



# Next Door

# Wines

## The 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 there. Give or take.

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.

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, May 2023*

# White

1. Muscadet Sur Lie, Jean François Baron, France 2021  
How did Muscadet ever go out of fashion, particularly when it's this good? Ozone fresh bouquet, bracing citrus-edged palate and *sur lie* for added complexity. Send for the seafood platter!  
27
2. Pinot Gris, Via Magna Rulandské Sedé, Martin Pomfy, Slovakia 2021  
Simply *skvelý*, which we're almost certainly unreliably informed, is Slovak for 'stonking'. Floral, fruity – passion fruit perhaps – and ever so slightly smoky. Good length so very much a food wine.  
27
3. Prensall Blanc/Chardonnay 'Susana Sempre', Mallorca 2018  
An authentic taste of the Balearics, succulent and grapefruit-fresh with a richer, more rounded core courtesy of the Chardonnay.  
29
4. Greco di Tufo, Villa Raiano, Campania, Italy 2021  
Lovely stuff from southern Italy. 'Racy and vibrant,' says *Wine Magazine*. Tip top, say we. Citrus blossoms, orchard scents, flipping delicious.  
31
5. Riesling, Watervale, Mitchell Estate, Clare Valley, Australia 2020  
Ripe, rich flavours that evoke honey and flowers (and 'petrol' aromas said one reviewer, in a good way apparently...)  
31
6. Pinot Blanc 'Réserve Personelle', Léon Beyer, Alsace 2020  
An approachable Alsatian that's more cuddles than bite. Great with lightly-spiced food and creamy sauces, this is full-bodied, fragrant and fresh. Well worth a detour.  
31
7. Sauvignon Blanc, Springfield Estate, Robertson, South Africa 2021  
Funky, distinctive and intense Sauvignon overflowing with lime and gooseberry. Someone also mentioned freshly cut green peppers, but for Pete's sake, this is wine not ratatouille.  
31
8. Pinot Grigio, Alois Ladeger, Alto Adige, Italy 2020  
Bit hesitant to feature the ubiquitous PG, but this a good 'un that puts the all-too-many pale, bland namesakes well and truly in the *ombra*.  
32

9. Grüner Veltliner 'Sandgrube', Rainer Wess, Kremstal, Austria 2022  
Modern, youthful take on an Austrian standard. Fresh, vibrant and zingy, which, in this form, does the job of zesty Sauvignon or a superior Pinot Grigio. 32
10. Domaine de Torraccia, Christian Imbert, Corsica 2021  
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. 32
11. Albarino, Lagar de Cervera, Rias Baixas, Spain 2021  
Cult wine in Galicia, the north-western region of Spain whence it hails. Not hard to see why when you taste it: elegant and with real depth of flavour. 33
12. Chenin Blanc, Carsten Migliarina, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2020  
Citrus and tropical fruits abound in a South African varietal to which everyone should beat a path and devour. Characterful and food-worthy. 33
13. Rousette de Savoie, Phillippe & François Tiollier, France 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. 33
15. Chardonnay, Forest Hill, Mount Baker, Western Australia 2021  
Classy Australian. Two words you don't hear too often together, unless you're referring to the late, great Clive James. Balanced, textured, ripe. 34
17. Sancerre 'Les Perriers', Andre Vatan, Loire Valley 2021  
Classy French (often heard together). 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. 35
19. Coteaux du Languedoc 'Les Muriers', Mas Bruguière 2020  
Not fabulously well-known, but pretty fabulous. Blend of Vermentino and Roussanne delivers deep straw colours, ripe plum aromas with citrus and minerals on the finish. 36

21. Bandol, Mas de la Rouvière, Domaines Bunan, Provence 2021  
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 and Rue Gloddaeth.
- 37
22. Sauvignon Blanc, Greywacke, Marlborough, New Zealand 2022  
Greywacke is where Kevin Judd went after Cloudy Bay. Not your typical Marlborough Sav though, this is like sponge cake with lemon icing plus some peach and melon lobbed in for good measure. A tropical afternoon tea then.
- 39
23. Rueda 'Naiades', Bodegas Naia, Spain 2016  
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.
- 41
24. Chablis Premier Cru 'Beauroy', Christophe Camu, 2021  
Concentrated, expressive, superior Premier Cru with good complexity on the palate and a long, satisfying finish. Everything a high-end, but still reasonably priced Chablis should be.
- 42
25. Crozes Hermitage, Alain Graillot, Rhône 2021  
Introducing the King of Crozes: Alain Graillot is the undisputed champion of this Rhône *appellation* and one drop of this confirms why it's many a wine writer's favourite.
- 44
26. Assyrtiko, Estate Argyros, Santorini, Greece 2021  
Volcanically good (well, it is from Santorini) 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.
- 44
27. Viognier, Le Pied de Samson, Christine Vernay, Rhône 2018  
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.
- 50

