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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

Some of the wines that missed out on a Top 100 position did so by the tiniest of margins.

You'll find them among our Highly Commended winners, which we describe on the following pages.

The list contains some names that will be familiar with most independents, as well as some that could be seen as more left-field. Either way, these are wines that make an important contribution to the Top 100 project and deserve further investigation.

50 THE WINE MERCHANT TOP 100

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ARGENTINA

White

Mendel Wines Semillon, Mendoza 2023 (£19.99, Cachet Wine): Waxy lemon; good iteration of the grape. Good flavour and finish.

El Enemigo Chardonnay, Mendoza 2023 (£25.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Zesty, expressive nose; ripe and full of flavour – lots of plush, toasty oak.

Mauricio Lorca Lo% Criolla Blanca, Mendoza 2025 (£12.25, Ucopia Wines): Greengage, tropical fruits, honeydew melon. Impressive for price point.

Matias Riccitelli The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree Torrontés, Mendoza 2024 (£17.49, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Fennel and rose petals on the nose; kumquat on the palate – very aromatic and exotic.

Orange

Cadus Naranja, Uco Valley 2024 (£20.99, Boutinot): Dark peach in colour; funky nose; bitter almond and fuzzy peach flavours. Intriguing.

Red

Bodega Urqo Palo Santo Cabernet Franc, Uco Valley 2024 (£15.99, Boutinot): Wild strawberries – very interesting and a very good price point.

Bodega Urqo Malbec Organico, Uco Valley 2024 (£17.49, Boutinot): Lovely depth and freshness; tangy, smooth, spicy. Structured without being chewy.

Molinos Nieto Senetiner Malbec, Mendoza 2025 (£12.99, Boutinot): Juicy red and black fruits; coffee bitterness; structured but soft tannins.

Bodega Urqo Los Durmientes Malbec, Uco Valley 2024 (£13.49, Boutinot): Nice concentration and fruit, delicate herbal note, tangy, peppery finish.

Mendel Wines Luján de Cuyo Malbec, Mendoza 2022 (£23.50, Cachet Wine): Savoury and full flavoured; briny with black olives – would be good with food.

Matias Riccitelli The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree Malbec, Mendoza 2023 (£25.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Slight pencil-shaving nose; aromatic, candied fruit, lovely acidity.

El Enemigo Syrah/Viognier, Mendoza 2022 (£25.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Deep aromas of cooked, jammy black fruits; fennel stems. Big, bold and structured.

El Enemigo Malbec, Uco Valley 2022 (£25.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Juicy fruit, black cherry and chocolate, sweet oak and a refreshing, subtle bitterness.

Zorzal Malbec Gran Terroir, Uco Valley 2024 (£21.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Blueberry, blackberry, balsamic nose; pickled fruit and prunes. Lots going on.

Zuccardi Regiones Malbec, Uco Valley 2023 (£21.29, Hatch Mansfield): Cranberry fruit – earthy and spicy with lots of fresh peppery spice on the palate.

Benegas Lynch Meritage, Mendoza 2019 (£50.50, Ucopia Wines): Big Bordeaux blend. Savoury meaty-cheesy vibe; bramble and hedgerow and oak.

Atamisque Catalpa Malbec, Tupungato 2023 (£22.50, Ucopia Wines): Fresh and juicy with lots of berry fruit and cream on the palate.

La Cayetana Pinot Noir, Los Chacayes 2023 (£24.95, Ucopia Wines): Light expressive bubble gum and wild strawberries; clean, light, easy-drinking.

Bodega Sottano Reserva de Familia Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendoza 2024 (£24, Vindependents): Inviting nose: classic Cab. Crowd-pleaser with a touch of mint/menthol.

Bodega Sottano Pilatos Malbec, Mendoza 2023 (£49.50, Vindependents): Very concentrated rich fruit; savoury with an almond oxidative note; judicious oak; smooth.

Bodega Sottano Junior Blend, Mendoza 2025 (£20.50, Vindependents): Crunchy tannins and chocolatey flavours, very pleasant winemaking.

Bodega Sottano Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendoza 2024 (£14.50, Vindependents): Blackcurrant, earth and bull's blood. Hidden fruit, good acidity, lots of iron.

Bodega Sottano Junior Malbec, Mendoza 2025 (£12.50, Vindependents): Juicy; Christmas spices and blood orange; candied red fruits. Good for the price.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

AUSTRALIA

White

Tournon Mathilda Viognier/Marsanne, Victoria 2024 (£18.50, Berkmann Wine Cellars): Good varietal nose: clean stone fruit. Good intensity – vibrant, layered.

Peter Lehmann Wigan Riesling, Eden Valley 2018 (£25.99, Boutinot): Hugely characterful nose. On the palate, it's tropical, slightly oily, with some smoky minerality.

Soumah Savarro Savagnin, Yarra Valley 2024 (£19.99, Boutinot): Intriguing, hard-to-define nose: good depth and well-balanced acidity. Apple fruit.

Berton Vineyards Pitchfork Chardonnay, Barossa Valley 2025 (£10.99, Cachet Wine): Very tropical and juicy fruit; simple but bright and refreshing; value.

Torbreck The Steading Blanc, Barossa Valley 2022 (£42, Fells): Very well made: stone fruit, lovely restraint and balance. High price but high quality.

Pewsey Vale Vineyard Estate Riesling, Eden Valley 2024 (£19, Fells): Great intensity on the nose with good Riesling character; mineral-laden palate.

Tyrrell's Pokolbin Hills Single Vineyard Semillon, Hunter Valley 2019 (£30, Fells): Lovely texture with richness balanced by citrus; slightly smoky but fruit still evident.

Tyrrell's Hunter Valley Chardonnay, Hunter Valley 2024 (£19, Fells): Leesy but fruity, with a beeswax note; very crisp but has a nice richness, too.

Jim Barry Wines Watervale Riesling, Clare Valley 2024 (£15.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Clearly Riesling! This would be a very good introduction to the grape.

Tahbilk Marsanne, Nagambie Lakes 2023 (£16.49, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Good stone fruit character; simple but very drinkable; good fresh finish.

Jim Barry Wines Assyrtiko, Clare Valley 2022 (£25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Very pale; fresh and mineral; slightly herbal with an intensity of lemon sherbet.

Jim Barry Wines Loosen Barry Slate Hill Riesling, Clare Valley 2023 (£25.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Subtle nose with classic lime; deliciously zesty on the palate.

Cherubino Pedestal Chardonnay, Margaret River 2024 (£19.33, Hatch Mansfield): Complex lemony fruit; toast. Leesy rather than oaky; very good balance.

Pierro Vineyards Fire Gully Chardonnay, Margaret River 2025 (£23.95, Jeroboams): Very bready and toasty, savoury Chardonnay; substantial but balanced and bright.

Highgate Hunter Valley Chardonnay, Hunter Valley 2023 (£15.50, Vindependents): Very bright and tropical primary fruit. Refreshing and rather amiable.

Orange

Smallfry Wines Tangerine Dream, Barossa Valley 2023 (£28, Substrata Wines): Golden, slightly cloudy. Stewed fruit, apple peel. Slight tannic grip. Great with a cheeseboard.

Red

Langmeil Blacksmith Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa 2021 (£26.50, Berkmann Wine Cellars): Dark, brooding purple; full creamy blueberry and blackberry palate.

Unico Zelo Truffle Hound, Clare Valley 2022 (£23.50, Berkmann Wine Cellars): An Australian Barbera that's very intense with lots of sweet fruit; a real point of difference.

Berton Vineyards Pitchfork Shiraz, Barossa Valley 2024 (£10.49, Cachet Wine): Sweet fruit on entry, but fresh and not syrupy – really good value.

Yalumba Samuel's Collection Barossa Bush Vine Grenache, Barossa 2023 (£16.99, Fells): Superb depth and juicy fruit; lots of flavour and succulence. Well made.

Dalrymple Vineyards Tasmania Pinot Noir, Tasmania 2023 (£38, Fells): Sophisticated, lovely depth and texture and a great Pinot nose – couldn't be anything else.

Xanadu Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River 2022 (£25.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Deep classic Margaret River Cabernet: intense, structured, but lovely balance.



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Mount Langi Ghiran Cliff Edge Shiraz, Grampians 2023 (£23.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Meaty, savoury and herbal notes on the nose; sweet fruit, nice mouthful.

Jim Barry Wines Shiraz, Clare Valley 2022 (£16.49, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Eucalyptus/menthol on the nose really comes through; very interesting and drinkable.

Berton Vineyard Shiraz Reserve, Barossa 2021 (£19.49, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Cherry tones; Big, bold, high-alcohol Shiraz with lots going on for the money.

Paringa Estate The Paringa Single Vineyard Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula 2022 (£87, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Beautiful ripe Pinot style; delicious fleshy cherry and raspberry; expensive, but high quality.

Yering Station Pinot Noir, Yarra Valley 2023 (£25.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Attractively summery red fruit; juicy and accessible; proper Pinot texture/tannins.

Berton Vineyard Winemakers Reserve Durif, Langhorne Creek 2022 (£14.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Intense, dark fruit – a wine full of dusky tannic power.

Parker Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawara 2021 (£17.50, Jeroboams): Good balancing coolness in this fresher style; mint and eucalyptus and blackcurrant.

De Bortoli Wines Deen Durif, Riverina 2021 (£13, North South Wines): Rich and deep and full of flavour; power with fruit.

Brothers at War The Old Man Syrah, Eden Valley 2023 (£18, The Antipodean Sommelier): Darker fruit and spice. Fresh and lifted rather than syrupy and cloying.

AUSTRIA

White

Pfaffl Dot Austrian Peach Riesling, Niederösterreich 2025 (£16.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Nice appealing nose and texture; stone fruit rather than citrus; good length.



Weingut Rabl Langenlois Grüner Veltliner, Kamptal 2024 (£19.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Fresh with lots of fruit and gentle acidity; graceful, easy-going.

Rosé

Funkstille Zweigelt Rosé, Niederösterreich 2025 (£13.99, Alliance Wine): Pretty red-fruity nose; juicy and really drinkable – the price is great for Austria.

Red

Salzl Seewinkelhof Blaufrankisch, Burgenland 2023 (£15, North South Wines): Red fruits, spice, soft strawberries and cream; very low tannins. One to chill for the terrace.

BULGARIA

Orange

Rossidi Orange, Thracian Lowlands 2022 (£24, Ivo Varbanov Wine Selection): Dark copper. Highly aromatic. Spicy, warming, mango hug! Show me the pad thai.

