

Decanter

# FESTIVE

*wine guide*

**230**  
GREAT  
BUYS

The ultimate handy companion for all your UK high-street wine shopping this Christmas and New Year





## Inside this guide

3 Welcome

### \* THE DECANTER UK HIGH-STREET WINE EDIT

4 Asda

6 Aldi

8 Booths

10 Co-op

12 Majestic

14 Marks & Spencer

16 Morrisons

18 Sainsbury's

20 Tesco



22 The Wine Society

24 Waitrose

26 Best high-street Champagnes

30 Best Champagnes beyond the high street

32 Best high-street Champagne alternatives

36 Best Champagne alternatives beyond the high street

### \* THE DECANTER CHRISTMAS FOOD AND WINE PAIRING GUIDE

39 Top wines for turkey

40 Brilliant wines for beef

41 Remarkable wines for roast ham

42 Great wines for goose or duck

43 Fab wines for fish and seafood

45 Versatile wines for veggie options

46 Best sweet wines

48 Best fortified wines

50 Best Christmas wine picks from DWWA 2025

52 Join Decanter Premium



# Happy holidays!

**W**elcome to Decanter's first Festive Wine Guide!

While this is the season to raise a cup (or many) of good cheer, we all know that it can be quite stressful – especially if you're the one organising the end-of-year party, Christmas Eve drinks and Boxing Day brunch. And let's not forget what bottles to pair with the festive feast on the big day itself...

But don't worry: on the wine side at least, we've got you covered. We've scoured the UK's supermarkets, leading high-street merchants and online wine retailers, Decanter's own in-house experts and of course our database of more than 100,000 wines to bring you a handy, downloadable selection of the best bottles to buy this festive season.

(Tip: if you stock up on the sparklings, you can cruise into your New Year's Eve celebrations with ease.)

So grab yourself a glass of whatever you fancy, sit back and peruse our 230 recommendations at your leisure, and let Decanter make this a stress-free season to be jolly.

*Cheers!*

## WINE COLOUR KEY

● White ● Rosé ● Orange ● Red ● Sweet & fortified wines

All prices, stockists and availability details were correct at the time of publication. Decanter cannot guarantee ongoing availability or that prices will remain the same after publication.

# The Decanter UK high-street wine edit

Wherever you live in the UK, and whatever your wine preference, there's bound to be a supermarket, national chain or online retailer near you that has something to suit your taste and budget – particularly at Christmas, with all the great festive deals to be had. From our extensive coverage of the autumn/winter supermarket tastings, we've made a curated selection of what we think are some of the best buys available this festive season.

## ASDA

### 1 Asda, Lugana, Lombardy, Italy 2024

90 points

£11.42 Asda

A gem of the Asda range, this genteel Northern Italian white from the Lugana DOC appellation near Lake Garda is all hazy soft-focus charm, with summery scents of meadows, white flowers and fennel bulb, and a palate of juicy, soft, ripe pear with trickling cool-stream acidity.

Alc 13%

### 2 d'Arenberg, The Hermit Crab Marsanne-Viognier, McLaren Vale, South Australia 2024

89 points

£13.47 Asda

One of the best-loved wines in this popular McLaren Vale producer's multifarious portfolio, this Rhône-inspired blend of Viognier and Marsanne offers a rounded fruit-fleshy mouthful of ripe pear and tropical fruit with a charming orange blossom lilt.

Alc 14%

### 3 Stellenrust, Mason's Kloof Chenin Blanc, Coastal Region, South Africa 2025

89 points

£9.97 Asda

Made for Asda by the always reliable Stellenbosch producer Stellenrust, a third of the blend here is barrel fermented and aged,

bringing honey-on-toast richness and mid-palate weight to a wine that is otherwise all about the immaculate, lip-smacking green apple, pineapple and fresh hay, and vivid cleansing acidity.

Alc 13%

### 4 Asda, Exceptional White Burgundy, Bourgogne, France 2023

89 points

£11.13 Asda

There's a touch of Toblerone-ish honeyed almond to this unoaked Chardonnay that contrasts nicely with the easy-going soft apple fruitiness and discreetly insistent acidity in a characterful white Burgundy with the structure to pair off with pork as well as rich fish.

Alc 12.5%

### 5 Asda, Extra Special Sauvignon Blanc, Touraine, Loire, France 2024

87 points

£7.96 Asda

With its almost bracing citrus acidity and just-ripe gooseberry, elderflower and cut grass notes, this properly dry white hits an appealingly fresh nerve for fans of Loire Sauvignon Blanc operating on a tight budget.

Alc 11.5%



**6 Asda, Exceptional by Asda Shiraz, Great Western, Victoria, Australia 2023**

**89 points**  
£8.77 Asda

A highlight of the range, this Victorian Shiraz has a Rhône Syrah-like subtly peppered bloody-meatiness to go with the aniseed sweet shop and dark berry fruit. Plush without being at all flabby or OTT, this is a stylish wintry red.

**Alc 13.5%**

**7 Asda, Exceptional Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, Western Australia 2023**

**89 points**  
£6.98 Asda

Another outstanding performer at £6.98, so often a fruitful price point in the Asda

wine range. It's a wine of easy cassis-fruited succulence with just a touch of appetising crunch to the tannins and a leafy, graphite-like cooling finish.

**Alc 14%**

**8 Asda, Extra Special, Barbera d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy 2021**

**88 points**  
£7.47 Asda

Made for Asda by the trusty Piemontese own-label specialists Araldica, this is, as ever, excellent value for a chunky but fruit-filled red in which the lustrous mouthfilling dark cherry and plum is leavened and freshened with plum-skin tang and a squirt of tomato acidity for matching, naturally enough, with tomato-based pasta sauces.

**Alc 14.5%**

**9 Asda, Extra Special Malbec, Uco Valley, Mendoza, Argentina 2023**

**88 points**  
£9.97 Asda

It's worth paying the £3 premium over Asda's Extra Special Mendoza Malbec, since this Uco Valley bottling from Bodega Norton offers a palpable step up in quality, with a decidedly pretty violet edge to the well defined dark cherry and plum, sensual mid-palate plumpness, and real freshness in the finish.

**Alc 14.5%**

**10 Asda, Extra Special Marqués del Norte Reserva, Rioja, Spain 2020**

**88 points**  
£8.07 Asda

The excellent Extra Special Marqués del Norte Gran Reserva Rioja made by the same producer (Baron de Ley) is a very sound buy at Asda for £12.09; but we're highlighting its junior Reserva partner since it's so rare to find an £8 red with this much coconut softness and satisfyingly savoury maturity.

**Alc 14%**

## Should you decant?

There are no right or wrong answers here. But one thing is true: decanting cannot magically age a young wine, soften tannins or reduce acidity.

Decanting exposes wine to oxygen, causing it to change – usually positively (by enticing out more aromas) but potentially negatively. Decanting older or more delicate wines could lose many of its lighter aromas, so you might be better to open the bottle close to serving time.

If you don't have a nice decanter (or it's a bottle label you want to show off) you may want to double-decant: first decanting the wine from the original bottle to expose it to air, and separate the liquid from any sediment that may have formed in the bottle. After cleaning the bottle out, refill with the decanted wine using a funnel. If you are serving wine in a decanter, make sure it is spotlessly clean; avoid detergents, just use hot water.

Have a taste of the wine as soon as you've decanted it, then monitor it as it breathes and develops, so you can judge the perfect time to enjoy it. And decanting is not just for reds: consider decanting white wines, especially Chardonnay from Burgundy, Australia or California, to soften any smoky, reductive (struck match) characters.





## ALDI

**1 Chassaux et Fils, Specially Selected, Chablis 1er Cru, Burgundy, France 2023**  
90 points

£22 Aldi

The sunny 2023 vintage led to some particularly accessible, fruit-driven wines in Chablis, and Aldi's biodynamic premier cru example is typical of the year, with a ripe, almost stone-fruited character, crème fraîche richness and enough citrusy acidity to keep it fish-friendly and fresh.

Alc 13%

**2 Cambalala, Specially Selected Chardonnay, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2024**  
88 points

£6 Aldi

With its genteel but immaculately presented fresh ripe apple, white nectarine and ripple of fresh acidity, this new addition to the Aldi range comes over as a kind of South African answer to Mâcon-Villages. Bright, food-flexible, easy – but not facile – drinking.

Alc 13.5%

**3 Chassaux et Fils, Specially Selected Sauvignon Blanc, Touraine, Loire, France 2024**  
87 points

£7 Aldi

The Touraine appellation is always a good place to look if you're after an affordable hit of classic Loire Sauvignon zip and zing, and Aldi's example hits that particular spot nicely: it's clean, crisp and cool, with blackcurrant leaf, elderflower and gooseberry flavours.

Alc 12%

**4 Baron Amarillo, Specially Selected Rosado, Rioja, Spain 2024**  
87 points

£7 Aldi

A party bottle *par excellence*, this crowd-pleasing rosado is an easygoing aperitif with an engagingly fruity style that mixes white peach and watermelon, while retaining enough body and freshness to pair up with a wide range of canapés and snacks.

Alc 13%

**5 Aldi, Margaux Declassified, Bordeaux, France 2023**  
91 points

£20 Aldi

The source remains a secret, but whichever château is ultimately responsible, this is a clever bit of buying from the Aldi team. It's a classy, classic claret from the bountiful 2023 vintage, with a cedary lilt behind the cassis and super-fine-grained tannins.

**Alc** 13%

**6 Chassaux et Fils, Specially Selected, Cairanne, Rhône, France 2024**  
90 points

£10 Aldi

Rhône lovers are well served at Aldi, with this new addition from the Cairanne cru another excellent buy for all your winter-warming needs. All thanks to its winning combination of lush, perfectly ripe brambly berries with evocative garrigue and savoury pepper spice.

**Alc** 14.5%

**7 Baron Amarillo, Specially Selected, Ribera del Duero, Spain 2024**  
89 points

£9 Aldi

The classic Ribera hallmarks of high-altitude-borne freshness paired with dark and juicy ripe mulberry fruit are very much in evidence in this excellent-value newcomer to the Aldi range. It's an casserole-ready bottle that is deeply flavoured and robust but highly drinkable.

**Alc** 13.5%

**8 Costellore, Specially Selected, Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore, Veneto, Italy 2022**  
88 points

£9 Aldi

Valpolicella Ripasso has been dubbed the poor man's Amarone, and Aldi's example has enough of the rich, cherries-and-raisins-in-dark-chocolate bittersweetness to earn the comparison, as well as making it a contender to step in for Port when the cheeseboard comes round.

**Alc** 14%

**9 Chassaux et Fils, Côtes du Rhône, France 2023**  
87 points

£5 Aldi

One of a handful of circa-£5 reds in the



UK that taste like real wine as opposed to dilute alcoholic blackcurrant squash. With its firm but smooth tannins, this genuinely characterful, spicy Rhône is very hard to beat as a midweek red as the nights draw in.

**Alc** 13.5%

**10 Estevez, Merlot, Central Valley, Chile 2024**  
86 points

£4 Aldi

Like its white counterpart, the Estevez Sauvignon Blanc, this is a 'how do they do this at this price?' bottle that offers a really attractive red plum and berry nose, and a juicy, fruity palate with a bit of sappy tannin.

**Alc** 11%



## BOOTHS

**1** **Wildeberg, Coterie by Wildeberg Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc, Coastal Region, South Africa 2023**

93 points

£13.50 **Booths**

Waxy, intense barrel-fermented Semillon leads the way in this outstandingly good-value white, with the 20% unoaked (but long lees-aged) Sauvignon Blanc bringing aromatic zing and brightness. Exotic notes of coconut cream, lemongrass and pineapple complete the complex, food-friendly picture.

**Alc** 12%

**2** **Domaine Jones, Les Parcelles Vieilles Vignes, Vin de France 2022**

92 points

£16.50 **Booths**

From selected plots of Grenache Blanc, Macabeu and Muscat from Katie Jones, the hugely talented English expat vigneronne's own vineyards in Tuchan in Fitou, this is a marvel of palate-filling ripe apple and peaches 'n' cream freshened with orange, fennel and dill.

**Alc** 13.5%

**3** **Planeta, Terebinto Grillo, Menfi, Sicily, Italy 2024**

92 points

£16 **Booths**

One of the original prime movers in the Sicilian quality wine renaissance, Planeta remains one of the island's standout producers, with this organic white a captivating expression of the local Grillo grape variety's melange of exotic fruit, fleshy roundness and easy, sea-breezy freshness.

**Alc** 13%

**4** **Les Vignerons d'Aghione, Domaine Terra de I Nostri Vermentinu, Ile de Beauté, Corsica, France 2024**

90 points

£10.75 **Booths**

A delicate, fragrant Corsican take on the current Mediterranean flavour of the month, the white grape variety of Vermentino. It's a brilliant buy, with a gentle ripple of cool acidity and fennel scents running through the juicy fresh white peach and lemon citrus palate.

**Alc** 11.5%





**5** EH Booth & Co,  
Barolo, Piedmont,  
Italy 2020  
93 points

£22 **Booths**

Made for Booths by Fontanafredda, this is a very stylish, accessible Barolo at an unusually good price, showing pretty raspberry and macerated red cherry fruit and a sprinkle of sweet spice, while the Nebbiolo grape's famously firm tannins are buffed and polished to a sophisticated sheen.

**Alc** 14%

**6** EH Booth & Co, St-Julien,  
Bordeaux, France 2019  
93 points

£20 **Booths**

From one of the finest recent Bordeaux vintages, this St-Julien is exceptionally good value, drinking beautifully now – perfect for Christmas – with its softening fine-grained tannins, crème de cassis and savoury meatiness, but also happy to spend another while in the cellar.

