

# Silent but strong

## WINE

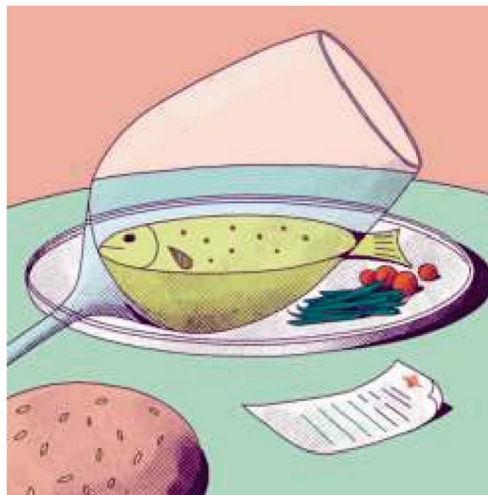
### DAVID WILLIAMS

Some wines are noisy, attention-grabbing. Busy with flavours and aromas, swishing and sashaying with luxurious textures, they command the palate with the force of their personality, stimulating the mind as much as the body, and tempting those who drink them to pile on the similes and adjectives as they describe them.

Complex, cerebral, individual... wines like top Bordeaux, Burgundy or Barolo don't just make wine lovers say silly things, they also make them part with silly amounts of money. But if they have a near-monopoly on uses of the phrase "fine wine", they're by no means the sort of thing you'd want to drink all the time. In much the same way that a simple bowl of pasta and a salad can have more appeal than a Michelin-aspiring tasting menu, what we look for from wine in most situations isn't a mind-blowing peak experience, but something like the opposite: a wine that goes about its business without making us think too hard about it.

A good quiet wine is harder to find than you might think. To get it right, a winemaker has to grasp the distinction between the subtly unshowy and the flavourlessly dilute. There's also what I think of as the princess and the pea issue: in a wine that sets out to glide without making a fuss, the small flaws (a dose of sour acidity, a brush of dry tannin) are all the more starkly apparent.

Some wine cultures understand the →



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principle better than others. The Italians make vast quantities of pale, crisp dry wines whose primary task is to provide an unobtrusive support for food. At around the £6 mark, it's all-but-impossible to tell a line-up of supermarket orvieto, soave and pinot grigio apart.

Made with everything in graceful balance, though, northeastern Italian whites, such as the reliably genteel pair (a Pinot Grigio and a Pinot Blanc, both £12.75) sold under the Piccozza label in Tesco, are the ideal wines for the unthinking cooling and soothing away of stress of a summer evening; while Tedeschi Capitel Tenda Soave DOC Classico 2022 (£16.75, VINVM),

is a model of elegant restraint, its subtle greengage and pear just the thing to lift a summer lunch of herby chicken and leafy salad.

Slightly more assertive of flavour, the sun-loving Mediterranean grape variety vermentino is no less talented when it comes to providing an immediate straight-from-the-fridge, post-work moment: Marilyn Lasserre Coquille de Mer Vermentino, Languedoc, France 2025 (£10.99, House of Townend) is a delicate fine-mist spray of lemon, lime and grapefruit. The same variety (you might find it called rolle on the label) is also often called on to play a supporting role alongside gently pressed red varieties such as grenache, cinsault, syrah and mourvèdre by those masters of whispery understatement, the rosé

winemakers of Provence. Château Marguerite Symphonie, Côtes de Provence 2025 (£24.99, Strictly Wine), is a particularly elegant example of the breed, while Coeur De Cardeline Rosé 2025, from Costière de Nîmes, offers some of that discreet charm at a fraction of the price (£9.25, The Co-op). Both these wines – and the gently insinuating orange citrus tang of pale Greek delight Oenops Apla Rosé 2024 (£14.79, Strictly Wine) – offer their pleasures quietly. But if you listen closely, you might find they have much to say. ●

**Wine of the Week**  
Coeur De Cardeline  
Rosé 2025, £9.25,  
The Co-op

