

## The 'Now Not So' Short List

Introducing probably the best wine list in Wales, which, to be fair, is a bold claim.

A fair amount of liquid has flowed under the bridge and into our glasses since we began compiling this 'short' list. We've picked the brains and plundered the cellars of the best suppliers across the country and we now reckon we're just about getting there.

There's real variety on show here, in grape, style and geography. The rulebook for wine lists says you should avoid featuring more than one wine from a single producer. What a load of rubbish! When you come across growers as brilliant and fastidious as Alain Graillot, Laurent Bunan and Xavier Bruguière, you'd be bonkers not to lay your hands on as many of their wares as possible.

You won't necessarily see too many obvious wines, but when we do feature a familiar name, you can be sure it's the best in class. Otherwise, we hope you are inspired and intrigued by what's on offer. Wines are also listed by country on the last two pages.

If you're unsure about anything, please ask for tips and recommendations. There's one thing of which you can be sure though and that's the quality of each and every wine that follows (and, indeed, flows).

Rhys Williams, June 2025

#### White

<ol> <li>Viura 'Gran Cerdo', Rioja, Spain NV 'Pig Wine', as we affectionately call it: a crowd-pleasing blend of overwhelmingly Viura with an occasional smattering Riesling and Gewurtztraminer. Do read the brilliantly entertaining anti-banking rant on the label. 10/10 for cojones</li> </ol>	8
2. Muscadet Sur Lie, Jean François Baron, Loire Valley 2023 How did Muscadet ever go out of fashion? Particularly when it's this good. Ozone fresh bouquet, bracing citrus-edged palate and <i>sur lie</i> (aged on the lees) for added complexity. Send for the seafood platter! 2 <sup>4</sup>	9
3. Pinot Blanc 'Réserve Personelle', Léon Beyer, Alsace 2023 That rare breed: an approachable Alsatian. Great with lightly-spiced food and creamy sauces, this is full-bodied, fragrant and fresh. Well worth a detour. 31.	5
4. Pinot Gris 'Grounded Cru', Adelaide Hills, Australia 2023 Zingy, aromatic, Aussie spin – more googly than orthodox off-break – on your standard Pinot Grigio with citrus, pear and honeysuckle in abundance. 32	2
5. Pinot Grigio 'Terra Alpina', Alois Ladeger, Alto Adige, Italy 2023 Bit hesitant to feature the ubiquitous PG, but this a top one from the Tyrol that puts the all-too-many pale, bland namesakes well and truly in the <i>ombra</i> . 32	
6. Greco di Tufo, Villa Raiano, Campania, Italy 2023 Lovely stuff from southern Italy. 'Racy and vibrant,' says <i>Wine Magazine</i> . Tip top, say we. Citrus blossoms, orchard scents, flipping delicious. 33	
7. Vermentino, Domaine de Torraccia, Christian Imbert, Corsica 2023 Just brilliant. Herby in a way that doesn't conjure an ageing VW Beetle with a mind of its own. Crisp, refreshing and satisfying. Organic, so manual not automatic. 33	3
8. Gavi di Gavi 'La Minaia', Nicola Bergaglio, Piemonte, Italy 2023 Award-winning, generous and ripe. Elegant and faultless. Might be my favourite white and then I remembered the Crozes (see bin 24) and the Bandol (bin 19), so <i>one</i> of my favourites.	

9. Lugana 'Vigne Alte', Zeni, Lake Garda, Italy 2023 Trebbiano deployed to brilliant effect in the hands of the Zeni family, who ply their trade a grape's lob from the shores of Garda. Full, fragrant and peachy in all senses of the word. 33

10. Côtes du Luberon, Château La Canorgue, Provence 2024 I cycled past this gorgeous vineyard outside Bonnieux last summer and something about the moment – the scents, the sun, the crazy speed I was descending – led me to think it was time to stock this Provençale stunner again.

11. Bical/Arinto 'Dinamica', Filipa Pato, Bairrada, Portugal 2024 Crowned 'Queen of Bairrada' by no less than Jancis Robinson (High-priestess of Wine Writers), Filipa Pato blends bical and arinto to produce an absolute belter that is light and clean as well as mouth-filling and complex. A biodynamic bargain 35

12. Albarino, Lagar de Cervera, Rias Baixas, Spain 2023 Cult wine in Galicia, the north-western region of Spain whence it hails. Taste it and see why: elegant and with real depth of flavour. A must with seafood and fish.