**Alc** 13%

**7** Domaine Gilles Robin,  
Papillon, Crozes-Hermitage,  
Rhône, France 2023  
92 points

£18 **Booths**

This box-fresh organic Crozes hits all the right northern Rhône Syrah notes in fragrant, succulent-supple mode, with liquorice and a crack of the black pepper pot infusing the violet-edged blackberry fruit in what is the very ideal of a steak-frites red.

**Alc** 13%

**8** Thymiopoulos, Jeunes Vignes  
Xinomavro, Naoussa,

**Macedonia, Greece 2023**  
92 points

£14.75 **Booths**

The latest vivid vintage of this ever-appetising unoaked expression of Greece's answer to Nebbiolo from star winemaker Apostolos Thymiopoulos. It is a typically evocative mix of balsamic-macerated strawberries, red cherries and dried aromatic herbs, with a spine of rosehippy acid and tenderly grippy tannin. Organic.

**Alc** 13%

**9** Famille Perrin, Méridion,  
Châteauneuf-du-Pape,  
Rhône, France 2022  
91 points

£27 **Booths**

A typically warming and substantial but aromatic and balanced Châteauneuf from the Beaucastel- (and Vieille Ferme chicken wine)-owning Perrin clan. This has an attractive bramble berry compote core of a fleshy mid-palate that contrasts nicely with the fresher rosehip, aniseed and herbal tones. Will certainly do for many a Christmas roast.

**Alc** 14.5%

**10** Howard Park, Miamup  
Cabernet Sauvignon,  
Margaret River,  
Western Australia 2023  
91 points

£13 **Booths**

One of Western Australia's most reliable and affordable producers, Howard Park comes up trumps again with this classic Margaret River Cabernet. Combining perfectly ripe (just short of crunchy) blackcurrant and black cherry fruit, with a waft of leafy freshness.

**Alc** 14%





**3 Domäne Wachau, Grüner Veltliner, Wachau, Niederösterreich, Austria 2024**  
90 points

£12 Co-op

A delectably juicy, rounded mouthful of ripe stone fruits (white peach and apricot) with pear enlivened by green apple, a touch of leafy herb and a surge of racy acidity. This is an exemplary lighter-style Grüner from one of the world's best-run, most quality-conscious co-ops.

Alc 13%

**4 Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, Riesling Kabinett, Mosel, Germany 2023**  
90 points

£12.50 Co-op

This typically graceful yet lively Kabinett (an off-dry style) is finely detailed and expressive, opening with ripe tropical fruit and lime-skin tones, before settling into a brisk, enlivening palate, where dashing, silvery, fine-line acidity meets a cushion of sugar that allows for mild, chilli-spicy food-matching opportunities.

Alc 10.5%

**5 Jean-Claude Mas, Co-op Irresistible Limited Edition Grenache Blanc, IGP Pays d'Oc, France 2024**  
88 points

£8.50 Co-op

Long-term Co-op supplier Jean-Claude Mas delivers great-value wines again with his delightful latest addition to the range – a 100% Grenache Blanc in a mouth-filling, fleshy stone-fruit style, with sensual, almost creamy weight on the palate despite the absence of oak.

Alc 13%

**6 Château Beau-Site, St-Estèphe, Bordeaux, France 2019**  
94 points

£25 Co-op

The Co-op may not be most wine lovers' first port of call for fine wine, but the retailer has always been good at sourcing a top-level claret or two at competitive prices – and this certainly continues that tradition. A Cabernet-led blend from the excellent 2019 vintage, it's cigar-box fragrant yet deep, dark and plush, with cassis and black olive savouriness and velvety tannins. Lovely now, but it will certainly keep for a decade or more.

Alc 13.5%

**CO-OP**

**1 Château Guiraud, G de Château Guiraud, Bordeaux Blanc, France 2023**  
93 points

£18 Co-op

Semillon leads the blend with Sauvignon Blanc in this very fine dry white from the celebrated Sauternes producer, with a nose of lemongrass, cut grass and lime,

and a palate that combines energy and creamy depths – with pithy grapefruit,

coconut cream and a long, tapering, star-bright finish.

Alc 13.5%

**2 Domaine Masse, Pierre Ponnelle, Montagny 1er Cru, Burgundy, France 2023**  
92 points

£24 Co-op

With a drizzle of honey and apple pie patisserie, this barrel-aged Côte Chalonnaise Chardonnay is full of warm-season ripeness and charm while retaining a graceful streak of cleansing acidity – a smart, richly layered contender for roast chicken – or for the Christmas main course.

Alc 13.5%



**7 Agricola Cottini, Palazzo Maffei Conte di Valle, Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore, Veneto, Italy 2021**  
91 points

£12.75 Co-op

An exceptionally swish, suave and elegant take on the Ripasso style – the dried fruit component brings depth and darker, chocolatey tones, yet the abiding impression is of fresh, immaculately ripe red and black cherries and berries, finishing with a moreish, tangy lift. Superb value.

**Alc** 14.5%

**8 Albert Glas, Pinot Noir, Pfalz, Germany 2023**  
89 points

£9.50 Co-op

Sourcing decent, varietally true Pinot Noir for under a tenner is one of wine retailing's most difficult missions, but this German bottling shows it is achievable – very pale in the glass, it combines fresh red cherries and strawberry jam with racy cranberry acidity, a touch of beetroot earthiness and light tannins.

**Alc** 13%

**9 Castello Vicchiomaggio, Co-op Irresistible Chianti, Tuscany, Italy 2023**  
89 points

£10 Co-op

A typically elegant, polished take on classic Chianti from John Matta at Tenuta Vicchiomaggio, this is relatively slim in frame, with fine, polished tannins, bright tomato-acidity and deliciously keen red cherry fruit, finishing with a touch of oregano-leaf savouriness.

**Alc** 12.5%

**10 Robert Oatley, Semaphore Cabernet Sauvignon, Western Australia 2023**  
89 points

£10 Co-op

This Western Australian Cabernet offers quite a lot of class for the cash, with a delightful freshening streak of blackcurrant leaf framing the classic cassis and subtly toasty oak, while the palate is succulent with black fruit and fine-grained tannins.

**Alc** 14%



# MAJESTIC

## 1 Château de Fieuzal, Abeille de Fieuzal Blanc, Pessac-Léognan, Bordeaux, France 2018

94 points

£21 Majestic

A brilliant bit of sourcing from the Majestic team, this mature dry white is still full of vim and vigour and leafy youthfulness. It's a near even split of Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc that has been aged for 10 months in neutral oak and which balances complex apricot and subtly toasty tones with mouthwateringly pithy orange citrus and great length.

Alc 13%

## 2 Cap Maritime, Coastal Chardonnay, Cape South Coast, South Africa 2024

92 points

£18 Majestic

A blend of fruit parcels from this producer's many fine plots in the ocean-cooled Cape South Coast, this is particularly excellent value at £18 per bottle, let alone the £15 when part of a mixed case of six. It's a barrel-and-concrete-fermented Chardonnay of poise and clean-cut stone fruit, a hint of

creaminess and a freshening, dry, long finish of salted citrus.

Alc 12.5%

## 3 Martín Códax, Anxo Martín, Ribera del Duero, Castilla y León, Spain 2023

92 points

£17 Majestic

The reliable Martín Codax cooperative has been meeting Majestic's Rías Baixas Albariño needs for years now, but this new addition from fellow Galician DO Ribeiro is a real standout. The Treixadura grape is the main player in a wine in which fragrant white flowers and dill-like herbiness mixes with succulently fleshy stone-fruited richness.

Alc 12.5%

## 4 Roberto Sarotto, Meera, Gavi di Gavi, Piedmont, Italy 2024

91 points

£18 Majestic

There's a lot of rather interchangeable Gavi around on the high street, but this Cortese is a cut above in its fluency, drive and



richer, fleshier fruit; a melange of peach, lemon curd and ripe apple tapering into a long, pristine, fresh finish.

**Alc** 12.5%

**5 Royal Tokaji, Dry Furmint, Tokaj, Hungary 2021**

**91 points**

£14

**Majestic**

A wine of real character, charm and presence for the money, this fully dry style from these regal masters of sweet Tokaji gets its electric charge and compulsive drinkability from the almost febrile acidity, which contrasts pleasingly with ripe apples, pears and apricots. A great wine for the Christmas centrepiece.

**Alc** 13%

**6 Alain Grignon, Grande Réserve Vieilles Vignes Carignan, IGP Pays d'Oc, France 2024**

**93 points**

£16 **Majestic**

Alain Grignon is something of a specialist in the underrated but, in the right hands, darkly glorious southern French grape variety Carignan, and this is the best of a bunch at Majestic. Robustly full of dark mulberry, blackberry and black olives, the

tannins are smoothly vivid and the wine is alive with the tang of rosehip acidity.

**Alc** 14.5%

**7 Château Poujeaux, La Salle de Poujeaux, Moulis-en-Médoc, Bordeaux, France 2018**

**93 points**

£20 **Majestic**

A supremely classy second wine from this high-performing Moulis-en-Médoc estate. At eight years old, it has settled into a highly drinkable, mellow phase where plump red and black plums and a touch of savoury meatiness meet softly fine-grained tannins.

**Alc** 14%

**8 La Rioja Alta, Definition by Majestic Viña Majestica Reserva, Rioja, Spain 2021**

**93 points**

£14.50 **Majestic**

Consistently one of the high street's biggest bargains, and particularly good in the fine 2021 vintage, this is a failsafe Rioja for fans of the traditional style from

one of Rioja Alta's finest estates. Expect a suave-textured wine that is ripely dark fruited and softly oak-savoury.

**Alc** 14%

**9 Maison Les Alexandrins, Terrasses de l'Eridan, Côtes du Rhône, France 2023**

**91 points**

£14 **Majestic**

Syrah leads the way in this authentic, unforced Côtes du Rhône, bringing that pleasingly dark and sinewy pepper-seasoned meaty character that is fleshed out with juicy but not at all overripe red berries. Great with beef or a nut roast.

**Alc** 13.5%

**10 Wynns, The Gables Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, South Australia 2022**

**91 points**

£15 **Majestic**

A typically well-balanced and classically styled Coonawarra Cabernet from top winemaker Sue Hodder and team at Wynns, this is full of ripe cassis and black cherry juiciness and chocolate mint freshness, given silky texture by the polished tannins

**Alc** 13.7%





## MARKS & SPENCER

### ① Clos de Nouys, Vouvray, Loire, France 2023

89 points

£14 **Ocado**

Vouvray's Chenin Blanc comes in all shapes and sizes, but this is the appellation in dry, lively, crisp mode. A wine of fine, clean lines and bright green apple fruit, with a swish of steely acidity and a polished silky feel.

**Alc** 12.5%

### ② Lyme Bay, Bacchus, Devon, England UK 2024

89 points

£15 **Ocado**

A quintessential English Bacchus from the high-performing Devon-based still-wine specialists Lyme Bay, this super-bright, fresh-out-of-the-box dry white is full of vivid passionfruit, lime and elderflower – truly England's answer to Kiwi Sauvignon.

**Alc** 11.5%

### ③ Marks & Spencer, Found Moschofilero-Roditis, Peloponnese, Greece 2024

88 points

£8.50 **Marks & Spencer**

A consistent highlight of M&S's fun Found range of unusual grape varieties and styles, this Greek dry white from Kintonis Winery is just so alluringly fragrant with exotic fruit salad, pine groves and orange blossom. The Mediterranean sea-breezy freshness leads into a gently lemon-pithy dry finish. In store only.

**Alc** 12.5%

### ④ Marks & Spencer, Gable Lodge Wild Ferment Chardonnay, Western Cape, South Africa 2024

88 points

£8.50 **Marks & Spencer**

If you're looking for a good-value white Burgundy alternative, this smart example from the ever-reliable Stellenrust winery is definitely a candidate. Partly fermented in French oak for an oatmealy-savoury, richly engaging palate filled with peach, subtle toasty notes and a super-clean dry finish.

**Alc** 13%

**5 Marks & Spencer, Collection Margaux, Bordeaux, France 2022**

93 points

£28 **Ocado**

A real candidate for the festive dining table, this impressive claret from fifth-growth Château Dauzac offers an alluring mix of the plump and the fragrant, with concentrated cassis and fine-grained oak giving way to subtle spice and the requisite Atlantic freshness on a long, tapering finish. A good-value splash out for the roast beef.

**Alc** 14%

**6 Marks & Spencer, Collection El Duque de Miralta, Rioja, Spain 2019**

91 points

£16 **Ocado**

Made for M&S by Rioja Alavesa-based El Coto, and drawing fruit from the estate's 700ha of vineyards, this sumptuous Gran Reserva is still feeling quite youthful at seven years old: chunky and savoury with a deep vein of just-softening blackberry fruit and sweet-oak shading.

**Alc** 14%

**7 Marks & Spencer, Etna Rosso, Sicily, Italy 2022**

91 points

£14 **Ocado**

Always a highlight of the M&S Italian range, and a brilliantly affordable expression of the exciting, ethereal Nerello Mascalese-led wines grown on the slopes of Mount Etna, this is a tongue-teasing combination of sour cherry, tomato and darker berries, with earthier tones and fine-knit tannins.

**Alc** 13%

**8 Domaine Mandeville, Carignan, IGP Pays d'Oc, France 2024**

90 points

£9 **Ocado**

One of the best-value reds on the high street, this unoaked 100% Carignan is beautifully expressive on the nose and offers a mass of finger-staining blackberry juice on the substantial but succulent, darkly intriguing palate alongside sinewy tannins. Try with the Christmas ham or a veggie wellington.

**Alc** 13.5%

**9 Palataia, Pinot Noir, Pfalz, Germany 2023**

90 points

£10 **Ocado**

Sleek and slinky but deep in flavour, this Pfalz Spätburgunder from former M&S winemaker Gerd Stepp is that rarest of beasts: a £10 Pinot Noir of genuine character and succulent drinkability. Soft cherry-berry fruit, a hit of cola and elegant tannins.