Red

Ivo Varbanov Syrah Carmen, Thracian Lowlands 2017 (£30, Ivo Varbanov Wine Selection): Rich, spicy nose, very dark. Still youthful with powerful tannins.

Ivo Varbanov Merlot & Syrah Cavaradossi, Thracian Lowlands 2020 (£15, Ivo Varbanov Wine Selection): Rich, warming and robust; lots of plummy rich fruit.

Zagreus Winery Vinica Mavrud, Thracian Valley 2020 (£27, The Jolly Merchants): Really nice polished red fruit followed by a large dollop of tannin. Needs time to soften.

CANADA

Red

LightFoot & Wolfville Fauna, Nova Scotia 2024 (£21, Daniel Lambert Wines): Crunchy purple fruit. Blueberries, bilberries, juicy and easy: Canada does Beaujolais.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

CHILE

Sparkling

Emiliana Amaluna Organic Sparkling, Casablanca Valley NV (£16.99, Boutinot): Clean bright nose and salty-maritime palate – refreshingly different.

White

Morandé Sauvignon Blanc Gran Reserva Selección de Viñedos, Casablanca Valley 2025 (£16, Berkmann Wine Cellars): Green pepper and asparagus; cool, fresh, classic Chilean Sauvignon Blanc.

Miguel Torres Chile Cordillera Chardonnay, Curicó Valley 2023 (£16.95, Fells): Rounded and fruity. Lemons and apples with grapefruit pith and subtle oak spice.

Emiliana Novas Gran Reserva Chardonnay, Casablanca Valley 2024 (£14.49, Boutinot): Fun, fruit-forward, well-balanced Chardonnay with some tropical fruit notes. Well put together.

Undurraga Terroir Hunter Chardonnay, Limarí Valley 2023 (£21, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Struck-match, lighter style. Elegance over power and oak. Bright and cool.

Caliterra Sauvignon Blanc Reserva, Aconcagua Valley 2024 (£13.68, Hatch Mansfield): Chile's answer to Pouilly-Fumé: smoky nose, gunpowder. Bright finish.

Arboleda Sauvignon Blanc, Aconcagua Valley 2024 (£17.78, Hatch Mansfield): South American Sancerre, lots of classic citrus flavour and racy freshness.

Rosé

Miguel Torres Chile Andica Organic Rosé, Curicó Valley 2025 (£12.99, Fells): Well made, clean, fresh, balanced: would definitely stock at this price.

Red

Matetic EQ Syrah Cool Climate, San Antonio 2019 (£33, Berkmann Wine Cellars): Deep, full-bodied, silky and intense; black olives, violets, blackberries – proper Syrah.

Caliterra Merlot Reserva, Colchagua Valley 2024 (£13.90, Hatch Mansfield): Soft fruit and fresh in style: nicely judged. Very good value.

Errazuriz Villa by Errazuriz, Aconcagua Valley 2022 (£29.96, Hatch Mansfield): Classic blackcurrant-and-menthol Chilean Cabernet character: like a Polo dipped in Ribena!

Viña Las Niñas de Apalta Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon Organic, Apalta 2023 (£20, Les Grands Chais de France): Chilean-goes-Rioja vibes, with lots of soft vanilla oak and red fruit. Satisfying.

Montes Alpha Colchagua Carmenère, Colchagua Valley 2022 (£18.99, Liberty Wines): Herbaceous, rosemary and violets, deep blackcurrant and blackberry, pepper and spice. Complex.

ENGLAND

Sparkling

All Angels Classic Cuvée, Berkshire 2019 (£42, Enborne Vineyards): Fresh orchard fruit and lots of salinity on a crisp, focused palate.

Hattingley Valley Blanc de Blancs, Hampshire 2019 (£51, Enotria): Fresh and very fruity Chard – very nicely done and certainly drinkable, if just a touch pricey.

Hattingley Valley Vintage Cuvée, Hampshire 2019 (£35, Vindependents): Lovely rich mouth feel. Pears, plums, grapes: lovely long finish. Good value for a vintage wine.

Borrowed Origins Field Blend Fiasco, Norfolk 2009 (£29.99, Fredricks): Intriguingly different and bright with lots of complex fruit; memorable.

Wiston Estate Rosé Vintage, Sussex 2018 (£57, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Baked pastry notes and the fruit is just lovely. Very classy and precise.

Wiston Estate Brut, Sussex NV (£37, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): A solid English sparkler, with plenty to like: fruit, mouthfilling richness.

MDCV UK Silver Reign, Kent NV (£18, MDCV): Confectionery: fruity sweets on the nose. Loads of tropical fruit. Fun and sweet without sugar.

MDCV UK Silver Reign Rosé, Kent NV (£17, MDCV UK): Loads of bright red fruit and sweetness – very enjoyable, accessible value pink fizz.



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MDCV UK London Clay Brut NV, Essex NV (£20.99, MDCV UK): Big weighty initial palate – full of dark red fruit. Easy-drinking.

White

1276 Wines Chardonnay, Herefordshire 2024 (£23.99, 1276 Wines): Hazelnuts, restrained oak, cream cake. Starts tart, finishes lavishly.

New Hall Wine Estate Bacchus Single Estate, Essex 2023 (£19.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Tart, tangy, zesty; bright aromatics. Refreshing, high acidity, good persistence.

FRANCE

Sparkling

Vignoble Alain Robert Alchimiste Pétillant Naturel, Loire NV (£21.99, Cachet Wine): Baked apple; biscuity notes, nice freshness, delicate mousse; appealing, textured finish.

Champagne Gardet Chigny-les-Roses Gardet Brut Tradition Champagne NV (£32.99, Cachet Wine): Delightful aroma: well-developed, biscuity-bready nose; very enticing palate.

Bruno Andreu De-alcoholised Sparkling Chardonnay NV (£10.99, Cachet Wine): Fun tropical notes and a touch floral, too. Quite convincing fizz style.

Union Champagne Brut 1er Cru Tradition, Champagne NV (£45, Daniel Lambert Wines): Savoury and fruity combine beautifully; really vibrant and fresh acidity.

Oedoria Cremant de Bourgogne Diamant, Crémant de Bourgogne NV (£21.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Fresh, vibrant and frothy. White fruit; clean, open, gentle.

Champagne Henriot Blanc Souverain, Blanc de Blancs, Champagne NV (£50, Fells): Lean and lovely, with soft green fruit. Very smart but really accessible style.

Simonnet-Febvre Crémant de Bourgogne, Crémant de Bourgogne NV (£20, Fells): Charming subtle style, understated, with greengage and lots of bright clean acidity.



Champagne Duval-Leroy Fleur de Champagne 1er Cru Brut Champagne NV (£64, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Pure light green apples and fresh saline minerality. Layers of toast and apple. High class.

Champagne Duval-Leroy Brut Réserve, Champagne NV (£51.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Riper dark-fruited style of blanc de noirs; rounded and rich mousse.

Champagne Palmer Blanc de Blancs, Champagne 2018 (£75.56, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Lovely ripe fruit: apple and yellow plum. Rich creamy palate, toasty finish.

Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte Réserve Exclusive Rosé, Champagne NV (£49.43, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): A total crowd-pleaser! So moreish; keep coming back for another glass.

Champagne Taittinger Les Folies de la Marquetterie, Champagne NV (£70, Hatch Mansfield): Richness and softness with a delicious creamy quality. Suave.

Champagne Philipponnat Réserve Perpetuelle Brut, Champagne NV (£49.95, JeroBoarns): Petit Filou! Depth, complexity and lovely balance. Candied fruit, savoury finish.

Champagne Laurent-Perrier Blanc de Blancs Brut Nature, Champagne NV (£92, Laurent-Perrier UK): Fresh Golden Delicious apples and pears; lovely light toast and biscuit.

Champagne Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé, Champagne NV (£82, Laurent-Perrier UK): Classic, stylish, benchmark rosé Champagne that ticks all the pink boxes.

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FRANCE Sparkling continued

Moillard-Grivot Blanc de Noirs Brut, Crémant de Bourgogne NV (£22, Les Grands Chais de France): Impactful opening with red fruits; a dry delicate finish.

Devaux Cœur de Nature Organic, Champagne NV (£55.99, Liberty Wines): Summer pudding fruit in a round rich palate; good weight balanced with energy.

Devaux Cœur des Bar Blanc de Noirs, Champagne NV (£55.99, Liberty Wines): Delicious richness of flavour on a well-rounded palate with vigorous mousse.

Devaux Cuvée D, Champagne NV (£59.99, Liberty Wines): It's all about the elegance here: refined and well-made, tailored Champagne.

Champagne Mandois Blanc de Blancs Brut, Champagne 2020 (£50, North South Wines): Very fresh and youthful; light Cox's apples on the racy crisp palate.

Laurent Breton Champagne Germar Breton Blanc de Noirs, Champagne NV (£37.50, Vindependents): Summer fruits in a soft creamy style; lovely body and texture.

Laurent Breton Champagne Germar Breton Blanc de Blancs, Champagne NV (£41.50, Vindependents): Baked apple and some honeysuckle on the nose; rich, round with good lees character.

Champagne Delavenne Grand Cru Original 60/40, Champagne NV (£42.50, Vindependents): Restrained and graceful, subtle but with lots of energy and life.

White

Pascal & Nicolas Reverdy Terre de Maimbray Sancerre Blanc, Sancerre 2024 (£28.50, Alliance Wine): Classy, classic Sancerre, young and dynamic; lime, asparagus, green apple.

Ferraton St-Joseph La Source Blanc, St Joseph 2023 (£32, Berkman Wine Cellars): Delicate, floral aroma; refined palate; sophisticated and stimulating.

Domaine Sylvain Bailly Quincy Beaucharme, Loire 2024 (£16.49, Cachet Wine): Apple, pear, white peach. Bruised apple, nice structure, leesy richness.

Domaine Sylvain Bailly Sancerre Prestige, Loire 2023 (£25.49, Cachet Wine): Rich, waxy nose; banana and a touch of passion fruit – an impressive, rounded wine.

Château Grand Moulin Bourboulenc Cocobiroux, Languedoc 2025 (£12.99, Cachet Wine): Delicate aromatics, peachy with ripe citrus and fresh acidity. Nicely done.

Marilyn Lasserre Coquille de Mer Vermentino, Languedoc 2025 (£10.99, Cachet Wine): Zippy and fresh with citrus notes. Great value fridge-door special.