13. Sauvignon Blanc 'Sound of White', Marlborough, New Zealand 2022 Way more interesting and satisfying than your standard Marlborough fruit-bomb thanks to a little wild fermentation in French oak. So citrus peel and stone-fruits galore, but with that bit more length and body.

14. Grüner Veltliner, Christina and Rainer Wess, Kremstal, Austria 2023 Modern, youthful take on an Austrian standard. Fresh, vibrant and zingy, which, in this form, is not dissimilar to an exotic Sauvignon or tropical Riesling.

15. Chenin Blanc, Carsten Migliarina, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2023 Citrus and tropical fruits abound in a South African varietal to which everyone should beat a path and devour. Characterful and food-worthy.

16. Riesling, Forest Hill Estate, Mount Barker, Australia 2022 'World-class quality, this is one of the most riveting and nervy dry Rieslings in Australia, and it will age for a further 5-8 years with ease. Awesome.' Matthew Jukes 37

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17. Rousette de Savoie 'Cuvée Emilie', Domaine de L'Idylle, Savoie 2022 Send for the skiing analogies as we celebrate the vinous joys of venturing off-piste and scaling the summit of oenological endeavour ('*Get on with it'* – ed). Appley fresh, satisfying body, grand with cheese, white fish or a sharing platter.

18. Sancerre 'Les Charmes', Andre Vatan, Loire Valley 2023 Pick of the bunch from the Loire's grandest *appellation* and the go-to Sancerre of many a Michelin-starred resto. Benchmark stuff, with an elderflower and cut grass bouquet and heaps of lemon zest.

19. Coteaux du Languedoc 'Les Muriers', Mas Bruguière 2023 Not fabulously well-known, but pretty fabulous. A humble *Vin de France* as no white is permitted in the Pic St Loup cru, this organic blend of Vermentino and Roussanne delivers deep straw colours, ripe plum aromas with citrus and minerals on the finish. 37

20. Bandol, Mas de la Rouvière, Domaines Bunan, Provence 2024 If you've never had white Bandol before (and it remains a relative rarity), right the wrong forthwith with this absolute belter, much beloved of the smarter eateries on the Riviera, Rue Gloddaeth and *chez nous*.

21.Verdejo 'Naiades', Bodegas Naia, Rueda, Spain 2021 Right up there among Spain's top whites, this is the ultimate expression of the Verdejo grape. Full-bodied, rich and complex with aromas of ripe melon and pears, precise kiwi fruit notes and grapefruit acidity. A bit Burgundian, dare we say?

22. Chardonnay 'Rays Road', Kumeu River, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand 2023 Absolute class act from probably the best Chardonnay producer in New Zealand and surely in the Southern hemisphere' top drawer. Elegant and orchard fruit laden. 44

23. Chablis Premier Cru 'Beauroy', Christophe Camu, 2023 Concentrated, expressive, superior Premier Cru with good complexity on the palate and a long, satisfying finish. Everything a high-end Chablis should be.

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24. Riesling 'Georgia's Paddock', Jasper Hill, Heathcote, Australia 2023 From The Laughton family's world renowned, bio-dynamic 20-hectare estate (regarded as the finest terroir in Australia) comes this gem, described Robert Parker as 'complex, savory, powerful and mouth-filling'. In other words, it's a ripper.

25. Crozes Hermitage, Alain Graillot, Rhône 2023

The late Alain Graillot was the undisputed King of Crozes. Son Maxime Graillot takes up the torch for this Rhône *appellation* and one drop confirms why it's many a wine writer's favourite. Wild flower aromas, peach on the palate.

26. Assyrtiko, Estate Argyros, Santorini, Greece 2023 Volcanically good (it's Santorini after all) stuff from the island's top producer; from 100-year-old vines, this is unoaked, dry and full-bodied delivering intense minerality (that volcanic soil again) and crisp acidity. Long, clean, utterly delicious.