**Alc** 13%

**10 Marks & Spencer, Cape Quarter by Boekenhoutskloof, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2024**

90 points

£10 **Marks & Spencer**

The price of this stylish Cape Bordeaux blend from leading producer Boekenhoutskloof (of Chocolate Block fame) has gone down since the last M&S tasting, making its luscious ripe, mint-infused cassis and berries and robust but succulent tannins all the more alluring and good value. In store only.

**Alc** 14%





## MORRISONS

### 1 Pazo Cilleiro, Morrisons, The Best Block Series 018 Albariño, Val do Salnés, Rías Baixas, Galicia, Spain 2024

90 points

£18 **Morrisons**

Using fruit sourced from the Val do Salnés sub-zone of Albariño's Galician heartland in Rías Baixas, this is a textbook example of the great Atlantic Spanish white grape, in which the bright apricot and pear is matched with scintillatingly saline-seasoned, lemon-juicy acidity, leading into a properly dry, pithy finish.

**Alc** 13%

### 2 RM Wineries, Morrisons, The Best Block Series 012 Riesling, Ancient Lakes, Columbia Valley, Washington, USA 2023

89 points

£16.50 **Morrisons**

From the Ancient Lakes sub-region of Washington State's Columbia Valley, this is an attractively open and softly insistent take on properly dry Riesling, with an Alsace-like plumpness to its ripe stone fruit and plenty of tingling lemon-and-lime acidity cleansing the finish.

**Alc** 13%

### 3 Terres Fidèles, Morrisons, The Best Minervois Blanc,

### Languedoc-Roussillon, France 2024

88 points

£9 **Morrisons**

A white Rhône-alike at a very Languedoc price, this rare UK release of Minervois blanc from Terres Fidèles is an excellent buy, the unoaked blend of Grenache Blanc, Macabeu and Rolle offering a mix of stone fruit, fresh orange and lime, and an evocative thyme-herbal note.

**Alc** 13%

### 4 Plaimont, Morrisons, The Best Côtes de Gascogne, Southwest France 2024

87 points

£7.50 **Morrisons**

The thrill of not-quite-shrill acidity that runs through this fantastic-value dry Gascon white, right through to the crisp, dry finish, is the perfect foil for the pungent, Sauvignon-like gooseberry fruitiness. A Christmas party contender.

**Alc** 11%





**5** **Morrison's, The Best Block Series 011 Côtes de Provence Ste-Victoire, France 2024**  
88 points

£16 **Morrison's**

Offering a genuine step-up in brightness of fruit and subtle creaminess of texture over the retailer's reliably drinkable The Best Provence Rosé, this graceful, Grenache-led blend is a pastel wash of strawberry-cream and hibiscus, with gently incisive acidity.

**Alc** 13%

**6** **Hacienda López de Haro, Morrison's, The Best Marqués de**

**los Ríos Gran Reserva Rioja, Spain 2015**  
92 points

£15 **Morrison's**

While Bodega Eguia makes Morrison's' good-value Marqués de los Ríos Rioja and Reserva Rioja, the retailer hands the responsibility for its Gran Reserva to the meticulous Hacienda López de Haro, and the bodega doesn't disappoint, making a gloriously polished, modern style with plenty of ripe, still-lively dark fruit, buffed and sheened with French and American oak, just starting to take on savoury tones.

**Alc** 14%

**7** **JP Ramos, Morrison's, The Best Douro Superior Reserva, Douro Valley, Portugal 2023**  
90

£11.50 **Morrison's**

Morrison's has a very drinkable The Best Douro Red on its books for £9.50 (88 points), but this Douro Superior justifies the extra £2 on the price tag with its effortless, silky glide and immaculate ripe fruits-of-the-forest concentration.

**Alc** 13.5%

**8** **Viña Ventisquero, Morrison's, The Best Gran Reserva Pinot Noir, Casablanca Valley, Chile 2024**  
90 points

£12 **Morrison's**

Made for Morrison's from fruit sourced in the original Chilean cool-climate region of

Casablanca by Viña Ventisquero, this is one of the best-value Pinots on the high street, with a convincingly raspberry-juicy, fruit-driven palate, a hint of earthy beetroot and citrusy bergamot, and fine, feathery tannins.

**Alc** 13%

**9** **Jules Lebegue, Morrison's, The Best Block Series 013 Médoc, Bordeaux, France 2023**  
89 points

£18 **Morrison's**

Unoaked and youthfully vibrant claret from the generous 2023 vintage, the near even split of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot produces a wine of clean lines and appetising Atlantic freshness, with a sappy quality to the tannins and delightful clarity to the succulent blackcurrant, red plum and subtle mint leafiness.

**Alc** 13%

**10** **Aroa, Morrison's, The Best Garnacha, Navarra, Spain 2023**  
88 points

£8.75

**Morrison's**

As so often in contemporary supermarket wine ranges, it's the stocks of old Garnacha vines in north-eastern Spain that provide the fruit for one of the best-value reds on the list, with Navarra's Bodegas Aroa producing a wine in which deluxe cherry juiciness meets plum-skin and blood-orange tang.

**Alc** 13.5%





## SAINSBURY'S



**1 Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference Chablis Vieilles Vignes Burgundy, France 2022**

93 points

£17.50 Sainsbury's

One of the best of the UK's many supermarket Chablis, this has an extra degree of luminous concentration and fluency when set alongside its peers, the result, perhaps, of sourcing

fruit from old vines, which bring tropical richness that contrasts

nicely with the clean racy acidity.

**Alc** 13%



**2 Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference Gavi di Gavi, Piedmont, Italy 2024**

91 points

£13 Sainsbury's

Like the TTD Chablis Vieilles Vignes (above) this 100% Cortese is a cut-above the often so-so supermarket ranks of its genre; a Gavi that ripples with cool-stream clarity and freshness, with subtle white flowers, preserved lemon and juicy fresh pear and apple.

**Alc** 11.5%



**3 Vasse Felix, Filius Chardonnay, Margaret River,**

**Western Australia 2023**  
**91 points**

£16 Sainsbury's

A swish, stylish white entry-point to this celebrated Margaret River producer's extensive range, this wild-yeast and barrel-fermented Chardonnay combines the plump sunny fruitiness of ripe nectarines and juicy honeydew melons with nutty savouriness and a cleansing wash of sea-breezy fresh acidity.

Available in-store only.

**Alc** 13%

**4 Invincible, Vinho Verde, Portugal 2024**  
**90 points**

£10.50 Sainsbury's

South African winemaker Marc Kent (of Boekenhoutsklouf / The Chocolate Block) and Rita Marques are the names behind this great-value new addition to the Sainsbury's range, in which Loureiro is by far the dominant player, bringing a delicious Riesling-esque touch of cool, zesty lime, white blossom and a subtle leafiness. Great with gently spicy dishes and seafood.

**Alc** 11.5%

**5 Laurent Miquel, Jeu Floral Rosé, IGP Pays d'Oc, France 2024**  
**88 points**

£11.50 Sainsbury's

Can you make Provence-style rosé in the Languedoc? Well this is a very convincing version of the pale pastel-shaded genre from Laurent Miquel, graceful and gently creamy with notes of strawberry, watermelon and spring blossom and a dry, fresh, citrus-edged finish.

**Alc** 12.5%

**6 Zuccardi, Poligonos Altamira Malbec, Uco Valley, Mendoza, Argentina 2023**  
**93 points**

£26 Sainsbury's

Part of the Zuccardi family's Poligonos range of Uco Valley 'village wines', this is sourced from fruit grown at 1,100m above sea level in Paraje Altamira – and it's an absolute delight. Without lacking in plump mid-palate fleshiness or detailed red fruit, it's so elegant, fragrant, silky textured and pure.

**Alc** 14%





**7 CVNE, Sainsbury's Taste the Difference, Rioja, Spain 2018**  
92 points

£16 Sainsbury's

Whether it's a function of the cooler 2018 vintage or of the stylistic preferences of CVNE, or a bit of both, this is a fresh, graceful take on the classic Gran Reserva recipe, with a swish of bright blackberry and strawberry leading into the spicier, leathery-savoury tones. Very polished and will keep improving for a few years. Great value.

**Alc** 13.5%

**8 Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference Côtes du Ventoux, Rhône, France 2023**  
91 points

£11.50 Sainsbury's

A highlight of the of southern French reds at Sainsbury's, there's a deliciously savoury charcuterie-like streak of Syrah bloodiness and peppery spice, in a gutsy red of real definition where the intensity is leavened by freshness.

**Alc** 14.5%

**9 Rustenberg, Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2023**  
90 points

£14 Sainsbury's

A Cape claret of immediate charm and juicy depths from the picturesque Rustenberg estate in Stellenbosch, this 100% Cabernet mixes classic cassis and blackberry, framed with sappy tannins and a kiss of vanilla oak into a longish refreshing finish.

**Alc** 14%

**10 Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference St-Chinian, Languedoc-Roussillon, France 2023**  
89 points

£11.50 Sainsbury's

Always a good bet in the Sainsbury's TTD range, this warming Grenache-dominated southern French blend made by Laurent Miquel has a pleasing brightness to it in this latest vintage, with the brambly berry fruit nicely defined before the liquorice-edged spice kicks in.

**Alc** 14%





## TESCO

### 1 Alpha Estate, Turtles Single Vineyard Malagouzia, Macedonia, Greece 2024

93 points

£20 Tesco

One of two exciting Greek white wine additions to the Tesco range is this luxurious take on Malagouzia, a wine that ripples with fresh, fleshy, white peach fruit, lemon balm and honeysuckle, and courses with fresh grapefruity acidity on the long finish.

**Alc** 13.5%

### 2 Pikes Wines, Riesling, Clare Valley, South Australia 2024

93 points

£13 Tesco

From one of the masters of this true-Aussie-original style of Riesling, and with fruit mainly sourced in the highly regarded Polish Hill district of the Clare Valley, this is just fantastic value for money: a scintillating, maximally tangy hit of the freshest, ripest lime skin and juice.

**Alc** 11.5%

### 3 Errazuriz, Gran Reserva Chardonnay, Aconcagua Valley, Chile 2024

90 points

£11.50 Tesco

Errazuriz makes a lot of wine, but the quality level rarely dips, and the value is often remarkable, not least in this very deftly made Chardonnay, which balances its luminous apple and peach with a flash of bright acidity and perfectly integrated wheatmeal-like oak notes.

**Alc** 13%

### 4 Nepenthe, Grüner Veltliner, Adelaide Hills, South Australia, 2024

90 points

£16 Tesco

There aren't all that many convincing versions of Austria's signature white variety being made beyond its borders, but this is certainly one of the best we've tried so far. It's appealingly fleshy with its melon and nectarine fruit, but it has focus and drive, too, from a burst of citrus and leafy-herbal freshness.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 5 Paul Jaboulet Aîné, Viognier,





**Rhône, France 2024**  
90 points

£11 **Tesco**

A delightfully graceful and great-value take on the occasionally overwrought apricot-scented Viognier grape from one of the most reliable names in the modern Rhône. This offers easygoing, soft, downy peachiness, subtle honeysuckle florals and plenty of presence without losing either focus or freshness.

**Alc** 13.5%

**6 Château Sociando-Mallet, La Réserve de Sociando-Mallet, Haut-Médoc, Bordeaux, France 2018**

92 points

£29 **Tesco**

The second wine of this perennially overperforming, unclassified Haut-Médoc property is designed for earlier drinking, with just 30% of the blend seeing oak maturation (for 11 months). From a powerful vintage such as 2018, the drinking window would appear to be open at seven years old, with a harmonious, fresh feel to its cassis, plum and soft cigar-box tones.

**Alc** 13.5%

**7 Catena, Appellation Agrelo Cabernet Sauvignon, Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina 2023**

91 points

£16 **Tesco**

There's a lot of wine for the money in this

very swish Cabernet from Agrelo in Mendoza's Luján de Cuyo. It has a deeply flavoured core of dark black cherry and blackcurrant fruit with a creamy mid-palate and plenty of soft-grained tannic structure showing Andean definition and freshness.

**Alc** 13.5%

**8 Rouffignac Lafont, Famille Lafont, Gigondas, Rhône, France 2024**

91 points

£17.50 **Tesco**

Rhône winemaker Julie Rouffignac is the name behind a number of Tesco's best buys, and this Grenache-led blend is most certainly among them. Unoaked, it's an unimpeded expression of spice and garrigue-inflected red fruit which combines concentration with energy and lift.

**Alc** 14.5%

**9 Xanadu, Point Break Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, Western Australia 2023**

90 points

£13 **Tesco**

A lovely expression of high-toned, fully fragrant and almost-sappy-juicy Cabernet Sauvignon, this vibrant Margaret River red smells of ripe cherries and blackcurrants and has a sleek texture and freshness to spare. Impeccable fruit, winemaking and value.

**Alc** 14%

**10 Famille Perrin, L'Oustalet, Ventoux, Rhône, France 2024**

89 points

£9.50 **Tesco**

The prolific Perrin family's version of the Southern Rhône blend in Ventoux is a gloriously vivid and compellingly drinkable blackberry-crumble-scented red. Its deeply dark-fruited with supple tannins and a robust but suave and fresh feel. Really good value.

**Alc** 13%



## THE WINE SOCIETY

**1 Château Cloisot, C de Sec du Château Cloisot, Barsac, Bordeaux, France 2023**  
93 points

£14.95 **The Wine Society**

From a leading Burgundian winemaker (Jean-Marie Guffens) specialising in dry Semillon in a corner of Bordeaux (Barsac) better known for sweet wines, this is outstanding value for a subtly honeyed, rich yet flinty style with an electric burst of cleansing grapefruit juiciness.