Bruno Andreu De-alcoholised Chardonnay, Languedoc NV (£8.99, Cachet Wine): Works surprisingly well! Gentle peachy style. Easygoing.

Philippe Lebrun Sauvignon Peewit Gris, Côtes de Gascogne 2024 (£10.99, Cachet Wine): Great pepper, grapefruit, citrus, tropical fruit; nice acidity and balance.

Producteurs Plaimont Le Faîte Blanc, Saint Mont 2020 (£22.99, Cachet Wine): Great balance of fruit and grapefruit acidity; rich golden apple and tropical fruit.

Domaine de la Trottières Claire de Lune, Anjou 2025 (£10, Daniel Lambert Wines): Youthful lemon, touch of fennel, flint and leafy finish. Lovely balance.

Domaine Renaudat Quincy, Quincy 2025 (£24.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Fresh, delicate, graceful: newly-cut grass and green banana. Delightful.

Dauvergne Ranvier Le Voisin Dessus, Ardèche 2024 (£16, Daniel Lambert Wines): Bright, peachy, floral, aromatic. Persistent and fruity but crisp.

Producteurs Plaimont Piou de Yura, Jurançon 2023 (£15.99, Cachet Wine): Tropical nose; fruit-driven palate all kept fresh with great acidity. Yum.

Producteurs Plaimont Les Vignes Retrouvés, Saint Mont 2023 (£14.50, Cachet Wine): Lime cake citrus vibes – very clean and racy. A wake-you-up wine.

Calmel & Joseph Les Crus – L'Or Bohème, Haute Vallée d'Orb 2024 (£12.99, Daniel Lambert): Lovely zingy fruit – really tingling. Freshness. Great point of difference.



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	Carmel & Joseph Les Crus – L'Astre Divin, Clairette du Languedoc 2024 (£15.99, Daniel Lambert Wines): Lightly herbal refined aromas, white peach – nice distinctive style. Domaine de la Creuze Noire St-Véran Creuze Noire, St-Véran 2023 (£26.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Classy white Burgundy – really well-made and refined at a great price. Domaine de la Gaultière Jasnières, Jasnières 2024 (£22, Daniel Lambert Wines): Reductive nose with nettle and Granny Smith apple; complex and enjoyable. Domaine Chauveau Pouilly-Fumé, Pouilly-Fumé 2025 (£22.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Apricot, melon – and very juicy peach! Ripe style, long finish. Domaine Guillaman Colombard Sauvignon, Côtes de Gascogne 2025 (£11, Daniel Lambert Wines): Tropical fruit, melon, mango and lychee. Very fruit-forward. Value. Domaines Paul Mas L'Artisan Le Chardonnay, Pays d'Oc 2025 (£10.95, Domaines Paul Mas): White and green fruits and florals. Great freshness and price point. Domaines Paul Mas Château Martinolles Limoux Blanc Vieilles Vignes, Limoux 2025 (£15.98, Domaines Paul Mas): Proper complexity and interest. Clearly very well made. Domaines Paul Mas Jean-Claude Mas Classic Viognier Le Pioch, Pays d'Oc 2025 (£8.99, Domaines Paul Mas): Really good peachy fruit and freshness for the money. Bravo! Domaines Paul Mas Jean-Claude Mas Réserve Chardonnay Les Grès, Pays d'Oc 2025 (£9.99, Domaines Paul Mas): Really good everyday drinking wine – and a good wholesale option, too. Joseph Burrier Mâcon-Villages Mémoire du Terroir, Mâcon-Villages 2024 (£17.99, Fells): Pretty nose and elegant palate; great for the price. Chéreau Carré Muscadet Sèvre et Maine, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine 2024 (£13.49, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Citrus fruit and wet stone – light and racy, saline finish.	Château de l'Ou Infiniment de l'Ou Chardonnay, Côtes Catalanes 2021 (£34, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Appealing touch of honey; good texture and structure, finishing fresh. Complex. Château de Campuget Viognier 1753, Gard 2024 (£17.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): A super-fresh example of Viognier; lightly peachy, extremely drinkable. Dopff au Moulin Gewurztraminer Terres Épicées, Alsace 2023 (£23.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Classic Gewurz aromatics – delightful rose petals. Nice weight of palate. Quality. Château de l'Ou l'Orange de l'Ou Muscat Blanc, Côtes Catalanes, Roussillon 2022 (£35.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Really interesting and distinctive; dried fruit and floral notes. Louis Jadot Domaine Ferret Pouilly-Fuissé, Pouilly-Fuissé 2023 (£49.51, Hatch Mansfield): Very classy white Burgundy, with lots going on and excellent balance. Château du Cléray Cru Vallet Muscadet Sèvre et Maine, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine 2023 (£21, Les Grands Chais de France): Textured easy drinking with bruised apple and citrus combining nicely. Château Belles Eaux Les Coteaux Grenache Blanc, Languedoc 2024 (£17, Les Grands Chais de France): Clean green fruit – doesn't scream Grenache Blanc but a very nice wine. Domaine Marguerite Carillon Santenay, Santenay 2023 (£38, Les Grands Chais de France): Real elegance and style on the nose; great richness on the palate. Domaine Fernand Engel Riesling Grand Cru Praelatenberg, Alsace 2022 (£25, Marta Vine): Honey notes and hint of petrol. Stone fruit, minerals, acidity, great integration. Lovely. Maison Brotte Les Hauts de Barville Blanc, Chateaufort-du-Pape 2024 (£34, North South Wines): Smooth, rich, complex but fresh – citrus and minerals with deep creamy flavours. Boris Kovac Piquepoul de Pinet Le Minéral, Picpoul de Pinet 2025 (£18.50, Utopia Wines): Restrained nose, but super-zippy and fresh just as you'd want, with extra citrus lift.
		

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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

FRANCE White continued

Domaine Fournillon Chablis, Chablis 2022 (£22.50, Vindependents): Textbook Chablis: clean, fresh and well balanced, zippy and refreshing.

Domaine Belleville Rully La Créée, Rully 2023 (£37, Vindependents): Very fresh style with lovely balance. Just what you'd want from a white Burgundy at this price.

Domaine Alexandre Chablis, Chablis 2024 (£23.50, Vindependents): Classic nose and good richness – a really good example of village Chablis.

Lionel Osmin & Cie La Baie Orientale, Vin de France 2025 (£17.50, Vindependents): Floral, grapey and refreshing; lightly tropical palate and fresh finish. Summer!

Domaine Bott-Geyl Gewurztraminer Les Éléments, Alsace 2021 (£26.50, Vindependents): Rich, round, floral lychee and rose; lovely fruit balances the sweetness.

Domaine Belleville Monthélie La Combe Danay, Monthélie 2023 (£50, Vindependents): Classy oak on the nose; depth and complexity on the palate – impressive.

Orange

Domaines Paul Mas Paul Mas Rosorange Organic, Vin de France 2025 (£13.95, Domaines Paul Mas): Fresh fruit and cream soda vibes: needs to be cold, but lots of fun.

Frédéric Garrabou When Life Gives You Oranges, Languedoc 2024 (£11.99, Cachet Wine): Voluptuously off-dry. Orange pith; white blossom, excellent value for money.

Rosé

La Bastide Blanche Bandol Rosé, Bandol 2024 (£29.99, Alliance Wine): Ripe summer fruits; great balance between freshness and slightly sweet richness.

Marilyn Lasserre Coquille de Fleur Cinsault Rosé, Languedoc 2025 (£10.99, Cachet Wine): Candy floss and strawberry; very gluggable rosé, juicy and dry.

Domaine Saint André Folie d'Inès Rosé, Languedoc 2025 (£11.99, Cachet Wine): Smart budget buy: candied, easy-drinking, party rosé.

Dauvergne Ranvier Tavel, Tavel NV (£20.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Layers of ripe red fruit; punchy and with an appealingly fruit-driven finish.

Château Paquette Classique, Côtes de Provence 2025 (£18.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Great balance of freshness and fruit concentration; a beautifully made rosé.

Domaine de la Creuze Noire Clarté de l'Été Rosé, Beaujolais 2024 (£18, Daniel Lambert Wines): Doing its own thing and doing it well: fully fruity summer session rosé.

Château Montaud Provence Rosé, Côtes de Provence 2025 (£16.95, Jeroboams): Ripe and slightly candied fruit; very soft of texture; juicy finish.

Les Grands Chais de France Sans Prétention Luberon Rosé, Luberon 2025 (£14.50, Les Grands Chais de France): Soft fruit throughout with a textured finish; crunchy cranberry.

Les Quatre Tours Domaine de la Rigouline AOP Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence, Coteaux d'Aix en Provence 2025 (£20.50, Marcato Direct): Lovely shimmering fruit concentration and nice soft juicy finish.

Les Quatre Tours Vilandria AOP Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence, Coteaux d'Aix en Provence 2025 (£16.50, Marcato Direct): Summer fruits: strawberries and raspberries in joyful easy-drinking style.

MDCV Fr La Grande Cuvée Rosé Wine, Côtes de Provence 2024 (£29, MDCV UK): Summer fruits enlivened by gentle citrus. Delightful texture and balance.

Red

Chanzay Maranges 1er Cru La Fussière, Burgundy 2023 (£44.39, Alliance Wine): Serious, slightly spicy nose; dark fruits: rich, resonant, savoury – full of character.



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Château Ponzac Maintenant ou Jamais, Cahors 2024 (£21.49, Alliance Wine): Very appealing dark fruit nose; fruit forward, approachable: would impress new world Cab drinkers.

Domaine de Colette Régnié, Régnié 2024 (£21.35, Alliance Wine): Soft sweet fruits, dry, food-welcoming palate – a balance of charm and seriousness.

Terres Fidèles Fidèle Corral d'En Pi, Collioure 2022 (£29.74, Alliance Wine): Velvety and plush. Good tannin structure. Big, rich, mouthfilling fun.

Guillaume Gonnet Bel Ami, Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2023 (£42.50, Alliance Wine): Cherry, plum and blackcurrant: well balanced and a good finish with a real sense of place.

Domaine Boutinot Rhône Cairanne Les Six, Cairanne 2023 (£18.99, Boutinot): This is great value for money: balanced richness – good wine, good fruit.

Domaine Boutinot Rhône Les Coteaux, Côtes du Rhône Villages 2023 (£13.99, Boutinot): Fruit-filled nose; appealingly light and grippy; savoury finish.