## Rosé

68. Chinon, Rudolphe Raffault, Loire Valley 2022

A fresh and satisfying coral-pink expression of Cabernet Franc, which displays redcurrant and raspberries in abundance and works brilliantly both as aperitif and partner to food (particularly seafood, white fish and spiced cuisine).

25

70. Cassis 'Clos Sainte Magdeleine', Jonathan Sack, Provence 2022

Thrilled to be able 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. All in all, pretty immaculate.

44

## Red

30. Primitivo, Cantele, Puglia, Italy 2020

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.

27

31. Touriga Nacional Castelão, Quinta da Lagoalva, Portugal 2021

Indigenous Portuguese grapes produce ripe black fruits, spice and vanilla in a ripe, juicy, generous red. Impressive balance and refinement for the price.

27

32. Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Contesa, Pescara, Italy 2020

Fine, full-flavoured combining dark bramble, black cherry and spicy oak.

27

33. Côtes du Rhône, Cuvée Personelle, Pascal Frères 2019

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.

28

34. 'Richesse', Christo Le Riche, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2018

Great Cab Sauv-rich blend provides juicy, mouth-filling flavours of red berries and plums balanced with a fine, soft tannic structure and rounded finish. Cracking value.

29

36. Bordeaux Supérieur, Chateau Abzac 2020  
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. 29
38. Malbec Limestone Block, Tinto Negro, Argentina 2018  
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. A cracker. 30
39. Moulin à Vent, Armand Aucoeur, Beaujolais 2021  
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. 30
40. Saumur, Chateau Fouquet, Paul Filliatreau, Loire Valley 2020  
'Beguiling,' concludes *The Spectator* in describing this hugely expressive cassis-loaded example of Cabernet Franc. Organic. 30
41. Blaufränkisch 'Ried Johanneshöhe', Weingut Prieler, Austria 2018  
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 Pinot Noir, but with a bit more going on. Certified organic. 30
42. Syrah du Maroc 'Tandem', Ouled Thaleb/Alain Graillot, Morocco 2021  
Lovely warming fruit-forward, slightly peppery Syrah. 'I would be very happy to serve this,' says wine doyenne Jancis Robinson. In that case, we'll join you. 32
44. Dolcetto d'Alba, Renato Fenocchio, Piedmont Italy 2021  
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. 32
46. Minervois 'Pas de Zarat', Domaine Le Casal, Languedoc 2018  
Only produced in the most propitious vintages and in limited volumes, so this velvety Grenache/Carignan/Syrah blend is a rare treat. It will cellar for another 10 years, but it's pretty spot on right now. 33

48. Côtes de Provence, Domaine Richeaume, Sylvain Hoesch 2018  
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 office). Delicious.
- 33
49. Pinot Noir 'Aus Rhodt', Stefan Meyer, Pfalz, Germany 2020  
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.
- 35
50. Pic St Loup 'L'Arbouse', Mas Bruguière, 2020  
'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. Much loved at Le Gavroche (Michel Roux Jnr's eatery in London). V v good.
- 36
52. Bierzo 'Encinas', Raul Perez, Spain 2018  
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.
- 37
54. Pinot Noir, Domain Road, Central Otago, New Zealand 2019  
Well-balanced Pinot with ripe strawberry/plum fruits and a polished finish. Elegant and classy. Think Richard Hadlee in his pomp, or else Cate Blanchette any time.
- 37
55. Bandol, Mas de la Rouvière, Domaines Bunan, Provence 2019  
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).
- 38
56. Rioja Reserva, Valenciso, Luis Valentin & Carmen Enciso 2014  
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.
- 39
57. Château Hourtin Ducasse, Cru Bourgeois, Haut Medoc 2015  
An excellent, sunny vintage delivers a ripe and full wine packed stylish tannins and zingy blackberry flavours. Good stuff, great value.
- 39