**Alc** 13.5%

**2 Christina & Rainer Wess, Tochter & Vater Grüner Veltliner, Niederösterreich, Austria 2024**  
92 points

£12.50 **The Wine Society**

From Tochter & Vater (daughter and father) duo Christina and Rainer Wess, this delightful dry Grüner is just full of the joys of spring: a racy, dancing pleasure to drink with its lipsmacking green apple and riper nectarine flavours.

**Alc** 12%

**3 Undurraga, TH Riesling, San Antonio, Chile 2021**  
92 points

£16 **The Wine Society**

From fruit grown in the cool-climate hot spot of Lo Abarco, a mere 4km from the Pacific in San Antonio, this is a scintillating take on Riesling with a silvery slash of acidity and a hit of lime (tangy juice and fragrant skin) that is just developing a hint of caraway seed complexity.

**Alc** 13%

**4 Virgen del Galir, The Society's Exhibition Valdeorras Godello, Galicia, Spain 2024**  
92 points

£14.50 **The Wine Society**

Virgen del Galir is part of the portfolio owned by Rioja bigwigs CVNE. This excellent value Godello, with its mix of fullness and clarity, certainly lives up to The Wine Society buyer Harriet Kinnimonth's description of 'Spain's answer to white Burgundy', although the classy lemon-curd richness is all the variety's own.

**Alc** 13%

**5 Vignoble du Rêveur, Rien Ne Bouge, Alsace, France 2023**



**94 points**

£22 **The Wine Society**

The Wine Society shows its funky side here with a highly original, hard-to-categorise, but endlessly entertaining biodynamic wine that looks like a light red and is made by macerating Pinot Noir grapes in Gewürztraminer juice. The result is pure delight: juicy strawberry fruit with a gentle floral edge and a racy, pithy, subtly spicy feel.

**Alc** 13.5%

**6 Sakkie Mouton, Dawn of the Salty Tongues Syrah, Olifants River, South Africa 2023**  
95 points

£37 **The Wine Society**

We're not 100% sure the cartoonish labels match the sheer quality and evocative beauty of the wine here, but maybe we're getting old. But what a wine! A sinewy, supple Syrah with silky tannins that combines the prettiness of violets, thyme and lavender with hibiscus and raspberry – and, yes, a coastal saline quality.

**Alc** 13.5%

**7 Elisa Guerin, La Vigne de Mon Père, Moulin-à-Vent, Beaujolais, France 2023**  
94 points

£18 **The Wine Society**

A new vintage rather than a new wine per





se, but this exquisite Moulin-à-Vent was by some distance the most impressive of the three Beaujolais we tasted at The Wine Society recently – a wine of seamless, silk-sheen softness and slinkiness with perfectly ripe, high-definition strawberry and raspberry fruit. **Alc 13.5%**

**8 Clos la Coutale, Grand Coutale, Cahors, Southwest France 2020 93 points**

**£20 The Wine Society**  
Part of The Wine Society's Christmas Fine Wine Collection, this is a very pure, seamless, harmonious style of Malbec, with no rough edges, aged in a mix of mostly neutral oak and concrete.

Delightful black cherry, blueberry and violet flavours and suave tannins. **Alc 14%**

**9 Domaine de la Butte, Pied de la Butte, Bourgueil, Loire, France 2024 92 points**

**£18 The Wine Society**  
The wines of the late Jacky Blot are now made by his no-less talented son, Jean-Phillippe, and they remain among the best in the Loire. This classic Bourgueil Cabernet Franc, with its chalky feel, fresh cassis, graphite and subtle

spice, is as bright, graceful and energetic as you could ask for. **Alc 12.5%**

**10 Domaine de Montvac, Arabesque, Vacqueyras, Rhône, France 2019 92 points**

**£17.50 The Wine Society**  
Made by retired ballerina Cécile Dusserre along with her daughter Amélie, this organic, unoaked Grenache-led blend does have a certain balletic elegance in the context of powerful Vacqueyras, but that elegance is built on the robust strength and muscular power of the fruit, which is layered, dark, earthy and succulent. Very good value. **Alc 14%**

## Crumbled or broken cork? We can help!

One of the most common misconceptions is that the small bits of deteriorated cork in contact with your wine will make it 'corked'.

A crumbled cork doesn't necessarily mean the wine is oxidised or faulty – though do taste it before serving – but it might indicate improper storage. If a bottle is stored vertically for too long in dry conditions, the cork will dry out.

If your cork crumbles or breaks on opening, don't worry. Cover a funnel with a thin cloth and pour the wine into another container, like a decanter. For old or fragile wines, pour carefully and consider filtering directly into the glass.

There is no foolproof way to avoid breaking corks but a two-prong opener (butler's thief) is useful for older wines. If the cork breaks in the bottle, try pushing it in and using a spoon handle while pouring.



## WAITROSE

**1 Roberto Sarotto, Srej Langhe Arneis, Langhe, Piedmont, Italy 2024**

91 points

£18 **Waitrose**

Made from Arneis grown on hillside vines on calcareous clay soils in Nervis near Alba in the Langhe hills, this is an effortlessly graceful, gently mouthfilling dry white with a deliciously pure burst of pear fruit juiciness and a delicately racy, Alpine stream fluency.

**Alc** 13%

**2 d'Arenberg, Dry Dam Riesling, McLaren Vale, South Australia 2024**

90 points

£13 **Waitrose**

A South Australian answer to Germany's Riesling Kabinett (an off-dry style), this light but concentrated Riesling benefits from the power of old, dry-farmed vines which provide the wine with its exhilarating clean-cut limey acidity and juicy white peach and quince length.

**Alc** 10.5%

**3 Cantina Colli Euganei, Fior d'Arancio, Veneto, Italy 2024**

89 points

£10 **Waitrose**

Light in body and alcohol, and light of spirit too, this is a charmingly floral, off-dry white with a graceful spring meadow fragrance of chamomile, jasmine and white blossom and a pretty palate of Muscat grape, ripe melon and a refreshingly breezy citrusy finish.

**Alc** 10.5%

**4 Robert Weil, Waitrose No1 Riesling, Rheinhessen, Germany 2024**

89 points

£12.50 **Waitrose**

Another highlight in the more upmarket No1 range of Waitrose's own-label brands, this again benefits from the work of a respected winery. In this case, fourth-generation winemaker Wilhelm Weil of Robert Weil in Rheinhessen delivers a scintillating dry Riesling with whip-smart citrus acidity and lots of juicy fruit on the tropical end of the spectrum.

**Alc** 11.5%

**5 Babylonstoren, Mourvèdre Rosé, Simonsberg, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2025**

90 points

£18 **Waitrose**

A top-notch Cape take on the classic pale-pink Provence formula, this 100% Mourvèdre has a delicate watercolour-brush of white flowers, graceful fresh acidity and a strawberry and cranberry cordial fruitiness. Delicately concentrated, it's worth the slightly elevated Provence-style entry fee.

**Alc** 13%

**6 Querciabella, Organic, Chianti Classico, Tuscany, Italy 2021**

93 points

£28 **Waitrose**

From one of Chianti's smartest modern addresses, the biodynamically farmed Querciabella, this is a gloriously suave and silky 100% Sangiovese, in which a burst of classic pure Chianti sour cherry fruit is joined by oregano and thyme notes and super-supple tannins into a long and savoury finish.

**Alc** 14%





**7 Bodega Norton, Malbec Reserva, Agrelo, Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina 2024**  
91 points

£17.50

**Waitrose**

Another excellent buy on the £10 Fine Wine Christmas offer, the reliable Bodegas Norton here offers a richer, more structured interpretation of Mendoza Malbec, with deeper, darker but still vibrant black cherry and dark plummy fruit, dark chocolatey tannins and a shading of savoury oak.

**Alc** 14.5%

**8 Domaine Boutinot, Réserve des Hospatiliers, Cairanne, Rhône, France 2024**  
90 points

£14 **Waitrose**

UK importers Boutinot have long been dab hands in the Rhône, a position helped by having their own vineyards in the Southern Rhône appellation of Cairanne, the source of this robust but smoothly charming winter-warming Grenache-led blend, with its blueberry and blackberry fruit given lift by perfumed lavender and its palate finishing with a dusting of peppery spice.

**Alc** 14.2%

**9 Louis Jadot, Quincié, Beaujolais Villages, France 2024**  
90 points

£15.45 **Waitrose**

Made from Gamay grown around the village of Quincié, this is one of Waitrose's £10 Fine Wine Christmas offer bottles. And, at that price, it's an exceptionally attractive buy: juicy, with classic Beaujolais cherry-berry flavours and a smattering of fine chalky tannin and sappy acidity.

**Alc** 12.5%

**10 Bodegas Ignacio Marín, Waitrose Blueprint Old Vine Garnacha, Cariñena, Aragón, Spain 2023**  
88 points

£7 **Waitrose**

Northern Spain's vast swathes of old Garnacha bush vines are consistently the source of some of the high street's best-value reds, and this example, based on 30 to 50-year-old vines from Cariñena in Aragón, is certainly one such: a big, bright hit of berry fruit and sweet paprika with easy-on-the-tongue tannins.

**Alc** 13.5%





# Best high-street Champagnes

Over the festive season, there's nothing like the pop of Champagne to mark the celebration, whether it's for a special party, a classy pairing at the Christmas meal itself, or to toast in the new year. From our extensive tastings, we've picked out 20 of the best Champagnes to seek out from UK supermarkets as well as selected online and national retailers.





**1 Co-op, Les Pionniers Brut, Champagne, France 2013**

**94 points**

£33.50 **Co-op**

From Piper Heidsieck, the Les Pionniers Champagnes have long been a standout of both Co-op's range and supermarket own-label Champagnes. The latest mature Vintage bottling – there is also a non-vintage (NV) cuvée – remains a considerable class apart – combining gorgeous, yeasty patisserie richness with a still-electrifying swish and cut of fine acidity and detailed pointillist mousse.

**Alc 12%**

**2 Ayala, Brut Majeur, Champagne, France NV**

**93 points**

£38 **Waitrose**

As direct and to-the-point as ever, this dry and tinglingly fresh Chardonnay-led (55%) Champagne embodies the pristine Ayala house style and offers very fine value with its apple, pear and riper stone fruit flavours, with just a hint of nutty-biscuity richness. Delicious!

**Alc 12.5%**

**3 Louis Roederer, Brut, Champagne, France 2016**

**93 points**

£70 **The Wine Society**

An absolute cracker! Made with all three Champagne grapes, it's expressive, rich and textured, yet remarkably elegant. Layers of red apple skin, plum and apricot are balanced by baking spice, a hint of smoke and a cool mineral core. In the glass, it reveals increasing nuance over time, making it a fabulously complex wine to linger

over throughout the festive meal.

**Alc 12.5%**

**4 Telmont, Réserve Brut, Champagne, France NV**

**92 points**

£56 **Waitrose**

Character and integrity in a Champagne that, having spent three years on lees, is moreish and opulent while retaining zesty freshness. Creamy, soft, persistent mousse, then yellow apple, ripe peach, buttered toast and frangipane fill the palate, topped with fragrant vanilla, apple blossom, jasmine and star anise. Finishes with a lively twist of lemon curd and grapefruit zest.

**Alc 12%**

**5 Charles Lafitte, Grande Cuvée Brut, Champagne, France NV**

**91 points**

£46.50 **Ocado**

Exclusive to this online supermarket, this is mouthfilling and elegant, with attractively mellow spicy red apple fruit. Slightly honeyed and subtly smoky, it lingers on the finish. An ideal choice for sipping on Christmas morning with smoked salmon blinis.

**Alc 12.5%**

**6 Henri Chauvet, Blanc de Noirs Brut, Montagne de Reims, Champagne, France NV**

**91 points**

£30 **Private Cellar**

This Pinot Noir and Meunier blend feels very true to the red grapes of Rilly-la-Montagne on the Montagne de Reims. It is crisply and carefully made, with notes of dried apple, plum



## HIGH-STREET CHAMPAGNE

and fresh strawberry before a nutty, peppery finish. There's both breadth and freshness in this straightforward but very recommendable grower cuvée.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 7 Henriot, Souverain Brut, Champagne, France NV 91 points

£35 **The Wine Society**

Offers a lot of complexity from lees-ageing and reserve wines for the price, making it an excellent buy. There's a sophisticated, complex note of baked citrus, sourdough and fresh nuts over precise stone fruit from the Pinot Noir, backed up by plenty of zesty Chardonnay. Layered, persistent and fine, it's a model non-vintage.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 8 Marks & Spencer, Collection Tradition Premier Cru Brut, Champagne, France NV 91 points

£28 **Ocado**

The Union Champagne co-op, operating here under the name De Saint-Gall, turns out a svelte, sophisticated style for M&S, with some reductively styled matchstick notes over sleek, sweet, citrus, nectarine and gentle toasty nougat richness. Easy, silky and refined for the price, this is a very smart Chardonnay-led aperitif style.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 9 Marks & Spencer, Delacourt Brut, Champagne, France NV 91 points

£25 **Ocado**

The M&S Delacourt Champagnes are a dependable choice for any celebration. This Brut includes 40% of reserve wines, adding depth and complexity to its 2020 base. Crisp and fresh, with lively lemon and grapefruit citrus, rounded out by stone fruit, honey and nuts, with brisk acidity and lovely honeyed toast notes.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 10 Waitrose, Blanc de Noirs Brut, Côte de Bars, Champagne, France NV 91 points

£28 **Waitrose**

This is all about true-to-type, cleanly presented Pinot Noir fruit rather than anything heavily biscuity, creamy or showy. Juicy and friendly, with red apple, brown pastry and a little cut of bitter orange, it's balanced and moreish.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 11 Piper-Heidsieck, Cuvée Brut, Champagne, France NV 90 points

£27 **Waitrose Cellar**

Piper-Heidsieck shoots for plenty of Pinot Noir-forward fruit, and this succeeds with fresh strawberry, caramel and lemon peel ease, the palate lined with a plush digestive biscuit richness that sits nicely with just enough freshness and precision. One of the most reliable grandes marques at this level.

