



Next Door

Wines

The Short List

Introducing probably the best wine list in Wales, which 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.

Rhys Williams, June 2022

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!
26
3. Prensai 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.
28
4. Greco di Tufo, Villa Raiano, Campania, Italy 2020
Lovely stuff from southern Italy. "Racy and vibrant," says *Wine Magazine*. Tip-top say we. Citrus blossoms, orchard scents, flipping delicious.
28
5. 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.
30
6. 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 apparent!...)
30
7. Pinot Grigio, Alois Ladeger, Alto Adige, Italy 2020
We decided if we were going to feature the ubiquitous PG, it had better be a good 'un that puts the all-too-many pale, bland namesakes well and truly in the *ombra*.
30
9. Albarino, Lagar de Cervera, Rias Baixas, Spain 2021
Cult wine in Galicia, the north-western region of Spain from where it hails. Not hard to see why when you taste it: elegant and with real depth of flavour.
32
11. 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.
32

13. Chardonnay, Forest Hill, Mount Baker, Western Australia 2019
 Classy Australian. Two words you don't hear too often together, unless you're referring to the late, great Clive James. Balanced, textured, ripe. 33
15. Domaine de Torracchia, Christian Imbert, Corsica 2020
 Just brilliant. Herby in a way that doesn't bring to mind an ageing VW Beetle with a mind of its own. Crisp, refreshing and satisfying. 32
17. Sancerre 'Les Perriers', Andre Vatan, Loire Valley 2020
 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 lemon zest. 33
19. Coteaux du Languedoc 'Les Muriers', Mas Bruguière 2020
 Blend of Marsanne and Rousanne delivers deep straw colours, ripe plum aromas with citrus and minerals on the finish. Organic to boot. 35.5
21. Bandol, Mas de la Rouvière, Domaines Bunan, Provence 2020
 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. 36
22. Sauvignon Blanc, Greywacke, Marlborough, New Zealand 2021
 Greywacke is where Kevin Judd went after Cloudy Bay. Not your typical Marlborough Sav at all, this is like sponge cake with lemon icing plus some peach and melon lobbed in for good measure. 38
23. Chablis Premier Cru 'Beuroy', Christophe Camu, 2019
 Concentrated, expressive, superior Premier Cru with good complexity on the palate and long, satisfying finish. Top stuff. 42
25. Crozes Hermitage, Alain Graillot, Rhône 2020
 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. 42.5

27. Viognier, Le Pied de Samson, Christine Vernay, Rhône 2020
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. Pretty amazing really.

50

Rosé

68. Chinon, Jean-Maurice Raffault, France 2021
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).

24

70. Côtes de Provence 'Sainte Magdeleine', Jonathan Sack 2021
The Williams family rosé of choice (and we've had a few) and quintessentially Provençale, so elegant, pale and infused with wild strawberries, redcurrant and raspberry.

35

Red

30. Nero d'Avola, Bruno Fina, Sicily 2020
So you can trust a Sicilian (fans of the *Princess Bride* will understand). Big, generous and hearty delivering heaps of morello cherry and soft tannins to help it slip down.

27

32. Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Contesa, Pescara, Italy 2019
Fine, full-flavoured combining dark bramble, black cherry (what, more cherries?) and spicy oak.

27

33. Côtes du Rhône, Cuvée Personelle, Pascal Frères 2019
We've stocked this since we came to Dunoon 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.

27

34. 'Richesse', Christo Le Riche, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2018
Great Bordelaise blend provides juicy mouth-filling flavours of red berries and plums balanced with a fine, soft tannic structure and rounded finish. Cracking value. 28
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. 28
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
40. Cabernet Franc, Chateau Fouquet, Paul Filliatreau, Loire Valley 2019
"Beguiling," concludes *The Spectator* in describing this hugely expressive cassis-loaded example of Cab Franc. 30
42. Syrah du Maroc 'Tandem', Ouled Thaleb/Alain Graillot, Morocco 2019
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. 31.5
44. Dolcetto d'Alba, Renato Fenocchio, Piedmont Italy 2019
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. 31.5
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 ace right now. 32.5
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. 32.5

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 eaterie in London). V v good. 35.5
52. Bierzo 'Encinas', Raul Perez, Spain 2018
 The deeply trendy Mencía 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. 36
54. Rioja Reserva, Valenciso, Luis Valentin & Carmen Enciso 2012
 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. 36
55. Aglianico Taurasi, Villa Raiano, Campania, Italy 2015
 Iconic, cult (can you be both at once?) red from Southern Italy. Rich, dark, complex, choc-full of black fruit, liquorice and, well, chocolate. Not sure there's a more complete expression of the Aglianico grape out there. Cannot commend it enough. 36
56. Bandol, Mas de la Rouvière, Domaines Bunan, Provence 2018
 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). 37
57. 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
58. 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). 37
60. 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. 38

62. Ribera del Duero, Pesquera, Alejandro Fernandez, Spain 2015
A great wine in an excellent vintage. Fernandez is a top-class producer and here creates a concentrated tempranillo/cencibel blend with spicy fruit and a long, lingering finish.
- 38.5
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 2019
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.
- 45
- 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".
- 54

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.
- 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 only from Pinot Noir harvested from Grand Cru vineyards. Le business, as they almost certainly never say in France.

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.

79

Dessert

72. Monbazillac, Domaine de l'Ancienne Cure, Christian Roche 2015

Versatile, rich and complex 'sticky', which will complement most puds wonderfully (and, incidentally, goes down a treat with *foie gras*). Share a half bottle over a couple of nights.

Glass (125ml) 5

Half bottle 18

74. Banyuls Reserva, Domaine de la Tour Vieille

Banyul is France's finest dark, sweet wine. Brilliant with chocolate puds and excellent as an aperitif.

Glass (125ml) 6 Bottle 29

Continued overleaf

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 and fresh with bags of berry fruit.

175ml 6.1, 250ml 8.1, Bottle 24

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.

175ml 5.8, 250ml 7.8, Bottle 24

Negroamaro 'Il Medaglione', Leone de Castris, Salento 2019

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 2020

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

White

Sauvignon Blanc 'Klein Louis', Napier Winery, South Africa 2020

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 2021

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 2020

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 6.5, 250ml 8.7, Bottle 26

Verdejo, Bodegas Naia, Rueda, Spain 2020

100 per cent Verdejo yields an elegant and complex wine, its structure a function of four months' ageing on its lees. I got nectarines the last time I tried it, which is odd as I asked for wine.

175ml 6.4, 250ml 8.6, Bottle 25.5

Rosé

Chinon, Jean-Maurice Raffault, France 2021

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, 250ml 8.1, Bottle 24