Domaine Pardon et Fils Morgon La Croix Gaillard, Beaujolais 2024 (£15.99, Cachet Wine): Dark savoury fruits; full-bodied and absolutely banging for the money.

Marilyn Lasserre Pinot Noir Les Argelières, Languedoc 2024 (£12.49, Cachet Wine): Lovely, chug-chug! Bright red fruit, super soft, everything in balance. Barbecue wine all-dayer!

Producteurs Plaimont Le Faîte Rouge, Saint Mont 2020 (£24.99, Cachet Wine): Super punchy with firm-textured tannins; intense and ready for duck confit.

Domaine Pierre Cros Le Barthas, Minervois 2024 (£21.99, Cachet Wine): Meaty and deeply savoury; a southern French blend in winter-warming action.

Château Famaey Cuvée X, Cahors 2022 (£36, Daniel Lambert Wines): Dark, serious, and Bordeaux-esque; still young with some grip. Top quality.

Domaine de La Creuze Noire Juliéas, Beaujolais 2023 (£21.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Warm spice, soft red fruits on the nose; dry and spicy, punchy and resonant palate.

Château La Rose Perrière Rouge, Lussac Saint Emilion 2018 (£29.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Slight hint of amaro – intriguing. Red fruit and tonic, grip and spice.

Dauvergne Ranvier Costières de Nîmes, Costières de Nîmes 2024 (£15, Daniel Lambert Wines): Lots of red apple, cherry, blackcurrant sweet spice, pastry, excellent value.

Domaines Paul Mas L'Artisan Le Pinot Noir, Pays d'OC 2025 (£10.95, Domaines Paul Mas): A very gluggable and well-priced Pinot. Bright and fruity – lots to like.

Domaines Paul Mas Château Paul Mas Clos des Mûres, Languedoc 2024 (£14.95, Domaines Paul Mas): Tart, crunchy cranberry. Cherry compote, spicy finish. Full of character.

Domaines Paul Mas Château Crès Ricards Oenothera, Terrasses du Larzac 2024 (£21, Domaines Paul Mas): Smooth, dark fruit and peppery spice – sweetly attractive.

Domaines Paul Mas Arrogant Frog Cabernet Merlot Organic, Pays d'OC 2024 (£13.50, Domaines Paul Mas): Cassis nose and a sprinkle of spice. Soft. Great value.

Domaine de Piéblanc Côtes du Rhône Bourdon, Côtes du Rhône 2024 (£17.50, Davy's Wine Merchants): Forest floor and blackcurrant/plum, lots of fruit and soft tannins. Smoky finish.

Joseph Burrier Beaujolais-Villages La Verchère, Beaujolais Villages 2023 (£18.99, Fells): Damson and prune; well balanced and savoury; good depth and tannins.

Maison Klipfel Barrel Aged Pinot Noir, Alsace 2023 (£20, Les Grands Chais de France): Light, spicy, floral, earthy. Very good value and easy drinking.

Domaine Lavigne Saumur-Champigny Vieilles Vignes, Saumur-Champigny 2023 (£17.99, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Green leafy beginnings turn savoury and meaty. Enjoyable tannins.

Olivier Coste Mourvèdre Illégal, Pays d'OC 2024 (£15.99, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Inviting black olives and dark fruit on the nose and palate. Savoury and deep.

Château de Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône Les Deux Albion, Côtes du Rhône 2023 (£24.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Very serious and savoury C-du-R! Spicy and lots of tannins – will definitely keep.



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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

FRANCE Red continued

Domaine de la Solitude, Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2023 (£43.99, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Deep and robust but juicy – lots of herb and spice and savoury tannin.

Dom Brial Carignan Côtes Catalanes Dom Ici Rouge, Côtes Catalanes 2024 (£12.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Nobody would complain if you gave them this at a wedding: juicy, fruity good value.

Château de Montfrin, Côtes du Rhône 2024 (£16.95, Jeroboams): Light, fruity candied strawberry and cherry flavours. Clean, refreshing, good for the price.

Château Cantelays, Pessac Léognan 2022 (£39, Les Grands Chais de France): Delicious complexity: tannins are polished, chocolate tones and herbs. Drink now or in 10 years.

Domaine Maurice Écard Savigny Les Beaune Premier Cru Les Narbantons, Savigny Les Beaune 1er Cru 2021 (£44, Les Grands Chais de France): Very nice drink: candied, rounded fruit, resonant palate, great length and balance.

Château des Jaumes La Pierre Taillée, Côtes de Roussillon Villages Tautavel 2022 (£21, Les Grands Chais de France): A really good all-rounder: quaffable, fruity but deep.

Domaine du Joncas Le Canyon Organic, Terrasses du Larzac 2023 (£22, Les Grands Chais de France): Herbal garrique and cooked fruit: rolling in meadows of herbs and blackcurrant.

Domaine Saint Siffrein Châteauneuf du Pape AOP Rouge, Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2022 (£46.99, Marcato Direct): Plum fruit and a savoury edge – hints of mushroom. Lots of acidity and a balsamic note. Good quality.

Château Picoron Tattarrattat, Vin de France 2024 (£20, Moreno Wines): Hints of mushroom; lots of acidity, balanced tannins: savoury and balsamic finish.

Jean Bouchard Fixin Rouge, Fixin 2023 (£41, North South Wines): Still youthful with crunchy tannins: needs time but everything there for a glorious future.

Vignobles Andre Lurton Château de Barbe Blanche Rouge, Lussac Saint Emilion 2022 (£25.50, North South Wines): Full-bodied and intense; grippy tannins, toast and roasted coffee beans.

Domaine La Løyane Cuvée Marie Lirac Rouge, Lirac 2023 (£33, Vindependents): Red fruits, cranberry and blueberry on the palate; leather savouriness on the finish. Food wine.

GEORGIA

White

Vachnadziani Krakhuna, Imereti 2024 (£15.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Lightly tropical and lemony – crisp and fresh and youthfully pleasant.

Bedoba White, Kakheti 2024 (£19.99, Liberty Wines): Soft but fresh, creamy, a little bit nutty; stone fruit and brioche, honey; very pleasant.

Shilda Kirke Goddess Blend, Kakheti 2022 (£15.50, Moreno Wines): A touch oxidative: nutty, rounded, but still fresh. Interesting and full of character.

Red

Vachnadziani Saperavi, Kakheti 2024 (£13.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Juicy and herbal with candied soft cherry and plum. Good value.

Orange

Shilda Rustaveli Saperavi Qvevri, Kakheti 2022 (£23, Moreno Wines): Appealingly rustic – rich and juicy, crunchy and tannic, robust and hearty.

GERMANY

White

Oliver Zeter Grauburgunder, Pfalz 2024 (£17.50, Delibo Wine Agencies): Restrained nose; lovely open palate with zing and hints of apricot and red apple.

Braun Pfalz Riesling Trocken Individuell, Pfalz 2024 (£18.99, Marcato Direct): Crisp acidity and lemon sherbet tempers the ripe apple fruit. Appealing.

Weingut Greiner Chardonnay Gutswein, Baden 2023 (£28.25, Richmond Wine Agencies): Deliciously ripe orchard fruit and nice touches of oak. German Chardonnay? Why not?

Hanewald-Schwerdt Monkey Morio, Pfalz 2024 (£17, Vindependents): Ripe grapey-floral classic Muscat nose – hugely refreshing posh grape juice.



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Red

Fritz Wasser Spätburgunder Reserve, Baden 2024 (£24.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Very intense red fruits – strawberries; builds on the palate, tartly refreshing.

Gerd Stepp Mineralstein Cabernet Franc, Pfalz 2023 (£24.50, Utopia Wines): Herbaceous nose and herby palate – nice fit between Loire and Argentine styles.

Hanewald-Schwerdt Kalkriff Spätburgunder Trocken, Pfalz 2021 (£19.50, Vindependents): Lovely perfume; fruit, tannin and acidity all balanced and nicely in check.

GREECE

White

Gavalas Winery Santorini Natural Ferment, Santorini 2024 (£56.50, Alliance Wine): Creamy, very complex pineapple, tropical fruits. Rounded, refreshing, clean, precise.

Boutari Semeli Moschofilero, Mantinia 2024 (£18.99, Boutinot): A lovely wine! Fresh, perfumed, mineral, lively, and easy to drink.

Akrathos Assyrtiko, Halkidiki 2022 (£31, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Intense flavours; bright, refreshing, green fruit pastilles on the long finish.

Ktima Gerovassiliou Malagousia, Epanomi 2025 (£26, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Full-bodied and super-flavoursome; pithy, slightly honeyed, exotic.

Monemvasia Winery Tsimbidi Dry White, Laconia 2024 (£21.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Delicious, fresh, mineral, well-balanced, enticing – lingers beautifully.

Navitas Winery Assyrtiko Terre de Zeus, Pieria 2023 (£25.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Cream and brioche on the nose; balanced palate with delicious pithy grapefruit.

Idaia Winery Vidiano Ocean, Crete 2024 (£21, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Melony white fruits and subtle floral notes; juicy fleshy palate.

Manolesakis Estate Malagousia/Assyrtiko Exis, Macedonia 2024 (£16, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Intriguing nose of blossom honey; lovely freshness.



Diamantakis Diamantopetra White, Heraklion 2025 (£23.50, Vindependents): Generous nose: fruity and fresh; medium-bodied; a really nice little glass.

Diamantakis Petali Assyrtiko, Heraklion 2025 (£19.50, Vindependents): White peachy nose, citrus freshness on the palate; oily texture. Good fun.

Red

Gaia Wines Agiorgitiko By Gaia, Peloponnese 2023 (£20.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Savoury herbal, menthol nose; lively, complex palate of dark fruits and mint leaf.

Manolesakis Estate Moschomavro/Limnio Exis, Macedonia 2024 (£16, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Bright dark cherry nose; soft and creamy with bitter cherry finish.

Alpha Estate Single Vineyard Hedgehog Xinomavro, Macedonia 2023 (£24.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Savoury cured ham, truffle and herb; lovely tannins – to be enjoyed with protein.

Navitas Winery Xinomavro Terre de Zeus, Macedonia 2022 (£26.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Evocative savoury aromas; dusty, slightly drying tannins – one for lovers of old Barolo.

HUNGARY

White

Gilvesy Cellars Gilvesy St George Cuvée, Badacsony 2023 (£20.95, Davy's Wine Merchants): Smoke and pineapple and zip – a distinctive Hungarian take on Riesling.