**Alc** 12%

### 12 Tesco, Finest Premier Cru Brut, Champagne, France NV 90 points

£26 **Tesco**

The Union Champagne co-op makes Tesco a consistent performer among own-label wines. This carefully made, Chardonnay-forward brut is accordingly delicate and neat with sweet almond, bright tangerine and cooked apricot flavours. Gently creamy and smooth.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 13 The Wine Society, The Society's Brut, Champagne, France NV 90 points

£34 **The Wine Society**

The Wine Society's popular own-label Champagne is made by Alfred Gratien, with oak fermentation bringing a generous, expressive warmth to the wine. Apple tart, walnut and a little orange citrus Chardonnay brightness characterise this open, appealing style.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 14 Waitrose, No1 Special Reserve Brut, Champagne, France 2018 90 points

£39 **Waitrose**

Castelnau has turned out a successful 2018 vintage for Waitrose here, with the hot year's broad and sweet-fruited palate thrown into focus by some smart, stylish aromatics. Nectarines, cream and lemon curd on toast lend this a sense of sophistication at the price. Very easy.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 15 Veuve Monsigny, Premier Cru Brut, Champagne, France NV 90 points

£23 **Aldi**

Crisper and more precise than its Veuve



Monsigny Brut partner (*below*), this Pinot Noir-led premier cru is not quite so eye-catching in terms of price, but it is very elegant, with a tingle of pure-lemon acidity and lovely oatcake savouriness.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 16 Veuve Olivier, Secret de Cave Brut, Champagne, France NV 90 points

£27.96 **Asda**

A mere dash (3%) of oaked reserve wines and a healthy 18 months' ageing in bottle contribute to the buttered toast and brioche richness of this cut-above sub-£30 Champagne, with its lemon-meringue pie flavours and pithy finish.

**Alc** 12%

### 17 Champenoise des Grands Vins, Asda Extra Special Louis Bernard Brut, Champagne, France 2018 89 points

£27.98 **Asda**

The latest vintage of Asda's generally reliable cut-price Vintage bottling (rollback price is currently £25) has an attractive toasted brioche and honeyed nuts richness on the nose, leaning into a sweetly candied palate with an apple and lemon finish.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 18 Veuve Monsigny, Brut, Champagne, France NV 89 points

£15 **Aldi**

There's been no shortage of hype around Aldi's budget Champagne over the years,



and there's no drop in quality in the latest iteration either, which continues to offer remarkable levels of rich apple pie, honey and lemony freshness that belie its modest price.

**Alc** 12.5%

**19 Alfred Gratien, The Society's Rosé Brut, Champagne, France NV**  
92 points

£39.31 **The Wine Society**

A soft, slightly unctuous Champagne, with a moreish weight on the mid-palate. The cranberry, strawberry and cherry fruit are covered with a thin honeyed glaze, while also lifted by zesty pink citrus and red apple crispiness. Creamy mousse adds to the inviting immediacy and food-friendliness. A versatile and crowd-pleasing choice for the festive season. It will work perfectly as an aperitif, alongside seafood, canapes and charcuterie or with the main meal.

**Alc** 12.5%

**20 Marks & Spencer, Delacourt Rosé Brut, Champagne, France NV**  
89 points

£27 **Marks & Spencer**

Pinot Meunier takes top billing here, comprising just under half the blend, supported by both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. It makes for a ripely red-fruited style, the raspberry and cherry taking on a slightly candied edge before the hibiscus- and cranberry-tea freshness and tang joins on the finish.

**Alc** 12.5%



## Open a bottle of sparkling wine like a pro

Using a knife or sword to sabre your bottle of fizz open is a flamboyant option, but to avoid a trip to A&E this festive season, follow our simple tips.

First, remove the foil and then untwist the wire cage to loosen it. But don't remove the cage – keep your thumb on the cage top to prevent the cork from popping out.

Then, while tilting the bottle away from you and others, hold the cork firmly with one hand while twisting the bottle from its base with the other. Three turns of the bottle should result in the cork escaping with a gentle hiss.

# Best Champagnes beyond the high street

Leading online retailers, merchants and local independents have a great selection of Champagnes – from the familiar big houses (grandes marques) to smaller grower wines that are well worth knowing about. From our huge database of tasting notes on Decanter.com, we've selected 10 great examples for you to try.



**1 Huré Frères, Invitation Brut, Champagne, France NV**  
92 points

£50 **Forest Wines**  
Yuzu, fennel and buttered toast aromas up front – overall a sense of steely minerality comes through. On the palate there's plenty of bright citrus and just-ripe

white peach. Lively, fine bubbles and subtle brioche and biscuit complexity.  
**Alc** 12%

**2 Louis Roederer, Collection 246, Champagne, France MV**  
92 points

£49.95 **Cheers Wine Merchants**  
Roederer's multi-vintage, multi-regional blend is named for its 246th harvest, and that experience is notable here. Subtly complex, this elegant Champagne combines delicately balanced notes of apple blossom, spiced pear, citrus peel and brioche with a light, chalky mouthfeel.  
**Alc** 12.5%

**3 Valentin Leflaive, Blanc de Blancs CV1830 Extra Brut, Champagne, France NV**  
92 points

£50 **Ellis Wharton**  
Part of the stable of Burgundy's Olivier Leflaive and named after his son, this Champagne wears its pedigree proudly. A blend of both Grand Cru and Premier Cru fruit, this rich, golden sparkling delivers layers of spiced apple crumble, toasted hazelnut and ripe peach over a refreshing, lemon-cream tang and kick of ginger on the finish. Fabulously full-throttle.  
**Alc** 12.5%

**4 Berry Bros & Rudd, Grand Cru Brut, Montagne de Reims, Champagne, France NV**  
91 points

£37 **Berry Bros & Rudd**

Made by the Mailly Grand Cru cooperative, this is a perennial performer for those who like Pinot-heavy breadth. Blackberry, dark honey and roasted nut richness meet a relatively firm, structured palate in a food-friendly, well-priced and polished Champagne with some age and complexity.

**Alc** 12%

**5 Michel Arnould, Observation Grand Cru Brut, Montagne de Reims, Champagne, France NV**  
91 points

£35 **Tanners**  
It's quite rare to find good grower Champagne at this price, but this is a very convincing example. Based on Pinot Noir from the grand cru village of Verzenay, it's persistent, pure and bright, with tangy yellow apple, clementine and apricot fruit, and a gentle, chalky firmness. Precise and pure – and excellent value.

**Alc** 12%

**6 Ayala, Brut Nature, Champagne, France NV**  
90 points

£38 **The Champagne Company**  
Ayala's Brut Nature is the same base wine as its Brut Majeur (see *Best High-Street Champagnes*), yet with four instead of three years on the lees and with zero dosage. It's pure and fresh, with clean citrus threaded throughout. A crisp, stony wine with subtle hints of toasty complexity. Great value.

**Alc** 12.5%

**7 Champagne Gallimard Père et Fils, Cuvée Prestige Brut, Champagne, France 2017**  
90 points

£44.75 **The Good Wine Shop**

This concentrated, gently oxidative vintage Champagne reveals its maturity through a delicate, rose-gold hue and richly layered complexity. Aromas and flavours of white flowers and tarte tatin with a twist of lemon are carried by a fine, creamy mousse. Beautifully balanced and drinking at its peak. Best enjoyed soon.

**Alc** 12%

**8 Henri Chauvet, Réserve Brut, Montagne de Reims, Champagne, France NV**  
90 points

£35 **Private Cellar**

A second recommendation from this grower on the Montagne de Reims (see *Best High-Street Champagnes*) comes in the form of a blend, with roasted apple, bright pear and fine strawberry-scented Pinot quality backed up with Chardonnay elegance. True, balanced and convincing, there's fine value to be found here.

**Alc** 12.5%

**9 Guy de Forez, Les Riceys Blanc de Noirs Tradition Brut, Côte des Bar, Champagne, France NV**  
89 points

£38 **The Whisky Exchange**

An unusual find, this grower Pinot Noir from Les Riceys in the Côte des Bar pours a pale pink, as the Blancs de Noirs from this region often do. It's a lot of fun for the price: fleshy, juicy and succulent with plenty of strawberry and pearly fruitiness and a little apple skin grip. Light-hearted and enjoyable.

**Alc** 12.5%

**10 Lay & Wheeler, Brut, Champagne, France NV**  
89 points

£22 **Lay & Wheeler**

Thiénot produces this rich, toasty style for Lay & Wheeler, with some melted butter and toffee-like notes over grapefruit marmalade Chardonnay and some sweet apple fruit. There's still refreshment value, though. A good find for fans of easygoing, approachable styles.

**Alc** 12%



# Best high-street alternatives to Champagne



## HIGH-STREET CHAMPAGNE ALTERNATIVES



From Prosecco to Crémant, Cava to English sparkling, plus the gamut of New World fizz – there’s a world of excellent and fascinating bubbly out there to choose from, as our expert selection of 20 eclectic wines proves. And discover even more on [Decanter.com](https://www.decanter.com)...

**1** **Domaine Boxler, Crémant d’Alsace, France 2020**  
92 points

£25 **The Wine Society**

The pristine house style of Domaine Boxler’s often-exquisite still wines translates well into the production of fizz, with this blend of 50% Pinot Blanc, 30% Pinot Noir and 20% Auxerrois delivering a luminous apple- and pear-juicy wine full of tangy energy and mineral refreshment.  
**Alc** 12.5%

**2** **Simonsig, The Society’s Exhibition, Méthode Cap Classique, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2023**  
92 points

£12.95 **The Wine Society**

Made by a (the) pioneer of South African traditional-method sparkling wine, Simonsig, this is outstanding value and easily the equal, or more, of many a pricier Champagne or Crémant. Chardonnay leads the way in a blend of the trad

Champagne trio, for a wine of elegance, fruit purity and fine, lacy mousse.  
**Alc** 11.5%

**3** **Asquith Gardens, Traditional Brut, England NV**  
91 points

£18 **Asda**

The cat is long out of the bag regarding the previously enigmatic producer behind this and many other own-label English sparkling wines, with Rolling Green Hills being a *nom de guerre* for Nyetimber’s declassified production. This is one of the best: with 10 years of age behind the 2015 vintage base, there’s a mix of fresh and baked apples and toasty intensity with the nervy English acid hallmark still very much to the fore.  
**Alc** 11.5%

**4** **EH Booth & Co, Brut, East Sussex, England NV**  
91 points

£24 **Booths**

Booths’ house English sparkler is made by one of England’s original ‘grandes marques’, Ridgeview in East Sussex, and it’s a typically bright and balanced take on the classic trad-method sparkling, with crème pâtissière and super-clean, invigorating lemon and red apple.  
**Alc** 12%

**5** **Leckford Estate, Blanc de Blancs, Hampshire, England NV**  
91 points

£35 **Waitrose**

The vines at Waitrose’s own vineyard at Leckford Estate in Hampshire are maturing nicely, and so has the Chardonnay in this classy blanc de blancs, based on the 2015 vintage and now offers a deeply satisfying mix of tingly, nervy, green apple acidity and almond croissant richness.  
**Alc** 12%

**6** **Simpsons White Cliffs Blanc de Blancs, Kent, England 2019**  
91 points

£40 **Tesco**

This impeccable 100% Chardonnay Kentish fizz builds a delightful mix of rich key-lime pie, lemon meringue and ripe orchard fruit flavours around an intricate framework of classically English nerves-of-steel acidity and a delicate mousse.  
**Alc** 11.5%

**7 Marks & Spencer, Etoile de Timberlay Crémant de Bordeaux Brut, France NV**

90 points

£10 Ocado

French crémants are a wallet-friendly alternative to Champagne – and this one from Bordeaux is a real crowd-pleaser. A blend of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Semillon, it has appealing toasty aromas of lemon tart, red apple and croissant, with a lively mousse. Airy and lifted citrus palate, with honeyed tones adding complexity and creaminess.

**Alc** 12.5%

**8 Chassaux et Fils, Specially Selected, Crémant de Loire, France NV**

89 points

£9 Aldi

A strong contender for best-value supermarket fizz, this blend of Chenin, Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay has an airy, fresh feel and a mouthwateringly chalky texture, with the ripe quince and red apple flavours poised between sweet and the pleasingly tart.

**Alc** 12%

**9 Gratien & Meyer, The Society's Saumur Brut, Loire, France NV**

89 points

£10.76 The Wine Society

Traditional method sparkling doesn't get better value than this. Produced by Gratien & Meyer for The Wine Society and aged 15 months on the lees, this fills the mouth with crunchy pink orchard fruit, lively citrus and juicy cantaloupe melon. A rim of oyster shell salinity adds texture and depth.

**Alc** 12%

**10 Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference Crémant de Limoux, Rhône, France NV**

89 points

£12 Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's Languedoc favourite Jean-Claude Mas turns his multi-talented hands to bottle-fermented fizz for this excellent-value, Chardonnay-led blend with Pinot Noir and the local Mauzac from Limoux in the Pyrenean foothills. A Christmas-ready celebrant with real

depth of flavour in a creamy-lemony style.  
**Alc** 12%

**11 Zuccardi, Pet Nat Phos Alma 4, Mendoza, Argentina 2025**

89 points

£12 Tesco

Tesco's range can be quite funky in places, with orange wines, Greek wines and, in this case, the trendy sparkling category of Pét-Nat, all getting a space on the shelf. From the relentlessly creative Zuccardi, this is a great introduction to this style of fizz: an explosively fresh, zesty, dry style that is alive with bright pear and pithy citrus fun.

**Alc** 12.5%

**12 Aldi, Specially Selected, Crémant du Jura, France 2022**

88 points

£11 Aldi

Another of this supermarket's long-running sparkling favourites, this stylish 100% Chardonnay fizz is rich in buttery biscuit and fresh-cut green apple flavours, with a creamy mousse carried by tangy acidity, all leading to a long, savoury dry finish.