58. Aglianico Taurasi, Villa Raiano, Campania, Italy 2015  
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? Cannot commend it enough. 40
60. Ribera del Duero, Pesquera, Alejandro Fernandez, Spain 2015/19  
A great wine in excellent vintages. Fernandez is a top-class producer and here creates a concentrated tempranillo/cencibel blend with spicy fruit and a long, lingering finish. 40
62. Chianti Classico, Isole e Olena, Tuscany Italy 2017  
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). 43
64. Shiraz 'Occam's Razor', Jasper Hill, Victoria, Australia 2017  
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'. Go easy though as it's heady stuff. 44
66. Crozes Hermitage, Alain Graillot 2018  
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. 46
67. Château Cantemerle, Grand Cru Classé, Haut Medoc 2012  
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'. 55
68. Barolo 'Lu', Eugenio Bocchini, Piemonte, Italy 2017  
Really at the business end of the list here with this immaculate Barolo from husband-and-wife team Eugenio and Cinzia. Flavours of plums, cinnamon and vanilla follow the classic Barolo scent of tar and roses. Request decanting. 75

## 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 28

74. Crémant de Limoux Brut, Domaine Collin

Brilliant French sparkler. 'Made in the same way as champagne, and with a blend of champagne grapes (chardonnay and pinot noir), this comes as close to a swanky champagne as you can get without the hefty price tag. It's fun, frothy and deliciously crisp.' Richard Hood in *The Independent*

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.

49

78. Champagne, Premier Cru Brut Vintage, Dumangin 2009

A real treat and fitting for any truly special occasion. This is Premier Cru Champagne from a fantastic vintage. It has a vibrant gold colour, aromas of red berries leading to a balanced, full-bodied palate and toasty undertones.

75

## Dessert

72. Monbazillac, Domaine de l'Ancienne Cure, Christian Roche 2021

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) 6.5 Half bottle 18

74. Banyuls Reserva, Domaine de la Tour Vieille

Banyuls is France's finest dark, sweet wine. Brilliant with chocolate or raisiny puds.

Glass (125ml) 7

75. Vinsanto 'First Release', Estate Argyros, Santorini, Greece 2015

Amazing, grand sweet wine from created from the Assyrtiko grape that does so well on this volcanic Greek island.

Glass (70ml) 8.5

## 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. Don't be put off by anything you don't recognize; they're all pretty gorgeous.

### Red

Pinot Noir, Domaine Girard, IGP Pays d'Oc 2021

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 6.5, 250ml 8.5, Bottle 25

Rioja Crianza, Marques de Zearra, Bodegas I Petralanda 2016

Crackerjack of a Rioja, so good it practically drinks itself. Textbook stuff with trademark coffee aromas and creamy chocolate flavours. Good bottle age.

175ml 5.8, 250ml 7.8, Bottle 24

Negroamaro 'Il Medaglione', Leone de Castris, Salento 2020

Ripe, generous Southern Italian with oodles of rich, gutsy dark fruits. Warm and velvety in the mouth, intense on the nose.

175ml 5.7, 250ml 7.7, Bottle 23

Côtes de Thongue, Vin de Pays de l'Hérault 2021

Delicious, warming blend (principally Merlot with some Grenache and Carignan) created for carefree, youthful and instant gratification.

175ml 5.8, 250ml 7.8, Bottle 24

Continued overleaf

## White

### Sauvignon Blanc 'Klein Louis', Napier Winery, South Africa 2021

Clean, dry and fresh with tangy green apple, nettle (ouch) and gooseberry aromas and zingy grapefruit acidity. In other words, delish.

175ml 6, 250ml 8.1, Bottle 24

### Picpoul de Pinet, Ludovic Gaujal, Languedoc 2022

The Williams quaffer of choice. Zesty and bracing, with crisp ozone aromas tangy citrus notes and long pebbly finish.

175ml 6, 250ml 8.1, Bottle 24

### Gavi di Gavi, Nicola Bergaglio, Piemonte, Italy 2021

Award-winning, generous and ripe. Elegant and faultless. Was going to say it's my favourite white and then I remembered the Crozes (see Short List), so *one of my favourites.*

175ml 7, 250ml 9.5, Bottle 28

### Verdejo 'Basa', Telmo Rodriguez, Rueda, Spain 2021

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, November 2022.*

175ml 6, 250ml 8.1, Bottle 24

## Rosé

### Chinon, Rudolphe Raffault, Loire Valley 2022

A fresh and satisfying coral-pink Cabernet Franc, which displays redcurrant and raspberries in abundance and works brilliantly both as aperitif and partner to food (particularly seafood, white fish and spiced cuisine).

175ml 6.5, 250ml 8.5, Bottle 25