Royal Tokaji Furmint, Tokaj 2022 (£16.99, Fells): Stone fruits and almond nuttiness on a ripe palate. Nicely balanced.

Breitenbach Winery Tokaj Dry Szamorodni, Tokaj 2023 (£20.50, Vindependents): A touch of fino character, baked apples, lovely acidity – very niche, but fun if handsold.

Sweet & fortified

Royal Tokaji Sweet Szamorodni, Tokaj 2019 (£19.99, Fells): Delicately sweet rather than rich; pale with candied fresh stone fruit.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

HUNGARY Sweet & fortified continued

Breitenbach Winery Tokaji Aszú 6 p Amfora Selection, Tokaj 2022 (£70.50, Vindependents): Vivid nose – intense citrus, marshmallow; candied citrus palate, smoky finish. Very good.

ITALY

Sparkling

Villa Sandi Prosecco Asolo Il Nero, Veneto NV (£19.99, Cachet Wine): Fresh and fluent with attractive subtle herbal, slightly medicinal notes.

Prapian Estate Asolo Prosecco Superiore Brut, Asolo NV (£14.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Smooth, fresh, clean, subtle pear and lightly floral honey.

Bellavista Franciacorta Extra Brut Alma Assemblage 2, Franciacorta NV (£35.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Uplifting: satin texture, silky mousse and very mild texture; lovely dry finish.

Medici Ermete Lambrusco Concerto Reggiano, Emilia-Romagna 2024 (£16.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Classic Lambrusco: dry and attractively bitter with black cherry and ripe dark plum.

Bortolin Angelo Spumanti Prosecco Extra Dry, Prosecco Valdobbiadene 2025 (£19.95, Jeroboams): Concentrated pear purée with a light touch of candied, dried apple.

Produttori di Manduria Aka Charme Rosato Spumante Brut, IGT, Salento 2024 (£18.48, Alliance Wine): Crunchy red fruits on the nose and palate; good, long fruity finish.

White

Feudo Antico Casadonna Pecorino, Terre Aquilane IGP 2020 (£69.99, Alliance Wine): Herbal and savoury, great tension and acidity – really lights up the mouth.

Tenuta Olim Bauda Chardonnay I Boschi, Piedmont 2023 (£30.94, Alliance Wine): Gentle honeyed fruit on the nose; very suave palate; length and cut.

Feudo Antico Pecorino Biologico, Tullum 2024 (£25.18, Alliance Wine): Clean orchard fruit nose; good complexity of honeyed stone fruit on the palate.

ILatium Morini Le Calle, Soave 2024 (£18.71, Alliance Wine): Gentle texture and delicious stone fruit with a rounded feel.

Umani Ronchi Centovine Pecorino, Colli Aprutini 2023 (£28, Berkman Wine Cellars): Tropical fruits with fresh almond undertones; delightful, stylish drink.

Mezzacorona Pinot Grigio Riserva, Trentino 2024 (£18, Berkman Wine Cellars): Tangerine and lemon citrus; lovely mix of acidity, fruit and minerality.

Azienda Agricola Mario Giribaldi Langhe Arneis, Piedmont 2024 (£17.99, Cachet Wine): Restrained and subtle tangerine nose; discreet charm at a good price.

Azienda Agricola Mario Giribaldi i Risi Gavi, Piedmont 2024 (£17.69, Cachet Wine): Very clean, subtle lemon nose; saline, light and soft on the palate – good-quality Gavi.

Cantina Lavis Nosiola, Trentino 2023 (£13.99, Cachet Wine): Light and easygoing texture; appealing floral quality and juicy white peach.

Zeni Soave DOC Classico Vigne Alte, Veneto 2025 (£13.99, Cachet Wine): Apricot stone fruit, herbaceous; minerals and honey – superior Soave value strikes again.

Villa Sandi Pinot Grigio, Veneto 2024 (£11.75, Cachet Wine): Floral, fresh, dry, clean and refreshing. Lovely grapefruit flavours and minerals.

Cantina Lavis Pinot Grigio, Trentino 2024 (£14.49, Cachet Wine): Very perfumed and lively; fruit-driven and a touch of blossom.

Famiglia Castellani Collesano Vermentino, Tuscany 2024 (£16, Gonzalez Byass UK): A truly distinctive wine filled with lime and mint. Easy to sell.

Di Filippo Grechetto di Todì, Umbria 2024 (£17.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): A characterful, enjoyably balanced easy-drinker to have with smart seafood pasta.

San Marzano Vermentino Timo, Salento 2025 (£14.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Totally classic Vermentino, but from the south: fresh, vibrant, pithy.

La Chiara Derthona Timorasso, Derthona 2023 (£25.50, Jeroboams): Very inviting peaches-and-cream nose; clean, intense palate that tapers to a fine point.



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La Giustiniana Lugarara Gavi di Gavi, Gavi 2025 (£21.99, Liberty Wines): Floral, herbaceous, very appealing intensity and great commercial style.

Poggio al Tesoro Solosole Vermentino, Tuscany 2024 (£29.99, Liberty Wines): Concentrated and fleshy with a pronounced streak of minerality. Very well made.

Franz Haas Dolomiti Pinot Grigio, Vigneti delle Dolomiti 2025 (£19.99, Liberty Wines): Mango, peach, hint of floral; lovely fruit and texture, cleansing finish.

Cantine di Marzo Greco di Tufo DOCG, Greco di Tufo 2024 (£22.50, Mercato Direct): Golden hues, fragrant on the nose; light, vibrant, good acidity and balance.

Il Poggiarello Mami Bianco, Emilia-Romagna 2025 (£31, Moreno Wines): Floral fragrance: very aromatic; touch of herb, apricot; impeccable style and length.

Caruso & Minini Bibbo Zibbibo, Sicily 2025 (£17, Moreno Wines): Pale, vibrant, and lively – honeydew melon and pears; refreshing and lingering.

Miopasso Grillo Appassimento, Sicily 2023 (£12.99, North South Wines): Bright honey and honeysuckle; vibrant, fantastic balance. Absolute cracker of a wine for £12.99!

Odulin Ribolla Gialla, Friuli Venezia-Giulia 2024 (£13, North South Wines): Intense nose of citrus peel; soft texture of ripe pear. Lovely value.

Azienda Agricola Cortese Vanedda Bianco, Terre Siciliane 2023 (£20, North South Wines): Golden hue – oak? Lovely fruit richness balanced with great freshness.

Integro Verdeca, Puglia 2024 (£13.50, North South Wines): Yummy brightness of fruit salad – peach, melon and crisp ripe apple. Excellent value.

Val delle Rose Litorale Vermentino Maremma Toscana DOC, Tuscany 2025 (£15, Vinexus): Peaches and nectarines, freshly picked; touch of orange blossom – light, soft, very drinkable.

Tenuta Alzatura Aria di Casa Montefalco Bianco DOC, Umbria 2023 (£30, Vinexus): Golden hue, fresh and subtle oaking – good complexity while remaining fresh.

Cecchi Lobelia Toscana IGT, Tuscany 2025 (£16, Vinexus): Just the loveliest basket full of stone fruits! Love it.

Orange

Azienda Agricola Cortese Orange-utan Bianco, Terre Siciliane 2024 (£15, North South Wines): Beautiful nose to go with the lovely pale copper colour. Great price.

Rosé

Cecchi Calipte Toscana IGT Rosato, Tuscany 2025 (£16, Vinexus): Great nose, really fresh and lively; palate is softly strawberry.

Red

Le Chiantigiane Loggio del Sole Governo All'Uso, Toscana IGT 2024 (£16.13, Alliance Wine): Typical fruit profile, richer than a straight Sangiovese; good for drinking now rather than cellaring.

Rallo Azienda Agricola Regnante Perricone, Sicily 2025 (£19.99, Alliance Wine): Very dense, intense colour; super savoury nose; spice and leather.

Produttori di Manduria Sonetto Primitivo, Manduria, Puglia 2019 (£46.50, Alliance Wine): Robust, forthright style – in a good way. Pleasingly dusty, dusky finish.

Serègo Alighieri Possessioni Rosso Valpolicella Classico, Valpolicella Classico 2023 (£20, Berkman Wine Cellars): Pleasing smoky note; dark cherry and chocolate; savoury finish.

Tenuta Il Cascinone Crocera Barbera d'Asti, Barbera d'Asti 2022 (£13.99, Boutinot): Fresh, juicy, classic Barbera: youthful grip and upfront pleasure.

Zeni Bardolino DOC Classico Vigne Alte, Veneto 2024 (£13.99, Cachet Wine): Pleasant cherry quality; raspberry too. Tangy and balanced – would be nice chilled.

Azienda Agricola Mario Giribaldi Nebbiolo D'Alba, Piedmont 2022 (£23.99, Cachet Wine): Aromatic, bright red fruits; rich tannins; accessible, upfront style of Nebbiolo.

Tenuta Gacci Rubicone, Emilia-Romagna 2016 (£75, Cachet Wine): Still loads of colour: nose of spice and herbs; rich dark black cherry. Big and impressive.



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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

ITALY red continued

Cantina Lavis Pinot Nero, Trentino 2024 (£14.49, Cachet Wine): Redcurrant fruit; relatively rich style of Pinot – useful alternative to New Zealand.

Casa Grazia Victorya 1607, Cerasuolo di Vittoria 2024 (£34.90, Dellavita Wines): Sweet red fruits, inviting nose; nicely integrated tannins – ambitious.

Casa Grazia Laetitya, Sicily 2024 (£27.90, Dellavita Wines): A generous tutti-frutti nose; good acidity, fresh but rounded.

Casa Grazia Per Mari Nero d'Avola, Sicily 2023 (£23.20, Dellavita Wines): Punchy, dark, intense, full-bodied and plenty of tannin: robust and winter-warming.

Cantina Lavis Marzemino, Trentino 2023 (£14.99, Cachet Wine): Real crowd pleaser with berry fruit, silky tannins: show us the pizza or pasta with ragù.

Cantina Lavis Teroldego, Vigneti delle Dolomiti 2024 (£14.49, Cachet Wine): Nice bright nose, rich black fruits; nicely balanced tannins – lovely midweek drinker.

Ratti Langhe Rosso DOC, Langhe 2024 (£18.99, Fells): Violets, dusty tannins: light, bright and juicy with a lovely long finish.