**Alc** 11.5%

**13 Asda, Exceptional, Prosecco, Veneto, Italy NV**

88 points

£7.52 Asda

Always one of the best supermarket Proseccos for the money, this elegantly easy-drinking fizz offers fresh apples, pears and floral tones, with a delicate wash of gently insistent acidity and a soft, cream soda-foaming mousse.

**Alc** 10.5%



**14 Marks & Spencer, Finca Miguel Cava Brut, Catalonia, Spain NV**  
88 points

£7.50 **Ocado**

It's understandable that Cava producers chafe against the cheap and cheerful tag, but they can't deny making some very good-value fizz. This classic blend of Cava's traditional grape trio, with its intensely tangy, lime-on-toast character, is a case in point.

**Alc 11%**

**15 Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference Cava Brut, Catalonia, Spain NV**  
88 points

£8.75 **Sainsbury's**

It may not hail from Cava's Penedès heartland, but this fizz from Castillo Perelada in Empordà is a brilliantly characterful, superb-value traditional-method sparkling wine, with a rich fruit-driven mix of lime and ripe peach, softly mouthfilling bubbles and a gently toasty finish.

**Alc 11%**

**16 Marks & Spencer, Rockferne Rosé, Sussex, England 2019**  
93 points

£30 **Ocado**

One of a pair of very fine English sparklers made for M&S by leading Sussex producer Roebuck Estates (the Rockferne Sparkling Brut, £28, 92 points, is also worth your attention). This rosé has a delicate pink colour and rich, ripe summer berry-crumble flavours shot through with real verve and tension.

**Alc 12%**

**17 Bird In Hand, Sparkling, South Australia 2025**  
89 points

£16 **Waitrose**

Made using the Charmat method with the second, fizz-giving fermentation in tank, this delightfully fruit-forward pink fizz really comes into its own at the £10 Fine Wine Christmas promo price. With its soft, candied raspberry, cherry and burst of cranberry it's a fun, festive party choice.

**Alc 12%**

**18 Graham Beck, Vintner's Selection Brut Rosé, Western Cape, South Africa NV**  
89 points

£13.75 **Tesco**

An excellent value new Tesco addition from an old South African sparkling wine hand, this 52% Pinot Noir, 48%

Chardonnay blend is as ever expertly done, with the 18 months' lees aging bringing a toasty heft to the refreshing strawberry cordial fruit and bright, pithy lemony finish.

**Alc 12%**

**19 Sieur d'Arques, Morrisons, The Best Crémant de Limoux Rosé, Languedoc-Roussillon, France NV**  
89 points

£12.75 **Morrisons**

Made for Morrisons by the reliable Limoux sparkling house Sieur d'Arques, this is excellent value for an accessible all-rounder of a pink fizz, with a creamy, mousse that tastes of candied cherries, strawberries and sweet red apples, and finishes with a spritz of zesty citrus acidity.

**Alc 13%**

**20 Araldica, Moscato d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy 2024**  
89 points

£9 **Majestic**

Just the ticket as a lighter alcohol way to end a meal with a flash of sweetness, this is a good-value take on the gently sparkling, joyously fruity Piemontese favourite, which tastes of Muscat grapes, peaches and spring blossom.

**Alc 5%**



# Best Champagne alternatives beyond the high street

Crack open the bubbly to add some fizz to your festivities. Online and independent retailers have a great selection of English sparkling, Crémant and more to suit any occasion. Here are 10 top picks from the Decanter.com database to try.

**1 Sugrue South Downs, The Trouble with Dreams, Sussex, England 2020**  
95 points

£49 [Swig.co.uk](http://Swig.co.uk)

Pronounced baked apple, quince, lemon biscuit and brioche aromas with chalky salinity. Exhilarating acidity and sumptuous creamy texture from extended lees ageing. Energetic, fresh, precise and dry. A truly elite sparkling wine from winemaker Dermot Sugrue, whose 2009 vintage won Best in Show at the 2025 Decanter World Wine Awards.

**Alc 12%**

**2 Furleigh Estate, Classic Cuvée Brut, Dorset, England 2019**  
91 points

£36 [The Good Wine Shop](http://The Good Wine Shop)

The vines at Dorset's Furleigh Estate are now hitting their stride as this exuberant sparkling wine demonstrates, despite a cooler vintage. Ripe juicy pear and orchard fruit mingle with hints of brioche and almond on the palate, which is fleshy and tangy with an appealing chalky finish. A very characterful and accessible English sparkler.

**Alc 12%**

**3 Hunter's, MiruMiru Reserve, Marlborough, New Zealand 2019**  
91 points

£29.95 [Jeroboams](http://Jeroboams)

With 15 months on lees, there's a light creaminess and richness to this Kiwi sparkling which brings width and magnitude to the wine in the mouth. It leans into yeasty, toasty notes and treads along warm citrus lines, like lemons and grapefruits warmed in the sun. Something a bit different to try!

**Alc 12%**

**4 Weingut Bründlmayer, Sekt Brut Reserve, Kamptal, Niederösterreich, Austria NV**  
91 points

£39 [Vino Gusto](http://Vino Gusto)

From one of Austria's most revered estates, this intriguingly offbeat sparkler is a blend of everything from Pinot Noir to Grüner Veltliner. Subtle and sophisticated, it displays notes of tangy rhubarb and red apple along with yellow plum and a whisper of pastry, all tied together by a delicate saline finish and





the signature Bründlmayer poise.  
**Alc** 12%

**5 Domäne Bruno Sorg, Classic Cuvée Brut, Crémant d'Alsace, France NV**  
**90 points**

£21.99 **The Wine Library**

This easy-drinking, generously flavoured Crémant comes from a modern estate in Eguisheim. A blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris, it opens with aromas of baked pear and ripe melon, followed by delicate pastry notes and a sprinkle of sea salt. Mouthfilling, moreish and finely balanced, it's a lovely sparkling with easy-going charm.

**Alc** 12%

**6 Domäne Jean Sipp, Crémant d'Alsace, Alsace, France NV**  
**90 points**

£20 **Jeroboams**

A characterful and easy-to-understand Crémant d'Alsace which has a petal-soft mousse and a creamy honey character, there's sweetness to the palate that keeps you coming back for more and doesn't verge into cloying.

**Alc** 12.5%

**7 Reichsrat Von Buhl, Riesling Brut, Pfalz, Germany 2020**  
**90 points**

£17.25 **Hic Wines**

Reichsrat von Buhl is known for a slightly richer, more textural and brioche-like style of sparkling and this Riesling is a wonderful example. Add notes of sliced green apple, candied lime peel and a squeeze of lemon to its perfectly poised acidity and you have a wine that truly outperforms its price tag.

**Alc** 12%

**8 Robert Oatley, Wildflower Brut Cuvée, Western Australia NV**  
**90 points**

£13.25 **York Wines**

Named for the 12,000 species of wildflowers found around Pemberton and Margaret River in where these grapes are sourced, this carbonated sparkling is designed to provide excellent value without sacrificing quality – and it does just that. Rich and leesy, with notes of ripe peach, baked apple and toasted nuts, it's all balanced up by a refreshing citrus core. Great value for the price.

**Alc** 12%

**9 Wiston Estate, Rosé, West Sussex, England 2018**  
**94 points**

£54 **Wiston Estate**

A pink that's almost violet blue-tinged in colour, this shows aromas of maraschino cherry and sweet spice, which lead to deeper red berry fruits and more red cherry, with a touch of ginger zing. The palate shows red apple and cream, with toasty, textured layers and a long, festive finish – perfect for a celebratory toast.

**Alc** 12%

**10 Domäne Sérol, Turbulent Champs Libres Rosé, Vin de France NV**  
**92 points**

£21 **Tivoli Wines**

What a joyous, life-giving wine! From one of the best producers in the Loire Volcanique, this is a vibrant, fizzy, juicy and fun pét-nat with flavours of plum, little pink flowers, blackberry and elderberry. Smooth and creamy mousse brings floods of flavour. It's made from Gamay and, as it's only 11% alcohol, it's the perfect pick-me-up – perhaps one to consider for New Year's Day?

**Alc** 11%



# The Decanter Christmas food & wine pairing guide

Serving what you like drinking with what you like eating is the simplest and best food and wine pairing advice, especially at Christmas. While there are no right or wrong matches, it is true that one or more properties of a wine (sweetness, acidity, tannins, maturation vessel, fruit profile, bottle age...) will lend themselves better to some dishes than others, making the whole dining experience even more pleasurable. We've recommended a few of our favourite wine styles for classic festive fare for you to explore.



## TOP WINES FOR TURKEY

The traditional choice for Christmas, turkey's low fat content means it can dry out during cooking. And the fact it is not a very strong meat means that, when picking wine, you also have to consider the diverse flavours of the accompaniments, from sweet cranberry sauce, sharp red cabbage and slightly bitter Brussels sprouts. Delicious wine matches with roast turkey include relatively full-bodied whites, like oaked Chardonnays, or medium-bodied reds with low-to-medium tannins, such as Pinot Noir or Gamay. Turkey's lack of fat means there is little to dampen down mouth-coating tannins associated with some younger, bolder red wines, which is why a few years of bottle age can change the picture – a mature Barolo, Bordeaux or Gran Reserva Rioja are great options. *From our huge database of wines we've picked out five available from UK merchants we think are perfect pairings. But discover more on the other pages of this guide and on Decanter.com.*



### 1 **Domaine Joseph Drouhin, Chassagne-Montrachet, Burgundy, France 2022** 94 points

£65 **Booths**

Booths' clearly has a clientele that is prepared to spend on fine wines if they genuinely match that description, and Drouhin's classy, cellar-worthy but currently *à point* white Burgundy certainly does that – a wine of burgeoning richness and oatmeally substance but with a bright, steely swish of fresh fruit and lively acidity.

**Alc** 13.5%

### 2 **La Rioja Alta, Finca Martelo, Rioja Reserva, Spain 2019** 94 points

£30 **Majestic**

Elegance defines this richly expressive, silky Rioja from Torre de Oña's 60-year-old vines. Complex and inviting, the nose is layered with red fruits, sweet spice and

a touch of vanilla leading to notes of pastry, biscuit and liquorice, while the palate offers generous flavours of wild strawberry, cherry and redcurrant wrapped in silky tannins. Full-bodied yet remarkably fresh, this is a wine of great character and finesse.

**Alc** 14.5%

### 3 **Château des Jacques, Roches Rouges, Moulin-à-Vent, Beaujolais, France 2022** 92 points

£20 **Waitrose**

This is Beaujolais in more serious mode from an estate in the Moulin-à-Vent cru that has been part of Burgundy bigwig Louis Jadot's holdings for almost 30 years now. It's structured and savoury, with fine-grained tannins, complex spice-seasoned red and black berries, and a long, refined, redcurrant-racy finish.

**Alc** 13.5%

### 4 **Château de Francs, Francs Côtes de Bordeaux, France 2018** 91 points

£16 **Majestic**

A ripely accessible and still – at eight years old – fruit-driven, Merlot-led claret that is generous with its high-toned blueberry and black cherry fruit and smoothly polished tannins. Excellent value on the mixed-six price of £14.

**Alc** 14.5%

### 5 **Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference, Barbera d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy 2022** 89 points

£9.50 **Sainsbury's**

Well-made by the stalwart Piedmont co-op Araldica, this is a typically robust but brightly refreshing take on Barbera, with a winter-warming serving of ripe dark plummy fruit and chocolate, contrasted with cherry-skin and tomato tang.

**Alc** 14.5%



## BRILLIANT WINES FOR BEEF

It's hard to beat a delicious red with the Christmas roast beef. Classic fuller-bodied Bordeaux or Napa Cabs, hearty Rhônes or Australian Shiraz, are go-to wines that can match beef's flavour intensity. Gravy is the usual accompaniment for beef, so choosing one of these bold wine styles with some age will match the savoury umami-laden sauce. Beef served rare or pink may not need such a big wine, so also consider a fresher Malbec. Wines that have a refreshing dose of acidity, like Barolo, will help cut through the rich meat and range of trimmings – but pick a mature one, where several years of ageing has softened and integrated the tannins. And not everyone likes red wine, so you might also consider serving a rich, barrel-aged white, such as white Burgundy or Viognier. *From our huge database of wines we've picked out five available from UK merchants we think are perfect pairings. But discover more on the other pages of this guide and on Decanter.com.*



### 1 Penfolds, Bin 8 Cabernet-Shiraz, South Australia 2023 92 points

£26 Sainsbury's

With its perfectly ripe, deeply satisfying dark berries and currants, its dusting of cocoa-powder (in both the flavour and the texture of the tannins) and its sprinkle of spice, this is an effortlessly suave, polished and appealing red from one of the original masters of that true Aussie original style, the Shiraz-Cabernet blend. **Alc** 14.5%

### 2 Chateau Bel Air Gloria, Cru Bourgeois Supérieur, Haut-Médoc, Bordeaux, France 2019 91 points

£17.50 Co-op

One of a pair of clarets from the excellent 2019 vintage in the current Co-op line-up, this doesn't have quite the same class or intensity as the Château Beau-Site, yet it remains a very enjoyable, Christmas-

ready red, with ripe, high-toned cassis- and-blueberry fruit, some deftly managed oak and plenty of freshness on the finish. **Alc** 13.5%

### 3 Paul Jaboulet Aîné, Crozes-Hermitage, Rhône, France 2023 91 points

£18 Tesco

A classic drinking-now, beef-ready Crozes from this leading Northern Rhône house. This pure Syrah is highly drinkable, boasting structure from sinewy-supple tannins, flesh from dark raspberry and blackberry fruit and spice from pepper-seasoned black olive savouriness.