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27. Viognier, Le Pied de Samson, Christine Vernay, Rhône 2023 From the King of Crozes to the Queen of Condrieu. Christine Vernay delivers a luscious, apricot filled beauty that's bottled as modest *vin de pays*, but could take down many a grand Condrieu in blind tasting. Amazing, really.

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#### Rosé

68. Côtes de Provence 'Cuvée Edalise', Maison Boutinot 2023 Everything a Provençale rosé should: pale, crisp, refreshing. Discernible white peaches, wild strawberries and maybe mandarin. Fruit salad then.

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70. Cassis 'Clos Sainte Magdeleine', Jonathan Sack, Provence 2024 Thrilled to offer this stellar rosé from the Côte d'Azur, where it is highly prized and eagerly sought. Delicately pink, abundant strawberries and raspberries with just the right acidity for balance. A lot going on here and, all in all, pretty immaculate.

## Red

30. Primitivo, Cantele, Puglia, Italy 2023 Delicious dark raspberry and mulberry fruits, lovely, soft and warming; so basically a duvet (not that they have much call for duvets in Puglia), apart from the fruit bit. 29 31. Touriga Nacional/Castelão 'Espirito', Quinta da Lagoalva, Portugal 2022 Indigenous Portuguese grapes produce ripe black fruits, spice and vanilla in a ripe, juicy, generous red. Impressive balance and refinement for the price. 29.5 32. Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Contesa, Pescara, Italy 2022 Fine, full-flavoured, combining dark bramble, black cherry and spicy oak. 30 33. Côtes du Rhône, Cuvée Personelle, Pascal Frères 2020 We've stocked this since we came to Llandudno in 2002 and it's never been anything other than spot on. Quintessential C du Rh with soft tannins, brambly fruit and a warming, spicy finish. 30 34. Bordeaux Supérieur, Château Abzac 2022 The Holy Grail-like quest for affordable, characterful, quality claret is over. Classic blackcurrant aromas with a soft hint of mint precede great concentration of fruit and fine balance. 100 per cent Merlot. 30.5 35. Malbec 'Calizo', Tinto Nero, Argentina 2022 There are too many indifferent, unrefined Malbecs knocking around at the mo, so it's a joy to introduce you to this silky gem. Scored a highly sought-after 90 pts from Robert Parker. And deservedly so. 31 36. Saumur, Château Fouquet, Paul Filliatreau, Loire Valley 2021 'Beguiling,' concludes The Spectator in describing this hugely expressive cassisloaded example of Cabernet Franc. Organic. 32 37. 'Cimento Tinto', Ribeira Santo, Dao, Portugal 2021 Aged in concrete for purer flavours, this approachable, easy-drinking, midweight

Aged in concrete for purer flavours, this approachable, easy-drinking, midweight blend does full justice to the Dao region's reputation for balanced wines that provide – free with every bottle – spiced plums and red cherries.

38. Moulin à Vent, Armand Aucoeur, Beaujolais 2022 King of the Beaujolais crus, this is chock-full of voluptuous berry fruit and a bit more stuffing than your standard. Perfect spring and summer quaffer, but fairly ace all year round to be honest. Great with pork.

39. Minervois 'Pas de Zarat', Domaine Le Cazal, Languedoc 2018 If this wine were a TV programme, it would be *Detectorists*: immaculately made, uplifting and utterly joyful, a smile and an overwhelming sense of well-being never more than a heartbeat away.

40. Côtes du Luberon, Château La Canorgue, Provence 2023 You can almost hear the cicadas and smell the wild garrigue scents of the Luberon in this gorgeous full-bodied blend of Grenache and Syrah. Generous, gastronomic and evocative – and probably the cause – of long, lazy days in the sunshine.

41. Cabernet Sauvignon, Knappstein, Clare Valley, Australia 2020 Award-winning textbook Aussie Cab Sav, laden with trademark notes of blackcurrant, dark chocolate and mint, with some tobacco leaf lobbed in (not literally) for good measure. Cracking value to boot.

42. Syrah du Maroc 'Tandem', Ouled Thaleb/Graillot, Morocco 2022 Lovely warming fruit-forward, slightly peppery Syrah. 'I would be very happy to serve this,' says Jancis Robinson. In that case, we'll join you.