Famiglia Castellani Collesano Chianti Riserva, Chianti 2021 (£19, Gonzalez Byass UK): Nicely perfumed in classic Chianti style – cherry and oregano, just settling into a good moment.

Querciabella Chianti Classico Riserva, Chianti 2021 (£43, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Beautiful nose, so fragrant. Big structure underpins gorgeous fruit. Very classy.

Carpineto Chianti Classico Riserva, Chianti 2020 (£27.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Something floral and herbal on the nose – delightful! Tannins are ripe and polished. Very good quality.

Banfi Rosso di Montalcino Poggio Alle Mura, Tuscany 2019 (£79, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Coffee, spice, loads of bright crunchy fruit; persistent finish, age-worthy – unmistakably Brunello.

Banfi Rosso di Montalcino Poggio Alle Mura, Tuscany 2023 (£27.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Outstanding nose, deep, brooding, but fresh: loads still to come, but great now.

Fattoria Casaloste Chianti Classico, Chianti Classico 2021 (£25.95, Jeroboams): Great purity of fruit with a really alluring nose; great supporting structure.

Amalia Cascina Barbera d'Alba, Barbera d'Alba 2023 (£22.95, Jeroboams): Pretty nose; solid, dark, ripe and substantial palate without being overbearing. Very well done.

Piandimare Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2021 (£15.95, Jeroboams): Exotic, quite floral nose: pot pourri. Succulent palate, ripe tannins.

Capezzana Barco Reale di Carmignano, Carmignano 2023 (£21.99, Liberty Wines): Red fruit and spice; nicely medicinal palate, firm but moreish, food-friendly tannins. Still young.

Vigneti del Vulture Piano del Cerro Aglianico del Vulture, Basilicata 2021 (£29.99, Liberty Wines): Intense and concentrated but somehow balanced: really grippy, dark and interesting.

San Cassiano Valpolicella Superiore DOC, Valpolicella Superiore 2023 (£16.99, Marcato Direct): Delicate charcuterie smokiness; red cherry, almond and nice weight of fruit.

Principiano Giuseppe e Francesco Barolo Ravera di Monforte DCG, Barolo 2022 (£58.99, Marcato Direct): Very good: bricky – it's not about fresh fruit – savoury, long. One to think about and with.

Villa Giada Suri Barbera d'Asti DCG, Barbera d'Asti 2024 (£20.50, Marcato Direct): A ripe style with lots of depth and layers; tannins beautifully crunchy.

Vigneti Radica Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2023 (£15.99, Marcato Direct): Packed with dark smoky fruit and herbs – robust but pizza-ready.

Caruso & Minini Frappello, Nerello Mascalese & Frappato, Sicily 2024 (£17, Moreno Wines): Dry tannins dovetail with bright cherry-led fruit: the blend really works.

Il Poggiarello Valandrea Gutturino, Gutturino 2024 (£22, Moreno Wines): Cherries and violets, coffee and oak. Rich palate of plump fruit.

Paolo Leo Pianerose Susumaniello, Puglia 2022 (£13, North South Wines): Great acidity: really well made and easy drinking. Crowd-pleasing barbecue red.



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Paolo Leo Riserva (Negroamaro Malvasia Nera di Lecce), Salice Salentino 2020 (£14, North South Wines): Big with lots of berry juiciness – rich and dark: easy to sell.

Corti Salentine, Primitivo di Manduria 2023 (£15.99, North South Wines): Rich fruit, fine tannin structure; long, long fruity clean finish.

Corti Salentine Riserva DOC, Salice Salentino 2021 (£14.99, North South Wines): Savoury but with great fruit; well balanced and good length.

Azienda Agricola Cortese Senia Nero d'Avola, Sicily 2020 (£23.50, North South Wines): Intense, slightly tannic; lots of cassis and spice. Full-bodied and lengthy.

Integro Primitivo, Puglia 2025 (£13.50, North South Wines): Simple but attractive: open, upfront, sweet figgy fruit and rustic tannin.

Val delle Rose Rosamante Morellino di Scansano, Tuscany 2023 (£16, Vinexus): Very pretty fruit, rich and smooth palate. Great value for an excellent wine.

Aminta Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany 2021 (£60, Vinexus): Great depth and real Brunello style: fantastic tannin-acid fretwork. Complex.

Aminta Rosso di Montalcino DOC, Tuscany 2024 (£32, Vinexus): Oregano and red cherry – classic Sangiovese nose. Energy, light grip and depth.

Tenuta Alzatura Sagrantino di Montefalco DOCG, Umbria 2020 (£30, Vinexus): Power-packed, lots of stuffing in tannin and fruit and alcohol. But it works!

Cantine Povero Barbaresco, Barbaresco 2022 (£29.50, Vindependents): Juicy style of Barbaresco; well integrated tannins and alcohol. Super soft and fruity.

Cà dei Maghi Valpolicella Classico Superiore, Valpolicella Classico Superiore 2021 (£29.50, Vindependents): Distinctive and bright juiciness – love the tanginess of cherries on the palate.

Sensi Vigne e Vini Poggio Scudieri Officium Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Brunello di Montalcino 2019 (£32.50, Vindependents): Accessibly priced Brunello, but still multilayered and very true to type. Good work.



Marco Porello Langhe Nebbiolo DOC, Langhe 2023 (£19.99, Winetraders): Beguiling and persuasive: bright cherry fruit that makes you want to drink another glass.

Sweet & fortified

Michele Chiarlo Nivole Moscato d'Asti, Moscato d'Asti 2025 (£21.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Classic happy-juice Moscato: floral and grapey and soft and light.

Pellegrino Passito Pantelleria Liquoroso, Pantelleria 2024 (£19.99, Fells): inviting, raisins, orange peel, blossom nose and an intense palate: something quite special.

LEBANON

White

Château Ka Source Blanche, Bekaa Valley 2024 (£22, Alliance Wine): Light but moreish pithy palate, with a streak of minerality. Attractively different.

Rosé

Château Oumsiyat Soupir, Bekaa Valley 2025 (£14, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): A walk in the peach groves in the spring air! Stone fruit, fresh off the tree.

NEW ZEALAND

White

Heaphy Moutere Chardonnay, Nelson 2024 (£19.99, Boutinot): Creamy-yeasty to open; Comté cheese savouriness; nice winemaking.

Lake Road Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 2025 (£16.99, Cachet Wine): Green bell pepper, tropical nose; well-rounded texture. Nicely done.

Te Kano Pinot Gris, Central Otago 2023 (£23.50, Davy's Wine Merchants): Subtle sweetness, white fleshy fruit, good body and texture.

Lake Chalice Sauvignon Blanc The Raptor, Marlborough 2023 (£19.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Full bodied, heightened acidity, gooseberry fool – classic NZ Sauvignon Blanc.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

NEW ZEALAND White continued

Hunter's Wines Offshoot Chardonnay, Marlborough 2024 (£23.95, Jeroboams): Clean and sharp – well-defined fruit; serious but very pleasant to drink.

Lawson's Dry Hills Reserve Chardonnay, Marlborough 2023 (£17, Lawson's Dry Hills Wines): Savoury toasty oak, touch of smoke, dovetailing with the fresh fruit. Good price.

Lawson's Dry Hills Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 2023 (£17, Lawson's Dry Hills Wines): Super-intense style – lots of green pepper, high acidity. Good value.

Tohu Tohu Marewa SV Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 2024 (£18, North South Wines): Crisp acidity, clear notes of gooseberry – textbook Kiwi Sauvignon.

Monowai Upper Reaches Chardonnay, Hawke's Bay 2021 (£20, The Antipodean Sommelier): Fruit and delicacy to go with the oak; biscuit tones; good quality.

Swift Albariño, Hawke's Bay 2025 (£20, The Antipodean Sommelier): Delicate nose, hints of white fruit – intense palate with peach flavours and oily finish.

Jules Taylor Wines Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 2025 (£19.50, Thorman Hunt): Elegant, restrained, old world style: salinity, minerality, oyster shells.

Jules Taylor Wines Marlborough Grüner Veltliner, Marlborough 2025 (£19.50, Thorman Hunt): Inviting green herbaceous nose; soft, slightly oily palate; fresh finish.

Jules Taylor Wines The Better Half Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 2025 (£16, Thorman Hunt): Fresh of nose, relatively full structure for Sauvignon – persistent, citrusy finish.

Red

Tiki Wine & Vineyards Tiki Single Vineyard Pinot Noir, North Canterbury 2023 (£19, Castelnau Wine Agencies): Cranberries and red cherries with plum on the palate; fresh and enjoyable.

Jules Taylor Wines Marlborough Pinot Noir, Marlborough 2023 (£22.50, Thorman Hunt): Clove, star anise and smokiness; good balance with crunchy red fruit.

Saint Clair Pinot Noir Pioneer Block 14, Saint Clair, Marlborough 2022 (£23.99, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Touch of savouriness, red cherry and a hint of tobacco leaf. Juicy, light, enjoyable.

Craggy Range Vineyards Pinot Noir, Martinborough 2024 (£36, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Raspberry jam, fresh cherry and freshening green tones; complexity.

Lawson's Dry Hills Pinot Noir, Marlborough 2021 (£16, Lawson's Dry Hills Wines): Wet wood nose; ripe red fruits, lush, accessible style.

Lawson's Dry Hills Reserve Pinot Noir, Marlborough 2023 (£18, Lawson's Dry Hills Wines): Vanilla oak and ripe red berries; succulent style at pretty price.

Snapper Rock Pinot Noir, Marlborough 2022 (£15, The Antipodean Sommelier): Light and easy style, with herbs and lactic notes; red berries to the fore.

Kelly Washington Organic Lowburn Pinot Noir, Central Otago 2024 (£38.50, Jeroboams): Lovely ripeness; plump but fresh berries with good acidity. Smart.

NORTH MACEDONIA

Red

Tikveš Babuna Red, Tikveš 2022 (£26.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Rich black cherry – intense. Sturdy tannins, pleasingly rustic and a bit of a find.

PORTUGAL

Sparkling

Global Wines Cabriz Sparkling Wine White Brut, Dão 2019 (£15.50, Marta Vine): Leftfield sparkler with fresh lemon and apple; distinctive earthy undertone.

Calçada Portal da Calçada Spumante, Vinho Verde NV (£10, North South Wines): Fun, fruity and frothy. Lots of peach and apple fruit. Straightforward but very well made.

White

No Rules Wines Portal da Estrela Branco, Dão 2024 (£12.99, Boutinot): Smells like a waft of fresh air: bright, breezy, approachable conversion kit for Portuguese whites.