**Alc** 13%

### 4 Domaine Bousquet, Finca Lalande Organic Malbec, Uco Valley, Mendoza, Argentina 2024 90 points

£12 Waitrose

From committed organic Mendoza

producer Domaine Bousquet, this is Argentine Malbec in its pretty, floral-fragrant, unoaked guise. A splash of perfectly ripe black cherry and berry and subtle lavender and rosemary in a fleshy-plump palate with just enough dusky tannin to keep it red meat-friendly. **Alc** 14%

### 5 Delicato Family Vineyard, Morrisons The Best Block Series 010 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California, USA 2023 89 points

£25 Morrisons

The most expensive of Morrisons' latest tranche of Block Series wines, this is nonetheless pretty good value in the context of this often-pricey genre of red wine, and it certainly delivers on the sweetly ripe dark blackcurrant and black cherry jam fruit with a careful dose of mocha oak and polished tannins.

**Alc** 14.5%

## REMARKABLE WINES FOR ROAST HAM

Most Christmas ham comes with a sweet glaze, and that's the main factor to consider with wine pairing, particularly when the ham is served hot. (For cold leftovers, a Gamay or a young Pinot are ideal – wines that would taste sharp and weedy with the same ham served hot.) Many glazes have an orange or marmalade component that works well with fruity reds like Syrah/Shiraz or GSM blends from the Rhône or beyond, maybe with bottle age. If there's heat and spice as well as the sweet, as with glazes or rubs that use mustard, look to Zinfandel or Pinotage, which also work with hams cooked in cola or with a treacle glaze. A less sweet ham? Consider Amarone. For a white option, perhaps with the classic ham and pineapple, try mature Semillon, old-vine Chenin Blanc, a rich Viognier or even Gewürztraminer. *From our huge database of wines we've picked out five available from UK merchants we think are perfect pairings. But discover more on the other pages of this guide and on Decanter.com.*

**1 Pringle Bay, Chenin Blanc, Swartland, South Africa 2025**  
89 points

£11 Majestic

The price has crept up a little since we last tasted this Swartland Chenin by star winemakers Duncan Savage and Thys Louw but, then again, which wines haven't over the past 12 months? This remains a delicious expression of Cape Chenin tanginess. It's a tropical-fruited unoaked style with just the right moreish levels of fruit brightness and tension.

Alc 12.5%

**2 Camins 2 Dreams, Yilá Red, Santa Barbara County, California, USA 2023**

93 points

£22 The Wine Society

Carignan leads the way in this multi-varietal blend from an exciting, low-intervention small producer. Very much in

a light and juicy mode, it combines easy-drinking refreshment with fruit-led complexity. It boasts a blood-orange citrusy quality and a just-picked, just-ripe blackberry crunch.

Alc 13%

**3 Château Capitoul, Languedoc-Roussillon, France 2022**  
90 points

£9.25 Co-op

A briary, brambly red of nicely modulated ripeness, this Languedoc blend of Grenache, Syrah and Carignan offers liquorice and cinnamon seasonal spicing to complement its supple tannins and dark fruit. At 13% alcohol, it's a winter-warmer but by no means a bruiser.

Alc 13%

**4 Château de Pizay, Régnié, Beaujolais, France 2023**  
89 points

£16 Majestic

From the warm and generous 2023 vintage, this is a boldly ripe, fruit-driven, unoaked take on Gamay from the Régnié cru, with an attractive core of raspberry compote, slightly candied strawberry and a supple, sunny, easygoing glugability. Ideal with the cold Boxing Day ham.

Alc 13.5%

**5 Chassaux et Fils, Specially Selected, Costières de Nîmes, Rhône, France 2024**

88 points

£7 Aldi

A long-term favourite in the Aldi range, this spicy blend from the corner of southern France where the Rhône segues into the Languedoc is a sound budget buy to match with festive fare: supple, lively liquorice-inflected blackberry and a sprinkling of pepper.

Alc 13.5%



## GREAT WINES FOR GOOSE OR DUCK

A roast duck or goose will give you a richer Christmas dinner feast compared to turkey. And for that, you'll need to choose a medium-bodied wine with relatively high acidity to cut through the fat content of these game birds, but also with enough juicy fruit concentration to match the flavour intensity of the dark meat. Pinot Noir is a classic red wine pairing, but also consider Mencía from Spain's Galicia region or Barbera from Italy. Depending on the sauce and stuffing, Mourvèdre, Merlot, Syrah or Cabernet Franc could also work, so long as the oak and tannins aren't overpowering. Rich white wines with refreshing acidity make delicious pairings, particularly off-dry Riesling, Vouvray or Alsace Pinot Gris. Rosé Champagne or sparkling wine would also be an exciting choice. *From our huge database of wines we've picked out five available from UK merchants we think are perfect pairings. But discover more on the other pages of this guide and on Decanter.com.*



### 1 Yealands Wines, Reserve Pinot Gris, Marlborough, New Zealand 2024

89 points

£12 Tesco

A bright, varietally true take on a grape variety that is one of New Zealand trump cards, this is full of characteristic orchard fruitiness, summer-garden flowers and subtle spice – it's nicely weighted and dry and at its best with poultry or white meat.

Alc 13%

### 2 Minimalist, Experimental Red Blend, Cape South Coast, South Africa 2023

90 points

£12.50 The Wine Society

A collaboration between The Wine Society and rising-star winemaker Sam Lambson, this is largely Sam's own 2023 Syrah fleshed out with Viognier from

Miles Mossop and Mourvèdre from De Morgenzon. It's a super-friendly lighter take on Syrah, a kind of Côtes-du-Cape, with a softly spiced raspberry drinkability.

Alc 13%

### 3 Nepenthe, Dolcetto, Adelaide Hills, South Australia 2024

90 points

£16 Tesco

Like its Grüner Veltliner white companion from Nepenthe in the Tesco range, there's far more to this wine than varietal novelty. Made in a lighter, *glou-glou* modern bistro style, it's all slick berry and cherry fruit, with cherry-skin tannins and a bright burst of acidity.

Alc 13%

### 4 CVNE, Maruxa Mencía, Valdeorras, Spain 2023

89 points

£12 Tesco

From Rioja masters CVNE's Galician outpost, this is Mencía in pure and juicy, pretty-fruited unoaked style. With a whoosh of ripe red and black cherry and easy light tannins, it's an easy-drinking Spanish answer to Beaujolais.

Alc 13%

### 5 La Seigneurie, Morrissons, The Best Block Series 019, Saumur-Champigny, Loire, France 2024

89 points

£15 Morrissons

Classically fresh and fragrant, light and gently crunchy, this 100% unoaked Cabernet Franc is a chillable pleasure, with its graphite-shaded blackcurrant and raspberry fruit and a refreshing hint of green leafiness. Simple but fun, it makes perfect company for game birds or tuna.

Alc 12%







## FAB WINES FOR FISH AND SEAFOOD

While not as common as the main event on Christmas Day, oysters, prawns and other seafood is often a staple in starters and appetisers, and fish – from cod and carp to salmon and herring – is traditional for many on Christmas Eve. Which means there are an array of grapes and wine styles for possible pairings. The cooking method and other ingredients will also steer your choice (ie: a wine with high acidity, like a sparkling, to cut through a batter or creamy sauce, or an aromatic wine with more residual sugar to counter spicy heat). But as a general guide, for lean and flaky mild fish, as well as seafood, pick a fresh, mineral, saline white from a coastal region like Assyrtiko, Picpoul, Muscadet, Albariño/Alvarinho, or a crisp Italian white such as Vermentino, Fiano, Pinot Grigio or Grillo. For robust white fish, try Chablis or unoaked Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Riesling or Grüner Veltliner. And for meatier and oilier fish, including raw fish, try Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Koshu, rosé, or even a juicy, unoaked red or light Sherry. *From our huge database of wines we've picked out five available from UK merchants we think are perfect pairings. But discover more on the other pages of this guide and on Decanter.com.*



### 1 Tbilvino, Qvevris Rkatsiteli, Kakheti, Georgia 2022

90 points

£16 Booths

Fermented and aged on skins for six months in traditional qvevri terracotta pots, this 100% Rkatsiteli is a well-mannered, accessible version of the ancient Georgian art of amber winemaking in which the oolong tea-tannins are joined by dried and fresh apricot and a pleasingly waxy texture. A versatile dinner companion.

Alc 12.5%

### 2 Filos Estate, Tesco Finest Assyrtiko, Florina, Macedonia, Greece 2024

89 points

£11 Tesco

As if to put the seal on Greece's arrival in the British wine-drinking mainstream, this is the first Greek wine to make it into the

Tesco Finest range. Happily, it's a worthy addition – a pristine hit of zesty, pithy lemon with a whistle-clean dry finish that is perfect for white fish.

Alc 12.5%

### 3 Marks & Spencer, Maison Riveraine, Petit Chablis, Burgundy, France 2023

89 points

£14 Ocado

Another M&S wine with the retailer's 'dropped and locked' price, meaning it's a little cheaper than when it first appeared in store. Made by the ever-reliable La Chablisienne co-operative, it's as pristine, taut, and tingling with lemony acidity as you'd want for fish and seafood.

Alc 12.5%

### 4 Wakefield, Riesling, Clare Valley, South Australia 2023

89 points

£12.47 Asda

A delicate waft of citrus blossom and lime flower gives way to a palate charged with classic Clare Valley lemon and lime zest-and-juice tang and clean lines. Offering total refreshment on its own, it's a palate-cleansing condiment for white fish or seafood.

Alc 12%

### 5 Der Komponist, Orange Wine, Austria 2024

87 points

£7 Aldi

Grüner leads the blend in a light yellow-gold, mildly macerated beginner's orange wine that is given extra floral-aromatic intensity by Gewürztraminer and Riesling, while the brief skin contact brings spice and very faint grip. A cushion of sweetness makes this a great match for spicy dishes.

Alc 12.5%



## VERSATILE WINES FOR VEGGIE OPTIONS

With many of us having switched to vegetarian or vegan diets, it's hard to hold a celebration without having to accommodate different dietary preferences. The good news is that many wine styles that pair well with meat work with meat-free options too. The go-to Christmas dish has long been nut roast, but also consider a butternut squash and mushroom wellington. For both of these, orange wines or Vin Jaunes would be a great match, sharing textural nuttiness and umami savouriness. For a red option, try the vibrant herb and tapenade notes of Xinomavro or blends from Southern Rhône or Languedoc, particularly those with bottle age. If you're serving grilled or roasted vegetables, choose structured reds with firm tannins and good density, while mezze platters, with marinated veg at their core, will pair best with fresh, juicy lighter-bodied and oaked styles. And, as with most things, when in doubt, Champagne or sparkling wine is a great option. *From our huge database of wines we've picked out five available from UK merchants we think are perfect pairings. But discover more on the other pages of this guide and on Decanter.com.*

### 1 **Domaine Jones, Orange Macabeu, Vin de France 2024** 92 points

£18 **Booths**

While more faddish winemakers have turned out a mediocre orange merely to keep up with the Joneses, the Fitou-based Jones behind this bottle has taken to the style with sincerity and real panache. It's wine of gentle, pithy grip, herbal-aromas, stone fruit, and a pleasingly, food-friendly twist of anise-like bitterness on the finish.

**Alc** 12.5%

### 2 **Cave des Papes, Morrison's, The Best Block Series 020, Vacqueyras, Rhône, France 2023** 89 points

£20 **Morrison's**

A no-holds-barred hit of rich and spicy, southern sun-fuelled Grenache leads the way, with a wiry brush of gnarly Syrah in this powerful Southern Rhône blend.

There's a robust and warming wildness here, with chewy tannin and alcohol to spare, and just enough herb-and-spice freshness to keep it upright.

**Alc** 15.5%

### 3 **Tbilvino, Saperavi, Kakheti, Georgia 2023** 89 points

£15 **Booths**

A vivid expression of Georgia's great red grape Saperavi, with intense, finger-stainingly inky dark blackberry juiciness, a subtle floral edge, and sinewy but soft tannins. Also try its excellent orange Qvevri Rkatsiteli (*see page left*).

**Alc** 13%

### 4 **Waitrose, Loved & Found Touriga Franca, Alentejo, Portugal 2024** 89 points

£10 **Waitrose**

When it comes to Portuguese Tourigas, the more widely planted Touriga Nacional gets most of the plaudits and attention. But this rare solo outing for Touriga Franca from 20-to-30-year-old vines is well worth a diversion. It's a typically warm-hearted, dark-berried red with a pleasing hint of rusticity in the tannins and a welcome lack of residual sugar.

**Alc** 13%

### 5 **Boutinot, Etre Affamé Cinsault, Languedoc-Roussillon, France 2024** 87 points

£8 **Co-op**

A chillable, very gluggable expression of southern French Cinsault, this light, bright, unoaked red combines strawberry fleshiness with cranberry sourness in a lightly tannic, easy-drinking thirst-quencher – ideal for Christmas feasting.

**Alc** 13%



# Best sweet wines

Sweet wine is a luscious indulgence that fits perfectly with festive fare. Whether it's a Sauternes or Barsac to go with blue cheese or Australian botrytised Semillon to partner mince pies – we have picked out an affordable, accessible selection for you. Find even more on Decanter.com...



**1** **Château Coutet, Barsac, Bordeaux, France 2016**  
93 points

£21 / 37.5cl **The Wine Society**

A real treat of a Barsac from Château Coutet, this offers a beguiling and luxurious mix of crystallised lime and lemon plus peaches in syrup with a touch of ginger marmalade spiciness. Blue cheese, foie gras, tarte tatin... take your pick for a partner.

**Alc** 13.5%



**2** **Domaine de Coyeux, Solera, Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, Rhône, France NV**  
93 points

£11.50 / 37.5cl

**Booths**

Made solera style by topping up and refreshing base wine from 2008 with younger wines each vintage, this gorgeous Rhône sweet wine marries delicate floral aromas and coursing fine acidity with richer tones of tropical and apricot fruit and plump Muscat sultanas.