43. Côtes de Provence, Domaine Richeaume, Sylvain Hoesch 2022 Dutch PM Mark Rutte served this to Emmanuel Macron on a state visit to the Netherlands and the French president loved it so much he took some back home (well, he probably doesn't have time to pop out to the offie). Delicious.

44. Tannat Reserva, Bodega Garzón, Uruguay 2023 The colour: a vibrant, deep violet, like undiluted Ribena. The taste: raspberry, blackberry, plums. The feel: full-bodied, super-smooth. What's not to love?

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45. Blaufränkisch 'Ried Johanneshöhe', Weingut Prieler, Austria 2020 Austrian wines are long-established, but very much on the up courtesy of juicy, balanced, black cherry and ripe plum infused treats such as this. Reminiscent of a bright Cab Franc. Certified organic.

46. Pinot Noir 'Aus Rhodt', Stefan Meyer, Pfalz, Germany 2021 The search for reasonably-priced, quality Burgundy ends in, er, Germany, the rising star of Pinot Noir. This is benchmark Pinot - forest fruit aromas, a touch of smoke and spice, integrated tannins - without the Burgundian price tag. 37

47. Dolcetto d'Alba, Pio Cesare, Piedmont, Italy 2023 Fragrant and supple with a juicy, elderberry concentration. Medium bodied with bags of fruit making for an excellent alternative to a cru Beaujolais such as Fleurie. 37.5

48. Pic St Loup 'L'Arbouse', Mas Bruguière, 2022 'L'Arbouse' is rich and compelling with a wealth of wild garrigue herb and berry scents and a lovely, pitchy palate of black fruit and fine-grained tannins. A staple of many a Michelin-starred eaterie.

49. Syrah 'Achelo', Antinori, Cortona, Italy 2022 In Tuscany's less-regarded south-eastern corner lies Cortona, the beautiful fortified hilltop home to yet another fine specimen from Antinori's stellar stable of thoroughbreds ('Horse analogies is it now?' - ed). Blackberry, plums and a hint of spice.

50. Margaux, Marquis de Mons, Bordeaux 2015 A brilliant vintage in the region and therefore precisely the time when the grand chateaux's second wines punch way above their weight division ('Boxing??!!' - ed). Really good balance of red fruit and warm wood spice. Lengthy and approachable. Drink now!

51. Corvina 'Palazzo della Torre', Allegrini, Verona IGT, Italy 2021 Very much a mini-Amarone, so all the chocolate and dark berry richness you'd expect from a wine made using the appassimento method, whereby the harvested grapes are dried to concentrate sugars, flavours and aromas. Serie A stuff.

52. Haut Médoc Cru Bourgeois, Château Hourtin Ducasse, Bordeaux 2015 That brilliant vintage again delivering a ripe and full wine packed stylish tannins and zingy blackberry flavours. Good stuff, great value.

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#### 53. Bierzo 'Encinas', Raul Perez, Spain 2021

The deeply trendy Mencia grape is deployed to pure, vibrantly violet effect resulting in a full-flavoured wine that manages to be both rustic and elegant, as well as fruity and savoury. Work out that if you can.

54. Bandol, Mas de la Rouvière, Domaines Bunan, Provence 2021 Full-bodied with a beguiling, deep purple robe, dark, hedgerow berry scents and a palate of black fruit, spices, dried ceps and game. Bunan is top of the pile in Bandol and it shows in this stonker ('stonker' being a technical term).

55. Pinot Noir, Domain Road, Central Otago, New Zealand 2022 Well-balanced Pinot with ripe strawberry/plum fruits and a polished finish. Elegant and classy. Think Richard Hadlee in his pomp (Google him if needs be).

56. Cabernet Merlot, Andre Van Rensburg, Stellenbosch South Africa 2021 AVR, legendary former head winemaker at Vergelegen, goes it alone with this stunning Bordelaise blend, which we uncorked for my father's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. It will keep for a decade, but frankly, why wait?

57. Aglianico 'Taurasi', Villa Raiano, Campania, Italy 2018 Iconic red from Southern Italy. Rich, dark, complex, packed full of black fruit, liquorice and chocolate ('You sure about this?' - ed). Is there a more complete expression of the Aglianico grape out there?

