lift, sweet and ripe cherry and raspberry fruit, and bright acidity to balance. Juicy, forward and rich.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 14%
Richard Mayson

Cara Sur, Tinto, Valle de Calingasta, San Juan, Argentina 2017 92 OC 94 SJE 92 TG 90

£28.50 *Christopher Piper, Field & Fawcett, Grapevine Rockliffe Hall, The Wine Co*
OC Ripe, juicy and sweet, with sour raspberry and raw cherry notes. High acid but joyful, appetising red fruit too.
SJE Plump, with aromas of baked fruits, crushed raspberries and mocha. A vibrant jab of acidity leads into flavours of orange peel and lemon curd. Tannins add savoury complexity.
TG Stewed red and black fruit with soft tannins, but quite firm acidity, giving a sweet-and-sour character.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 13.5%
Paz Levinson >



Domaine l'Aigüelière, Côte Rousse, Montpeyroux, Languedoc, France 2015 92 OC 93 SJE 91 TG 92
 £19.95 **Ten-Acre Wines**
OC Ripe and deep, with blackberry and black plum fruit. Good acidity, but slightly rasping tannin that still needs a bit of bottle age.
SJE Bursting with baked fruits, and layered with toasty oak. This is a burly, warm-hearted creature. Needs a few years to calm down further.
TG Savoury, opulent nose full of ripe damsons and black berries, leading to a structured, weighty palate. The oak is evident but classy and needs time to integrate.
Drink 2020-2025
Alc 14%
Tom Cannavan



Domaine Stéphane Ogier, Réserve, Côte-Rôtie, Rhone, France 2012 92 OC 92 SJE 90 TG 93
 £55 **Montrachet Fine Wine**
OC Ripe, rich and quite soft, with some black cherry and clean leather notes, as well as an attractive touch of slate.
SJE Rich and fleshy Syrah, still charmingly aromatic. The palate is beginning to slow down but retains fine texture and freshness.
TG Lifted violet and mulberry fruit – very pretty. Great vibrancy for its age thanks to zesty acidity.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 13%
Simon Field MW



Hickinbotham Clarendon Vineyard, Trueman Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale, South Australia 2016 92 OC 92 SJE 92 TG 91
 £52.60 **Stannary St Wine Co**
OC Very unusual mix of marzipan, dry chocolate and blackcurrant. It is quite tannic, but does have some violet scent and sap to lift it.
SJE Textbook aromas: blackcurrant with a hint of green pepper. This is a modern and glossy approach to Cab. Fleshy blackcurrants and a firm undertone of cedar.
TG Quite a jammy Cab, but still has that cassis and green pepper note, plus soft vanilla oak and grippy tannins.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 14%
Huon Hooke



Le Due Terre, Sacrisassi Rosso, Colli Orientali, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy 2015 92 OC 94 SJE 91 TG 91
 £33 **Stannary St Wine Co**
OC Big and burly, but with good black cherry fruit, lively cranberry acid and a savoury, mineral streak that ends with a hint of cherry blossom scent.
SJE Brisk, firm and just a little austere, with all that classic, crisp crunchiness. Dark plum and black cherry fruit dominates on the elegant palate.
TG Appealingly rustic, high-toned red with tart, savoury cranberry and rosehip flavours. Firm stewed tea tannins and crunchy acidity.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 14%
Richard Baudains



Saurwein, Nom Pinot Noir, Western Cape, South Africa 2016 92 OC 93 SJE 92 TG 90
 £40-£43 **Handford, Harvey Nichols, Swig**
OC Pale, delicate and scented with cool earth and soft rosehip. Mellow strawberry fruit and a dusting of fresh summer earth.
SJE Very pale Pinot but not in the least pale in flavour. Bursting with cherry juice, enriched with cocoa and fines herbs. Long, juicy finish. A very popular style.
TG Gentle pomegranate aromas. Quite lean and tart cranberry and sour cherry fruit on the palate, with high acidity and a leafy edge. Firm, subtle and savoury.
Drink 2019-2022
Alc 13.5%
Chris Mercer >



Demeter Zoltán, Eszter Tokaji, Tokaj, Hungary 2013 96 OC 95 SJE

98 TG 94
 £48-£49.95 Grapesmith, Savage Selection, Uncorked
OC Full and soft, with notes of pineapple, wax and lemon pith. Rich and syrupy but with lemon zest and pith bite. Very good.
SJE Golden colour, gloriously scented and sumptuously fruity, with cling peach aromas. Palate is bright and equally peachy with lemons, apricots, limes, butterscotch, brown sugar and marmalade. Textbook example.
TG Luscious mango, pineapple and barley sugar sweetness. Lifted, juicy and unctuous, balanced by bright lemon curd acidity. Very long.
Drink 2019-2027
Alc 9.5%
Caroline Gilby MW

Bodegas Callejuela, Amontillado, Jerez, Spain NV 96 OC 96 SJE 96 TG 95

£15.83-£28 Decantalo, Iberian Drinks
OC Full, rich and wonderfully deep, with notes of Brazil nuts, caramel and honey, plus almond skin bitterness and probing acidity. Excellent.
SJE Intensely roasted aromas; mahogany, toast, vanilla. Palate is exceptionally long and vivid, with bright punchy freshness, memorably so.
TG Beautifully complex notes of peanut brittle and Scottish tablet, with a piercing seam of balancing acidity and a lingering saline finish. Delicious!
Drink 2019-2025
Alc 18%
Matt Walls

Lustau, Almacenista Palo Cortado, Jerez, Spain NV 96 OC 96 SJE 96 TG 95

£23.70-£28 Exel, Highbury Vintners, Noble Green, WoodWinters
OC Deep amber, with a marvellous mix of nuts. Rich but dry, with peach skins and piercing acid lift. Excellent.
SJE Gloriously roasted, honeyed aromatics to match the sumptuously golden, glinting colour of the wine. Long, savoury palate, full of orange marmalade and with a salty savoury edge.
TG Great concentration and complexity of walnut skins, toffee apples, salted caramel and furniture polish. Savoury, saline length and brilliant orange peel freshness.
Drink 2019-2025
Alc 21%
Peter Richards MW

Cockburn's, Bicentenary Vintage Port, Douro, Portugal 2015 94 OC 94 SJE 94 TG 94

£60 Fareham Wine Cellar, Farr Vintners, Hedonism, Justerini & Brooks, Waitrose
OC Deep and rich; dense and ripe. Tannic and powerful - but not that scented.
SJE Youthful blast of Port: jostling with tannins, young fruits, spices and warm alcohol. Plenty to enjoy!
TG A powerful and imposing Port with lots of ripe bramble fruit, liquorice tones and sweet spice. Young, potent and structured.
Drink 2019-2027
Alc 20%
Richard Mayson

Equipo Navazos, La Bota 71 Manzanilla, Jerez, Spain NV 93 OC 94 SJE 94 TG 92

£25-£28.49 Alliance, Dunell's, Highbury Vintners, Virgin Wines
OC A delightful balancing act between the sweet-sour yeast and dry but rich notes of nut husk and apple core. Very good style.
SJE Typically nutty purity - where else but Sherry? Very intense palate. Silk entry, notes of orange, eucalyptus, salted almonds. Dry, punchy palate; long finish, unexpectedly soft and round.
TG Nutty, yeasty and fresh aromas lead to a bone-dry palate of salted almonds and orange blossom. Zesty, bright and linear.
Drink 2019-2023
Alc 15%
Natalie Earl 