**Alc** 15.5%



**3** **EH Booth & Co, Sauternes, Bordeaux, France 2018**  
93 points

£11 / 37.5cl **Booths**

Booths' own-label Sauternes has always been one of the best on the British high street, and the fleet-of-foot current vintage is evolving nicely at seven years old, with a moreish lemon curd on toast and long, delectably honeyed finish for citrus-fruit desserts.

**Alc** 14%



**4** **Helmut Lang, Eiswein, Burgenland, Austria 2019**  
93 points

£28 / 37.5cl **Waitrose**

Using Muskateller grapes concentrated in sugar, acid and flavour picked well into the winter when the temperature has dropped to -7°C, this precious golden elixir is simultaneously delicately detailed and pure, and intensely tropical fruity, the teeth-jangling sweetness of the crystallized fruit matched by a searing, but laser-guided flash of acidity.

**Alc** 11%

**5** **Tesco, Finest Dessert Semillon, Riverina, New South Wales, Australia 2020**  
92 points

£7 / 37.5cl **Tesco**

Incredible value, this is made by Aussie sweet wine experts De Bortoli (*see the same producer again below*). Despite the 263g/L residual sugar, it's fresh as a daisy, with orange marmalade, candied peel and lemon sherbet zestiness, plus a lick of barley sugar. Enjoy it chilled with fruit-based desserts.

**Alc** 9%

**6** **De Bortoli, Botrytis Semillon, Riverina, New South Wales, Australia 2019**  
90 points

£7.97 / 37.5cl **Asda**

Applying the same sweet-winemaking skills they've perfected with their much-admired Noble One Semillon, De Bortoli's entry-level sticky is as tangily engaging as ever: a mix of butterscotch, sultanas and orange marmalade cut with a shiver of fresh citrus acidity and pithiness.

**Alc** 10%

**7 De Bortoli, Morrison's, The Best Botrytis Semillon, Riverina, New South Wales, Australia 2020**

90 points

£7 / 37.5cl **Morrison's**

Always a highlight of any Morrison's tasting, and a no-brainer buy for Christmas sweet-wine requirements (from blue cheese to mince pies and pâté), this bargain golden Australian stickie is full of zip and nip, with its crystallised orange and lemon citrus and rich marmalade and tropical fruit.

**Alc** 9%

**8 Maison Sichel, Sauternes, Bordeaux, France 2022**

90 points

£11.50 / 37.5cl **Co-op**

Pure in fruit and tangy on the finish, this blue cheese- and fruit-dessert-ready golden sweet wine is filled with fresh mango, crystallised citrus peel and dried apricot – the honey-textured palate freshened and balanced by bright, cleansing acidity.

**Alc** 13%

**9 Marks & Spencer, L'Or du Ciron, Sauternes, Bordeaux, France 2022**

90 points

£13 / 37.5cl **Ocado**

Still youthful – and immediately appealing – this is an accessibly fruit-driven style of Sauternes, with plenty of citrusy drive and lemon-and-lime marmalade richness. There's a touch of honey too and a pleasingly zingy finish. A wine at its best with soft blue cheeses, or even to savour on its own.

**Alc** 12.5%

**10 Monemvasia Winery Tsimbidi, Malvasia Vin Liastos, Lakonia, Peloponnese, Greece 2012**

90 points

£28.99 / 37.5cl **All About Wine**

Bring on the salty cheese and the tarte tatin for this luscious Greek sweet wine demands it! A blend of indigenous varieties aged gracefully in bottle, it brims with layers of honey, toasted nuts and caramel, lifted by notes of candied fruit and a whisper of coconut. Vibrant acidity and a lick of salinity keep everything in balance, making each sip especially moreish.

**Alc** 13.5%





# Best fortified wines

Port, Sherry, Madeira and everything else besides – there is so much variety and complexity among fortified wines that they shouldn't just be reserved for Christmas. But this is the season where they shine: perfect with festive desserts, cheese boards and simply on their own. Or to leave out for Santa to help him on his long journey. Discover even more options on [Decanter.com](https://www.decanter.com)...

**1** **Henriques & Henriques, 15 Year Old Bual, Madeira, Portugal**  
94 points

£33 / 50cl **Majestic**

The Madeira trademark of sweet richness and dried fruit-and-nut complexity matched with scintillating acidity is in full, exhilarating effect in this luxuriously textured but compellingly drinkable Bual, with its complex array of butterscotch, plump sultanas and dried citrus peel.  
**Alc** 19%

**2** **EH Booth & Co, 20 Year Old Tawny Port, Douro Valley, Portugal**  
93 points

£25.50 **Booths**

Perfectly poised between the still-fruity charms of a 10 Year Old, and the nuttier, evolved flavours of older styles, Booths' complex, figgy but fluent 20 Year Old Tawny is a great example of why many shippers feel this point in the wood-ageing cycle is the optimum moment for bottling – and drinking.

**Alc** 19.5%

**3** **Niepoort, Late Bottled Vintage Port, Douro Valley, Portugal 2019**  
93 points

£20 **Waitrose**

A swish, stylishly textured Port with gorgeous clarity of vivid, dark, fruits-of-the-forest juiciness, this top-flight Port is a reminder of the excellent value

available in the LBV category: an immediately pleasurable, fine-tanned delight at any time of year.

**Alc** 19.5%

**4** **Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference 10 Year Old Tawny Port, Douro Valley, Portugal**  
93 points

£21.25 **Sainsbury's**

Like Sherry, age-dated Tawny Port is often among the biggest bargains in a supermarket own-label range. This example is a delightfully suave combination of mellow, nutty and dried-fruit character with still-bright and plumply fruited notes, plus a touch of milk chocolate, fig and sticky, unrefined brown sugar.

**Alc** 20%

**5** **Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference Oloroso Sherry, Jerez, Spain**  
93 points

£9.75 / 50cl **Sainsbury's**

Calling Sherry good value is almost tautological at this point, but this perennial favourite of the Sainsbury's TTD range really is amazing quality for the money. It's a wine of immensely tangy intensity with orange citrus and raisin-box characters, part of a complex mix that also includes figs and cinnamon.

**Alc** 20%





**6 Taylor's, Historical Limited Edition The Globe Reserve Tawny Port, Douro Valley, Portugal**  
93 points

£37 **Majestic**

Taylor's 10 Year Old is always one of the benchmarks of this style of wood-aged Port, and this special selection – which sits happily and seamlessly on the cusp between soft red fruitiness and mellow nuttiness – would be a great festive buy even without the delightful special bottle, which is inspired by English wine bottles of the 17th century.

**Alc** 20%

**7 Asda, Extra Special LBV, Port, Douro Valley, Portugal 2019**  
91 points

£11.97 **Asda**

The best value Port on the high street? For a full bottle, this sub-£12 LBV, made for Asda by Symington Family Estates (of Graham's, Dow's and Warre's fame), must be a contender, fairly purring with darkly intriguing ripe black fruit, figgy sweetness, and fine-grained tannins.

**Alc** 20%

**8 Co-op, 10 Year Old Tawny Port, Douro Valley, Portugal**  
90 points

£16.25 **Co-op**

Made for Co-op by the Fladgate Partnership, the group behind Taylor's, Fonseca and Croft, this is excellent value for a fully complex, rich and engaging Tawny, full of brown sugar, raisins, figs, prunes and chocolate plums.

**Alc** 20%

**9 Fletcher's, LBV Port, Douro Valley, Portugal 2021**  
90 points

£11 **Aldi**

The price has crept up over the £10 mark, but Aldi's textbook LBV remains an outstanding bargain – a wine of deftly handled oak and plump blue and black fruit, with a sprinkling of appealingly grainy tannin and hints of chocolate. A Christmas must-have.

**Alc** 19%

**10 Emilio Lustau, Morrisons, The Best Pedro Ximénez, Jerez, Spain**  
89 points

£10.5 / 50cl **Morrisons**

A new addition to Morrisons' well-regarded own-label Sherry range by Emilio Lustau, this is an ideal partner for Christmas pudding, thanks to its intense treacle and syrupy blonde chocolate richness, with that immense sweetness leavened by some soft fig and macadamia nut characters.

**Alc** 16.5%

## Know your Port styles

- **RUBY** A young, vibrant blend aged in bulk for up to three years to maintain its fiery nature.
- **RESERVE** A step up from Ruby, using premium wines and aged about seven years in wood.
- **CRUSTED** A blend of two or three harvests, aged in vats and bottled unfiltered, developing a 'crust' in the bottle. A more affordable alternative to Vintage Port.
- **WHITE AND PINK** Made from white grapes or with minimal skin contact, respectively. Enjoy white Port and tonic (Portonic) and Pink Port over ice.
- **LATE BOTTLED VINTAGE (LBV)** From a single year, bottled between four and six years after the vintage. Modern LBVs are

filtered for immediate drinking, while 'traditional' or unfiltered LBVs can age.

- **VINTAGE PORT** Made from a strict selection of the finest parcels in outstanding 'declared' years. Bottled young, ages slowly, and can take 20 to 40 years to reach its peak.
- **SINGLE-QUINTA VINTAGE PORT (SQVP)** From a single estate and made in good years, between declared vintages. To drink after about 10 years.
- **AGED TAWNY** Matured in small casks (lodge pipes), undergoing controlled oxidation. Bottled with age indications (10, 20, 30, 40, or 50 years old). Best served slightly chilled.
- **COLHEITA** A wine from a single year, aged in wood for a minimum of seven years, but often decades, taking on tawny characteristics. Bottled with both the harvest and bottling year on the label.

# Best Christmas wine picks from DWVWA 2025

The world's biggest wine competition saw nearly 17,000 entries from 57 countries, judged by 248 experts, including 71 Masters of Wine and 23 Master Sommeliers. It's a lot of numbers but, at the end of the day, the result is a definitive list of great wines from around the globe. We've distilled this even further to pick out 10 bottles available from UK supermarkets and independent merchants that would be perfect for any part of your seasonal celebrations.



**1 Vilarnau, Reserva Organic Cava Brut, Spain 2022**  
Value Gold, 95 points

£13.50 **Majestic, Ocado**  
Unmistakably Cava, complete with Golden Delicious apples, honeyed flowers, warming almonds and an enticing citrus acidity. The fine-grained, creamy mousse lingers beyond the finish.  
**Alc** 11.5%

**2 Graham Beck, Pinot Noir Rosé Brut, Western Cape, South Africa 2019**  
Gold, 96 points  
£22 **Majestic**

Glimmering with oyster shell splendour enhanced by whispers of raspberry coulis and citrus blossom. Nutty and creamy with a ruby grapefruit mousse and a saline finish.  
**Alc** 12.2%

**3 Nicolas Feuillatte, Blanc de Blancs Brut, Champagne, France 2019**  
Gold, 95 points  
£38 **Waitrose**

A frisson of orange blossom, acacia and lemon peel glides over the buttered pastry texture and creamy hazelnut mousse with lashings of orchard fruit.  
**Alc** 12%

**4 Bodega Hacienda López De Haro, Classica Blanco, Gran**

**Reserva, Rioja, Spain 2014**  
Platinum, 97 points  
£36 **The Wine Society**

Fabulously mature nose of honeysuckle, baked orange and caramelised apricot, toasted apple brioche complexity and mesmerising waxy texture. An age-defying freshness immerses the palate, ensuring many years ahead.  
**Alc** 12.5%

**5 Casal Ventozela, Azul Marinho Alvarinho, Vinho Verde, Portugal 2024**  
Value Gold, 95 points  
£8.42 **Asda**

A wonderful varietal showcase of ripe pear, peach, apricot and mandarin aroma with a riveting herbaceous complexity and supple citrus acidity. Long, elegant and rewarding.  
**Alc** 12.5%



**6 Villa Maria, Private Bin Riesling, Marlborough, New Zealand 2024**

Value Gold, 95 points

£12.50 **Booths, Ocado, Waitrose**

Engaging apple, lime blossom and fresh dandelions bloom over delightful spindly acidity and nurturing drive of citrus which propels towards the mineral finish.

**Alc** 11.5%

**7 Trivento, Golden Reserve Malbec, Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina 2023**

Gold, 95 points

£16.50 **Morrisons, Ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco**

Cheerful and luminous, parading minty red fruits, fragrant florals and spices which burst onto the energising palate beaming glossy tannins and mouth-watering acidity. Long and lush.

**Alc** 14%

**8 Castello Del Trebbio, Vigneto Lastricato Terraelectae, Chianti Rùfina Riserva, Tuscany, Italy 2020**

Platinum, 97 points

£54.99 **Ellis Wines**

Rose petals, black cherries and red plums threads seamlessly into folds of smoky oak with intricate tannins, well-defined structure and endorsing acidity. A compelling nuance of sweet floral fruit and savoury character.

**Alc** 14%

**9 Château Brown, Le Colomier De Brown, Pessac-Léognan, Bordeaux, France 2022**

Platinum, 97 points

£25.50 **Hennings Wine Merchants**

A tour de force: distinctive cassis, black cherry and graphite aromas emanate over the fabulous weight and structure with finely etched tannins and tense saline acidity. Beautifully constructed with a lingering mocha note at the end.

**Alc** 14%

**10 Kopke, 40 Year Old White Port, Portugal**

Platinum, 97 points

£89 **Vintage Wine and Ports**

Dried mango, honeyed lemons and fudge beguile and enthrall, with a boundless candied fruit sweetness that threads through the palate. Textured and lithe with a tannic twist and intrepid acidity.

**Alc** 20%





**Decanter**  
PREMIUM

---

Join Decanter Premium to access thousands of tasting notes and scores, plus exclusive daily articles from world-renowned wine experts



[www.decanter.com/subscribe/](http://www.decanter.com/subscribe/)