58. Rioja Reserva, Valenciso, Luis Valentin & Carmen Enciso, Spain 2019 A mightily impressive 93+ points from The Wine Advocate for as good a Rioja as you can find without paying bonkers prices. Elegant, complex, pure.

59. Chianti Classico, Isole e Olena, Tuscany, Italy 2019/20 The Ferrari 250 GT California (the one Steve McQueen and James Coburn used to drive) of Chiantis. Classy, elegant, drop dead gorgeous and particularly delicious with lamb (the wine, not the car).

60. Pomerol, Ballade de la Pointe, Bordeaux 2019 Another great vintage, another great time to seek out the second wine of an illustrious producer. Just like drinking velvet: rich, elegant, satisfying.

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61. Shiraz 'Occam's Razor', Jasper Hill, Victoria, Australia 2022 Jasper Hill sits at the stellar end of the Australian wine producer spectrum and this spicy, berry-loaded, scorched earth beauty is known in the trade as a 'humdinger'. 47

62. Ribera del Duero Crianza, Pago de los Capellanes, Spain 2021 Much lauded by the wine press vintage after vintage, this is rich and polished, matching power with high-plains freshness.

63. Crozes Hermitage, Alain Graillot, Rhône 2022 Benchmark for the *appellation* from the late King of Crozes. It has an intense black fruit bouquet and plump palate of dark, hedgerow berries, a good palate-cleansing acidity and fine-grained tannins. So very good.

64. Terrasses du Larzac, Domaine de Montcalmès Rouge, Languedoc 2021 Simply gorgeous, silky and substantial Grenache Syrah Mourvèdre blend from what *Wine Advocate*'s Jeb Dunnuck considers "one of my favourite estates in the Languedoc". Dark plums, cassis with a smattering of eucalyptus and mint.

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65. Haut Médoc Grand Cru Classé, Château Cantemerle, Bordeaux 2016 Classic cedar and cassis aromas in a strong vintage that is already drinking very well. 'VGV' says Jancis Robinson. In other words, 'Very Good Value'.

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66. Barolo di Serralunga d'Alba, Fontanafredda, Piedmont, Italy 2019 Supremely distinguished Piedmont producer delivers complex flavours of cherry, blackberry and spice with leather and autumnal woodland aromas. Like an aged, high-end Burgundy in appearance and taste, but not price tag.

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## Sparkling

72. Prosecco Superiore, Fabio Ceschin, Conegliano Valdobbiadene Sourced from the Conegliano Hills in the best region of Prosecco, this is floral and fruity with hints of green apple with an elegant and dry finish.

200ml bottle 8.95 750 ml bottle 29

73. Rosé, Crémant de Limoux Brut, Domaine Collin, France 'The best crémant for summer,' says Victoria Moore in *The Telegraph*. 'Sophisticated, dry and delicate with a gentle fragrance of red berries with subtle florals.'

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74. Crémant de Savoie Brut, Domaine de L'Idylle, France Classy champagne substitute. 'A crisp, bracing Alpine fizz from France's newest Crémant region. Pale golden colour, inviting nose, lively fruit aromas and a hint of pear. Super as an aperitif.' *Decanter Magazine* 

75. Champagne, Nicholas Feuillatte Grande Réserve Brut (half bottle) Rock solid champagne at the rich and toasty end of the spectrum courtesy of added Chardonnay in the Pinot Noir/Pinot Meunier blend. Perfect for two.

Half bottle 30

76. Champagne, André Clouet Grande Réserve, Grand Cru à Bouzy Complex and forward in style with a long persistent finish. Made using only Pinot Noir harvested from Grand Cru vineyards. 'Le business,' as they almost certainly never say in France.

78. Champagne, Premier Cru Extra Brut Vintage, Dumangin 2009 A real treat and fitting for any truly special occasion. This is Premier Cru Champagne by a top independent producer in a fantastic vintage. Vibrant gold in colour, aromas of red berries leading to a balanced, full-bodied palate and toasty undertones.

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#### Dessert

79. Monbazillac, Domaine de l'Ancienne Cure, Christian Roche 2022 Versatile, rich and complex 'sticky', which complements most puds wonderfully (and goes down a treat with *foie gras*, not that we ever serve *foie gras*, but still...). Share a half bottle over a couple of nights.