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Poças Vinho Verde Tongue Twister, Vinho Verde 2024 (£12.99, Cachet Wine): Fresh with apple and floral notes, very easy going but nice concentration.

Poças Branco da Ribeira, Douro 2024 (£49.99, Cachet Wine): Lovely white fruit, freshness, acidity, balance and finish – a tad pricey, but lots going on.

Encosta das Perdizes White, Alentejo 2025 (£13, Daniel Lambert Wines): Ripe nose, rounded green fruits – nicely made easy drinking at an attractive price.

Vale da Mata White, Lisboa 2024 (£18.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Lemon meringue and grapefruit rind – what a lovely distinctive dry white for summer.

Reguengo de Melgaço Alvarinho, Vinho Verde 2024 (£21.49, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): White flowers, pear and green apple – very high quality Alvarinho.

Esporão Reserva Branco, Alentejo 2024 (£22, Hatch Mansfield): Some oak on the nose that is nicely integrated in a balanced rich white with lots of presence.

Adega Coop de Favaio Casa Velha Gouveio, Douro 2024 (£16.50, Marta Vine): Lovely peach, pear, green fruit. Inviting nose. Appealing all-rounder.

Global Wines Vinha dos Amores Encruzado, Dão 2021 (£38, Marta Vine): Very well made, deft oak, lovely ripe fruit and typical pithy Encruzado character.

Calçada Quinta da Calçada Alvarinho, Vinho Verde 2024 (£15, North South Wines): A textbook take on modern Vinho Verde: spritzzy and light, with delightful fennel notes.

Red

No Rules Wines Portal da Estrela Tinto, Dão 2021 (£12.49, Boutinot): Lively, fresh red berry flavours. High tannins. Great wine for the price.

Poças Reserva Tinto, Douro 2023 (£19.99, Cachet Wine): Fruity, blueberries and floral notes (violet lavender), lovely balance – will improve with age, too.

Poças Fora da Série Red Roga, Douro 2022 (£26.99, Cachet Wine): Berries, lighter fruit, cranberries and lots of acidity – unusual sappy Douro style.

Encosta das Perdizes Red, Alentejo 2024 (£13.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Fig and green pepper: lots of fruit floods the palate. Great price.

Global Wines Vinha Maria Reserva Red, Dão 2022 (£13, Marta Vine): Darker fruits, spice, lots of tannins – robustly amusing for dark nights.

Global Wines Cabriz Edição Especial, Dão 2018 (£22.50, Marta Vine): Stewed fruit, Christmas spice: good concentration; a wine that merits its price.

Fortified

Poças Colheita, Douro 2005 (£44.99, Cachet Wine): Gorgeous nutty butterscotch – yum! Long, long finish. A treat.

Poças 20 Year Old Tawny, Douro NV (£49.50, Cachet Wine): Deep cut of cooked pear, caramelised and roasted nuts; luscious loveliness.

Dow's Late Bottled Vintage, Douro 2020 (£17.99, Fells): Rich red fruit in a classic LBV style; velvety tannins – excellent price.

Kopke Colheita Tawny Port, Douro 2001 (£58, Jeroboams): More nutty, caramel loveliness – very smooth texture and great balance.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

ROMANIA

White

Cramele Recas Wildflower Chardonnay, Viile Timisului 2024 (£11.77, Alliance Wine): Unusually perfumed nose for a Chardonnay; sweet, candied fruit; price is a plus.

Orange

Crama Delta Dunarii La Sapata Feteasca Regala Orange, Dobrogea 2024 (£23, The Jolly Merchants): Perfumed, aromatic, floral, clean – a delicious (pale) orange wine.

SLOVENIA

White

Quercus Pinot Bianco, Goriška Brda 2024 (£15.50, Berkmann Wine Cellars): Gently fruited nose, bruised apple palate; more Alsace than Italian.

SOUTH AFRICA

White

Lo & Behold Chenin Blanc-Viogner, Piekenierskloof 2024 (£13.75, Alliance Wine): Lovely for price; pear and quince; works very well as an entry-level white.

Jordan Chardonnay Barrel Fermented, Stellenbosch 2024 (£25, Awin Barratt Siegel Wine Agencies): Very big, very buttery, very enjoyable and substantial; a wine to savour.

Wildeberg White, Franschhoek 2023 (£29.99, Boutinot): Beeswax and chamomile; a delicious full mouthful, with a lemon finish.

Wildeberg Coterie Semillon Sauvignon Blanc, Coastal Region 2025 (£14.49, Boutinot): Value for money here: fresh citrus tones and a slight flinty edge.

Wildeberg Wild House Sauvignon Blanc, Western Cape 2025 (£10.49, Boutinot): Grapefruit-tastic! Sweetie-shop nose – a good, sharp entry-level Sauvignon.

Daschbosch Mossiesdrift Steen, Bredekloof 2024 (£19.99, Boutinot): Stewed and baked apple, sweet finish – apple pie vibes.

Delheim Chenin Blanc Wild Ferment, Stellenbosch 2024 (£19, Delibo Wine Agencies): Extremely ripe style of Chenin – lots of apple sweets and a touch of perfume.

Warwick Old Vine Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 2023 (£27.99, Fells): Wild lemon thyme. Bright acidity and a lingering finish – pour me a glass.

Olifantsberg Grenache Blanc, Bredekloof 2022 (£24.25, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Complex merging of stone fruit and floral flavours – big but fresh.

Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 2024 (£18.39, Hatch Mansfield): Skilful mix of pear, apple and honey. Serious balance and verve for this price.

Neethlingshof Duiker Cadenza Sauvignon Fumé, Stellenbosch 2024 (£24, Les Grands Chais de France): Canned pineapple and a touch of vanilla – much, much nicer than it sounds!

Le Grand Domaine Grand Vin de Stellenbosch Sauvignon Blanc, Stellenbosch 2021 (£20, North South Wines): A Cape Sauvignon with a little extra level of concentration; lemon rind finish.

Old Road Wine Co Grand-Mère Semillon, Franschhoek 2024 (£38, North South Wines): Beautiful complex nose; full and voluptuous palate; floral white blossom. Yum.

Red

Raats Family Wines Family Reserve Cabernet Franc, Stellenbosch 2022 (£37.06, Alliance Wine): Complex but mellow, spicy dark fruit, pencil shavings, gentle tannins.

Tokara Directors Reserve Red, Stellenbosch 2022 (£40, Awin Barratt Siegel Wine Agencies): Very nice; vibrant, violet; grippy balanced tannin.

Tokara Reserve Collection Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 2022 (£36, Awin Barratt Siegel Wine Agencies): Black fruit and deep oak – serious complexity and balance; fine, textured tannins.

Jordan Long Fuse Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 2024 (£26, Awin Barratt Siegel Wine Agencies): Cassis, deep, but not too tannic. Lovely soft feel. Showing very well.



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Tokara Reserve Collection Syrah, Stellenbosch 2023 (£36, Awin Barratt Siegel Wine Agencies): Complex, iron-rich, bloody – dark and intense and just very very good.

Buitenverwachting Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot, Constantia 2023 (£17, Berkman Wine Cellars): Attractively lean; black fruit and vanilla oak – very good for the price.

False Bay/Waterkloof Boreas, Stellenbosch 2023 (£34.99, Boutinot): B.I.G! Spicy, savoury, deep violets and blackberry; hearty but lovely.

Wildeberg Wild House Cabernet Sauvignon, Western Cape 2025 (£10.99, Boutinot): Soft fruit, very easy, very safe choice for a house party.

Avondale Wine Jonty's Ducks Pekin Red, Paarl 2021 (£18.49, Cachet Wine): Big and juicy – bold and fruity. Plenty of powerful bang for buck.

Lomond Wines Estate Syrah, Cape South Coast 2022 (£19.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Lovely rich fruit, fruitcake notes; integrated soft tannins. Very good.

Lomond Wines Romans Bay SMV, Cape South Coast 2022 (£14.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Lovely and soft but fruity and spicy. Super-integrated tannins. Lovely long finish.

Brookdale Estate GSM Mason Road, Paarl 2024 (£18, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Soft and smooth Grenache. Nice fruit and soft finish. High but balanced alcohol.

Kleine Zalze Family Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 2020 (£41.30, Hatch Mansfield): Impressive. Very spicy, very meaty, and very rich. Justifies the price.

Le Grand Domaine Grand Vin de Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot, Stellenbosch 2020 (£24, North South Wines): Very balanced, deeply black fruit, spice, cedar and vanilla.



SPAIN

Sparkling

Vallformosa Cava Reserva Brut Origen, Cava 2023 (£14, North South Wines): Classically styled traditional Cava with an emphasis on upfront citrus and apple fruit.

White

Bodegas Barbadillo Patinegro, Andalucia 2022 (£22.76, Alliance Wine): Nutty nose, direct and savoury. Great complex dry Palomino. Excellent typicity.

Bodegas Altolandon Doña Leo, Manchuela 2024 (£17.78, Alliance Wine): Nectarines, summer sunshine. Food-friendly dry finish; black pepper. Great stuff.

Pazo Señorans Albariño Colección, Rías Baixas 2022 (£36.64, Alliance Wine): A whisper of kiwi on the nose and palate. Lovely texture and weight.

Cuatro Rayas Bodegas Pisuega Organic Verdejo, Rueda 2024 (£13.94, Alliance Wine): Very bright fresh nose: tropical fruit (pineapple) and lemon. Refreshing.

Adega Ponte da Boga Godello, Ribera Sacra 2024 (£22.80, Alliance Wine): Apricot, restrained nose; shake of white pepper and spice; nettles and stone fruit. Complex.

Perelada Només Garnatxa Blanca, Emporda 2024 (£16.87, Alliance Wine): Rich baked apple and fleshy palate; a soft hug.

Soto Manrique La Viña de Ayer Albillo Real, Cebreros 2021 (£22, Berkman Wine Cellars): Trendy wine from an unusual variety; hard to pitch but very nicely balanced overall.

Bodega Hermanos del Villar Oro de Castilla Verdejo, Rueda 2024 (£14.99, Cachet Wine): Tropical fruits – banana; richness, with an oily palate. Classic Verdejo.

Torres Magnetic Blanco, Penedès 2024 (£12, Fells): Riesling-style nose; good value; interesting limey character.

Torres Spain Clos Ancestral White, Penedès 2023 (£20, Fells): More Riesling character lime-peachiness. Lovely racy acidity – real character.

