

# Decanter

*The world's best wine magazine*

January 2016 £4.40

## 50 STAR BUYS OF 2015



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# 50 star buys of 2015



From the thousands of wines tasted and rated by *Decanter's* expert judges and writers over the past 12 months, we have picked out 50 of the highest-scoring bottles available in the UK. And with 14 of them under £20, there's a host of affordable treats on the following pages to kickstart your seasonal festivities

TO CELEBRATE THE end of another year of great wines, three of our regular experts – Peter Richards MW, Sarah Jane Evans MW and Xavier Rousset MS – have chosen *Decanter's* 50 star buys from the hundreds of wines rated Outstanding in 2015.

Every one scored 18.5/20 (95/100) points and above during the past 12 months and are all still commercially available, with the selection taken from our monthly panel tastings and Weekday Wines, as well as recommendations from our writers that have been published in feature articles and supplements. Our three experts retasted the wines blind (only the principal grape variety and vintage were known) and judged them totally on their own merits.

The tasting included lots of stylistic differences but our panel unanimously agreed on the final 50. The top 10 are highlighted on these first two pages, with the others grouped by region.

The results provoked a few surprises, with white wines and Australia the stars. Rousset found the Australian whites very pure and precise with great minerality

and balance. 'The country's wines have had a tough time, especially Chardonnay, often criticised as too extracted and over-oaked with high alcohol. Producers have reacted to that and it's paying off.' Richards also praised Australia's other popular varieties such as Riesling, Pinot Noir and Syrah for being 'better and more elegant and diverse than ever before'.

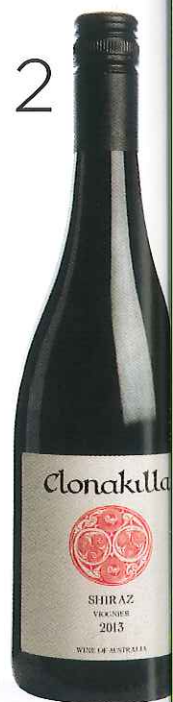
No sparkling wines made it into the judges' top 10, but Richards found the two English wines (see p28) 'wonderfully expressive and vivid'.

Evans praised the variety of drinking pleasure on offer in these 50 star buys: 'There are wines with glorious individual character – such as Charme and Chryseia from the Douro (see p32), the new-wave Argentinian Malbec blends like Ji Ji Ji and Demente (p27), and an unexpectedly lovely expression of Marsanne from Oratoire St-Martin (p31).'

Many of the wines recommended offer great value for money (prices and stockists have been checked and updated) and can all be bought with confidence as they come with the *Decanter* seal of approval.

## 1 Vasse Felix, Heytesbury Chardonnay, Margaret River, Western Australia 2013

£29.95-£35 Christopher Piper, Laithwaite's, Fine & Rare, Hawkshead, Hedonism, Slurp, St Andrews Wine Co, Vin Cognito  
Wonderfully complex aromas of fresh dough, roasted nuts and butter. Ripe fruit palate with a rich lemon curd note, along with well-integrated oak and balanced sweetness and acidity. Racy and elegant, a stunning and refined modern Chardonnay. **Drink** 2016-2022 **Alcohol** 13.5%



## 6 Viu Manent, Gran Reserva Chardonnay, Casablanca, Chile 2013

£12.45-£13.99 Flagship Wines, North & South Wines, Partridges  
Beautiful nutty, preserved lemon rind and struck flint aromas. Great concentration of savoury tones on the palate with vivid lime pith lift and a broad, long finish. Elegantly crafted with amazing balance and lovely acidity. **Drink** 2016-2024 **Alc** 13%





Italy

**Poggiotondo, Vigna delle Conchiglie Riserva, Chianti, Tuscany 2011**

£48-£50 Exel Wines, Liberty Wines, Slurp, Winedirect  
Floral, cherry and earthy fruit with firm tannins – quite punchy. An endearing Chianti that should be one of the stars of the region. **Drink** 2016-2022 **Alc** 14%



New Zealand

**Man O' War, Dreadnought Syrah, Waiheke Island 2012**

£34 Carruthers & Kent, Must Wines, The New Zealand Cellar, Oxford Wine Co, Swig  
Black pepper, hints of violets and warm earth. Juicy and tangy palate with fine, firm tannins and some toasty oak. Still young and self-contained with lots of potential still to emerge. **Drink** 2016-2028 **Alc** 14%



New Zealand

**Man O' War, Dreadnought Syrah, Waiheke Island 2013**

£35-£36 Carruthers & Kent, Exel Wines, New Generation Wines, The New Zealand Cellar, Swig  
Dark fruit, charred tones, some leathery tannins and bacon notes. The palate has lots of black fruit with a touch of mint; complex and classy with a black pepper finish. **Drink** 2016-2029 **Alc** 14.5%



Portugal

**Niepoort, Charme, Douro 2012**

£59.95 Bottle Apostle, Corks of Cotham, Fortnum & Mason, Handford, Highbury Vintners, Raymond Reynolds, Wadebridge Wines, Woodwinters  
Coffee and caramel aromas lead on to a palate of dark cherry, plum and liquorice with a faint floral hint. Medium bodied with juicy fruits and firm tannins. Finishes a bit rustic with peppery spice. **Drink** 2016-2019 **Alc** 14%



Portugal

**Prats & Symington, Chryseia, Douro 2012**

£50-£60 Berry Bros & Rudd, Davy's, Fortnum & Mason, Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Hedonism  
Lovely, ripe dark berries with black pepper, bacon, violets and powerful tannins. Quite savoury and forceful in style with a rustic, complex finish. **Drink** 2016-2025 **Alc** 14%



Portugal

**Quinta do Vale Meão, Douro 2012**

£59.95 Corks of Cotham, D Byrne & Co, Harvey Nichols, Hanford, Hedonism, Highbury Vintners, Lockett Bros, Raymond Reynolds, Uncorked, Woodwinters  
A vibrant nose of floral, high-toned, slightly raisined fruit. Decent palate weight – but not overloaded – with a fine, peppery structure and a savoury finish. **Drink** 2016-2023 **Alc** 14%



Portugal

**Quinta do Vesuvio, Port, Douro 1994**

£60-£91.90 Berry Bros & Rudd, Bordeaux Index, Christopher Piper, Handford Wines, Justerini & Brooks, Private Cellar, Tanners, The Wine Society  
Beautiful peppery aromas of prunes, plums, graphite and muscovado sugar. Unctuous and full of life, lifted by cherry and tobacco. Balanced and maturing with a bittersweet finish. **Drink** 2016-2045 **Alc** 20%



Portugal

**Quinta Vale Dona Maria, Curriculum Vitae, Douro 2012**

£51.45 Corney & Barrow  
Upfront, floral, creamy and plush dark fruit – seems quite modern in style. The juicy palate has a spicy, tarry character and fine powdery tannins. Quite savoury with good acidity. **Drink** 2016-2022 **Alc** 14.5% ➤

For full details of UK stockists, see p116