Glass (125ml) 7.5 Half bottle 19

80. Banyuls Reserva, Domaine de la Tour Vieille Banyuls is France's finest dark, sweet wine. Brilliant with chocolate or raisiny puds. Glass (125ml) 8

81. Gwin Pwdin, Gwinllan Estate, Conwy 2021 Locally (Mochdre!) produced and thoroughly recommendable: good intensity with peaches, honey and pears. Beats a trip to the fruit section at Asda.

Glass (125ml) 9

82. Vinsanto 'First Release', Estate Argyros, Santorini, Greece 2015 Amazing, grand sweet wine from created from the Assyrtiko grape that does so wellon this volcanic Greek island. Glass (70ml) 9.5

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## The Hit List (by the glass and bottle)

Something of a greatest 'hits' selection, which reflects a huge amount of time and care (aka sampling) to get just the right balance of variety, quality and value. The reds are all characterised by a bright and generous fruit, while the whites provide subtle variations on the themes of zest and ripeness of fruit.

#### Red

Pinot Noir, Domaine Girard, IGP Pays d'Oc 2023 Just puts a big, wide smile on your face, which, of course is precisely the point of wine. Bright, fresh and blameless with bags of berry fruit.

175ml 7.25, 250ml 9.8, Bottle 29

Rioja Crianza, Marques de Zearra, Bodegas I Petralanda 2019 Crackerjack – 'es viernes, son las cinco' – of a Rioja: textbook stuff with trademark coffee aromas and creamy chocolate flavours. Incidentally, you'll need a working knowledge of Spanish and 1970s children's TV to get that opening gag.

175ml 6.75, 250ml 9.1, Bottle 27

Negroamaro 'Il Medaglione', Leone de Castris, Salento 2022 Ripe, generous Southern Italian – I'm getting Inspector Montalbano here – with oodles of rich, gutsy dark fruits. Warm and velvety in the mouth, intense on the nose. Time to open a new case (see what I did there?).

175ml 7.25, 250ml 9.8, Bottle 29

Merlot, Côtes de Thongue, Vin de Pays de l'Hérault 2024 Delicious, warming blend (principally Merlot with some Grenache and Carignan) created for carefree and instant gratification. What's not to love about that?

175ml 7, 250ml 9.5, Bottle 28

#### White

Sauvignon Blanc 'Klein Louis', Napier Winery, South Africa 2024 Clean, dry and fresh with tangy green apple, nettle and gooseberry aromas, and zingy grapefruit acidity. In other words, delish.

175ml 6.75, 250ml 9.1, Bottle 27

Picpoul de Pinet, Ludovic Gaujal, Languedoc 2024 The Williams quaffer of choice. Zesty and bracing, with crisp ozone aromas tangy citrus notes and long pebbly finish.

175ml 7, 250ml 9.5, Bottle 28

Verdejo 'Basa', Telmo Rodriguez, Rueda, Spain 2023 A masterpiece from arguably Spain's most innovative winemaker. 'Brilliantly done, wonderfully clean and pure, and racy, with just enough of the spicy-bitter twist to complement the juicy tropical fruit flavours and lime.' *David Williams, Decanter Magazine* 

175ml 7, 250ml 9.5, Bottle 28

Viognier 'Grès du Trias', Vignerons Ardéchois, Rhone 2023 'A fruity, well-rounded and seductive viognier with aromas of fresh peaches, wild herbs and hints of dried lemons, too. It's medium-bodied with an aromatic and charming profile on the palate. Delicious fruit and a floral edge to the fresh finish.' So says wine guru James Suckling

175ml 7, 250ml 9.5, Bottle 28

#### Rosé

Côtes de Provence 'Cuvée Edalise', Maison Boutinot 2023 Everything a Provençale rosé should: pale, crisp, refreshing. Discernible white peaches, wild strawberries and maybe mandarin. Fruit salad then. 175ml 7.25, 250ml 9.8, Bottle 29

Well, that was fun, wasn't it?

# By country or region

## White

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#### Italy

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31 37
27 29.5 32.5 39.5 44 48