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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

SPAIN White continued

Jean Leon 3055 Chardonnay Organic, Penedès 2024 (£14.50, Fells): Lean and linear; great nose, nice fruit, textured on mid-palate, finishing fresh. Really good.

Bodegas Viñático Ensamblaje Blanco, Islas Canarias 2024 (£37, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Very much a natty vibe – wild and intense with tropical fruit.

Nivarius Rioja Blanco Maturana Blanca La Nevera, Rioja 2019 (£35, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Bright and fruity; good salinity; nice mouthfilling weight. Very intriguing.

Bodegas Bhilar Rioja Alavesa Phincas Thousand Mills Blanco, Rioja 2020 (£35.75, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Very dark colour. Sherry-like nose. Nutty, rich and oxidative.

Bodegas Ondarre Rioja Blanco Valdebaron, Rioja 2024 (£16, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Creamy and rich; butterscotch and banana. Long finish.

Notas Frutales de Albariño La Trucha Albariño, Rías Baixas 2024 (£23.50, Jeroboams): Tropical fruit nose; almost off-dry finish; key lime pie flavours.

Bodegas Eguren Ugarte Rioja Blanco Crianza, Rioja 2022 (£17.95, Jeroboams): A bright nose of pineapple and banana; lovely integrated fruit.

Attis Albariño Lías Finas Val do Salnes, Galicia 2024 (£26.95, Richmond Wine Agencies): Petrichor and white pepper – a more savoury and mineral style of Albariño.

Esteban Martín Ulula Sauvignon Blanc, Cariñena 2024 (£13.95, Ucopia Wines): Clean, green and mineral. Perfectly good Sauvignon at a friendly price point.

Cooperativa Vitivinícola Arousana S Coop Galega Follas Novas Albariño, Rías Baixas 2025 (£19.50, Vindependents): Brioche nose; big lime; nice length and depth of flavour.

Rosé

Celler de Capçanes Mas Donís Rosat, Montsant 2024 (£16.50, Alliance Wine): Florality and red fruit come together; a beautiful summer sipper.

Vega Tolosa 11 Piños Rosé, Manchuela 2025 (£12.50, Moreno Wines): Very herbal and juicy, very well balanced. It's a food wine.

Red

Perelada Només Garnatxa Negra, Emporda 2024 (£17.21, Alliance Wine): Charming nettle-like leafy character; juicy fruit. Characterful wine.

Bodegas Murviedro Casa Lo Alto Garnacha, Valencia 2024 (£19.99, Boutinot): Ripe red fruits, gritty texture – very easily enjoyed.

El Escoces Volante El Puno Tinto, Calatayud 2021 (£29.99, Boutinot): Vibrant red fruit, cranberries and red cherries; wonderfully juicy but balanced.

Bodega Hermanos del Villar Crianza Oro de Castilla, Ribera del Duero 2021 (£22.99, Cachet Wine): Rich mulberry fruit – fruits of the forest on the palate. Deep and sumptuous.

Bodegas Príncipe de Viana Reserva, Navarra 2020 (£12.99, Cachet Wine): Superbly useful value red; juicy bright fruits and well balanced. Easy to drink more.

Bodegas Agronavarra Perdido Tempranillo Vino de la 3 Riberas, Navarra 2024 (£10.99, Cachet Wine): Slightly sweet, but attractive fruit all the same; can't be beaten on price.

Bodega Enate Tempranillo, Somontano 2025 (£14.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Loads of ripe red fruit and a hint of smoke; feels fresh.

Torres Spain Clos Ancestral Red, Penedès 2023 (£20, Fells): Lovely concrete smell; brutalist aroma! Deliciously bright raspberries on the palate.

Torres Spain Purgatori, DO Costers del Segre 2022 (£24, Fells): quiet nose, cranberry and vanilla. Lovely crunchy tannins and vibrant acidity.

Jean Leon 3055 Merlot, Petit Verdot, Penedès 2023 (£14.50, Fells): Intense red fruits and spicy oak; violet-fragrant juiciness.

Bodegas Resalte de Peñafiel Ribera del Duero Crianza, Ribera del Duero 2021 (£30, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Lovely nose – really inviting and deep. Palate too. Great fruit and length.

Bodegas Ondarre Graciano, Rioja 2023 (£16.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Fresh, vivid and vibrant; great black fruit style from a different Rioja grape.



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Bodegas Bhilar Rioja Alavesa Phinca El Vedao, Rioja 2019 (£32.50, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Fragrant and bright with so much pure fruit; feels very modern.

Tandem Tempranillo/Cabernet/Merlot Ars Nova, Navarra 2018 (£18, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Good varietal character and enjoyable Bordeaux-goes-Spanish style.

CVNE Bela Roble, Ribera del Duero 2023 (£19.51, Hatch Mansfield): Real drinkability at a great price – love the dark bright fruit.

CVNE Imperial Gran Reserva, Rioja 2017 (£64.98, Hatch Mansfield): Lovely proper Rioja nose and so smooth on the palate. Great trad style but with fruit.

Castillo de Aresan Terruño Barrique Aged Red Blend Organic, Castilla La Mancha 2021 (£18, Les Grands Chais de France): Traditional in style, with generous fruit and lots of oak. It works very well.

Bodegas Pinoso Cepa 50, Alicante 2023 (£13.90, Marta Vine): Easy drinking – so good for a picnic or Spanish ham tapas, and an excellent price.

Neleman Wines Just Fucking Good Wine Red, Valencia 2024 (£23, Marta Vine): Dark cherry, gripping tannin, has the feeling of black pepper and bitter almond (good things!).

Alta Pavina Citius Pinot Noir, Castilla y León 2021 (£24, Moreno Wines): Dark, broody, stemmy; lots of spiced fruits – very good effort for a southern Pinot.

Vega Tolosa Bobal Icon, Manchuela 2024 (£15, Moreno Wines): Intense fruity nose; full tannins, yet fresh and light. Great value for money.

Eterea Kripan Phinca Hapa Tinto, Rioja 2021 (£31, Moreno Wines): Funky nose, a bit Pinot-earthy but not; keeps you very interested throughout the glass.

Mauricio Lorca Viña Péon Mencía de Amandi, Ribeira Sacra, Galicia 2023 (£21, Utopia Wines): Inky colour – jammy red and black berry flavours; ripe and full.

Bodega Son Vich de Superna Supernins, Mallorca 2021 (£21.50, Vindependents): Old spices, earthy, velvety texture, blackcurrant and stemmy freshness.

Mas Blanch i Jové Saó Abrivat, Costers Del Segre 2023 (£23, Vindependents): Fleshy, iron-rich nose; fresh, bright red fruit. So different and interesting.

Bodegas Alceño Sierra De Enmedio Monastrell, Jumilla 2024 (£16.50, Vindependents): Body Shop vanilla perfume – a great wine for wood lovers.

Marco Abella Loidana, Priorat 2023 (£24.50, Vindependents): Really elegant nose; true Priorat palate mixing warm flavours, structure and freshness.

Bodegas Leza Garcia Valdepalacios Crianza, Rioja 2021 (£13.99, Vinterra): This is real value – soft and mellow Rioja vibes; well made.

Fortified

Bodegas Arloren Vermut White, Jumila NV (£18.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Vanilla ice cream and Chartreuse; carries its alcohol well.

Bodegas Arloren Vermut Red, Jumila NV (£18.50, Daniel Lambert Wines): Burnt amber. Smells like sugar-free cola bottles. Herbs, bitter orange zest, caramel.

Valdespino Premium Collection Manzanilla Deliciosa Pago de Miraflores, Sanlúcar de Barrameda NV (£21.99, Liberty Wines): Lovely classic Manzanilla nose; green olives stuffed with lemon and hazelnuts; clean and saline.

TURKEY

Rosé

Kuzubağ Çal Karası / Kalecik Karası Rosé, Aegean 2024 (£18, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Love this: complex and interesting, some spice and savoury notes.

URUGUAY

White

Bodega Garzón Single Vineyard Albariño, Maldonado 2024 (£36.99, Liberty Wines): Lime and pastel de nata – leesy. Ambitious but it works.

Red

Pisano Family Wines Cisplatino Tannat, Progreso 2024 (£15.49, Boutinot): Bright expression of Tannat; leather, some rusticity and dried spice. Juicy black fruits.



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HIGHLY COMMENDED WINES

URUGUAY Red continued

Bodega Bouza Merlot Pan de Azucar, Oceanic 2023 (£34.95, Jeroboams): Plum, tobacco, eucalyptus; big plush black fruits and oak. Complex and rich.

USA

White

Sanford La Rinconda Chardonnay, Sta Rita Hills 2021 (£62, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Restrained but ripe Chardonnay with subtle crème fraîche, nuts and leesy notes.

Scheid Family Wines Metz Road Chardonnay, Monterey 2021 (£27, North South Wines): Rounded, exotic fruit, lots of oak and cream; classic, slightly old-style Cali Chard.

Rosé

Klinker Brick Winery Brick and Roses, Lodi 2025 (£20, Daniel Lambert Wines): Real interest and grip on the palate; restrained nose and soft fruit.

Red

Domaine Drouhin Oregon Roserock Pinot Noir, Eola-Amity Hills 2023 (£45, Berkman Wine Cellars): Fully ripe and glossy core of sweet cherry; polished tannins. Delivers for the money.

Trefethen Eshcol Red, Napa Valley 2022 (£22, Daniel Lambert Wines): Juicy and forward fruit, slick and polished oak. Leafy cassis, lifted plum. Taut, dry finish.

Chimney Rock Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District, Napa Valley 2023 (£126, Hallgarten & Novum Wines): Well-mannered, well-balanced, with blackcurrant, damson, smoke and cedar.

Newfound Gravels Red, California 2022 (£36.95, Jeroboams): Very nice if it's a bit chilled. Tastes younger than 2022; strawberries and cream.

Valravn Old Vine Zinfandel, Sonoma 2022 (£27.95, Jeroboams): Green peppers and candied fruit. Good depth of flavour – but fresh, too.

Pavette Pinot Noir, California 2024 (£18.95, Jeroboams): Baked red fruit, jammy and ripe; wide appeal at this price.

Scheid Family Wines Metz Road Pinot Noir, Monterey 2020 (£25, North South Wines): Smoky strawberries on the nose; juicy berries on the palate, some dry tannin.



LORENZO AND HAILY TREFETHEN

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