



The Crown & Castle wine list

**An EC warning: most wines contain sulphites, a known allergen – oh,
and alcohol, too.**

Sherry

served in 70ml measures

Manzanilla, La Gitana, Hidalgo

Served chilled, manzanilla is as dry as a bone but with a slightly salty, biscuity nuance. It's particularly good with tapas and seafood. 5.00

Puerto Fino, Lustau

Fino is always a dry and elegant sherry but this one is a real class act with great length and smoothness, as well as a typical almond edge. It's marvellous as an aperitif and, just like manzanilla, goes very well with shellfish. 5.00

Amontillado Napoleon, Hidalgo

A medium-dry sherry with a full-flavoured, nutty, rich finish, it's terrific with mushrooms and nuts as well as rich offal dishes. 5.00

East India Solera, Lustau

A cream sherry but hugely better than the usual stuff as it's barrel-aged and has some complexity as well as a pleasing nuttiness – which is also why it costs a bit more than run-of-the-mill cream sherries. 6.00

Blandy's Alvada 5-year-old Madeira

Obviously this is not a sherry but a wonderful madeira made from 50% Bual and 50% Malmsey grapes, and aged naturally in oak casks. With hints of chocolate, raisins, toffee and molasses, it is really lush but with a fine acidity and a long, bright, honied finish. Exceptionally drinkable. 6.00

CICHETI (chee-keh-tee) for two to share

includes Gordal Reina almond-stuffed green olives, Moulin de Daudet black olives, fennel brigantini, coppa (salami) heirloom radishes & vintage pecorino 13.00

served in the bar or restaurant from 12.15 to 2.30pm
and from 6.30pm to 9.30pm

Colour coding explanation

White wines and sparkling wines are on pages headed in green

Red wines are on pages headed in red

Wines typed in purple are particular favourites of the props.

Wine service – or reasons for the lack of it

It's not laziness but simply because:

- we (the props.) dislike the general rhubarb that so often accompanies the imbibing of wine
- if the wine is faulty, it's faulty, and no amount of sniffing or sipping will alter the fact – or the need for it to be replaced forthwith.
- seeing the bottle marooned across the room while one's glass remains empty (and the waiter oblivious) is infuriating – much better for the guest to pour the wine as and when it's wanted.
- leaving guests to pour their own wine allows the person driving to monitor and control their intake accurately.

BUT if you would prefer that we served your wine in the traditional way, then please let us know at the time of ordering. Despite our personal reservations we will happily oblige. (Truly.)

White wines by the 175ml glass

The wines below, as well as our house white, Soave, are available by the glass. If you don't want to finish a whole bottle in one sitting, we're happy to 'Verre de Vin' it for you – this will keep it in good order for the next day.

W1 Trinity Hill, Sauvignon Blanc, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, 2015

Unlike many Antipodean wines, this sauvignon is restrained and elegant. It is fresh but sumptuous, with gentle goosegogs on the nose and palate. The vineyard is owned by the Wilsons of London's Bleeding Heart restaurant fame. 8.00 (bin 22)

W2 Montesquiou, Cuvade Precieuse, Jurancon, France, 2015

If you have heard of these grapes you must be a true wine connoisseur – petit manseng and gros manseng and courbu. All that really matters is that they combine to make a marvellously different, lip-smacking, aromatic wine with a wonderfully fresh, zingy finish. We are bowled over by this wine. 8.00 (bin 31)

W3 Pinot Blanc, Zellenberg, Marc Tempe, Alsace, 2014

An instantly joyous, silky-smooth, rich, utterly gorgeous wine that reminds us of how pinot blanc used to taste but now rarely does. 50-year-old vines, that yield only a small amount, undoubtedly contribute to the sumptuous quality of this beautifully made wine. Frankly it's worth double the cost. 10.00 (bin 70)

W5 Domaine Oratoire St Martin, Reserve des Seigneurs, Cairanne, France 2014

Made with 50% clairette and 50% roussane, the otherwise peachy, floral notes of this rounded wine are tempered with an interesting slightly salty nuance. To add to the sophistication there is a slight tension on the finish that stops it being flabby. A very nice glass of wine. 8.00 (bin 50)

W6 Ca' dei Frati, Lugana, Italy, 2015

One of our all-time favourite wines, this is made from Turbiana grapes (who they?) on the glacial soils near Lake Garda. Rather more importantly, the wine is fabulous – concentrated but retaining a crisp, fresh, lively finish it's redolent of lemons, peaches and all things glorious, and it's beautifully structured. 9.00 (bin 32)

W7 Rosa dei Frati, Riviera del Garda Bresciano, Italy, 2015

A pink wine made near Lake Garda, in northern Italy, the producer is also responsible for one of our favourite white wines, Lugana (above). Their 'rosa' is so elegant it could have been crafted by Balenciaga. We love its gorgeous subtle colour, good berry fruits and utter stylishness. 9.00 (bin 33)

Red wines by the 175ml glass

The wines below, as well as our house red, Momentos – which is a merlot – are available by the glass. If you don't want to finish a whole bottle in one sitting, we're happy to 'Verre de Vin' it for you.)

R1 Pinot Noir, Innocent Bystander, Yarra Valley, Australia 2015

With France pretty much pricing itself out of the market when it comes to elegant fruit-packed burgundy, the New World tends to step into the breach. We normally plump for New Zealand pinot but, unusually, we all felt this refined, velvety Australian wine, with its dark, slightly spicy cherry flavours and soft tannins, really hit the mark. A lovely wine by any account. 9.00 (bin 103)

R2 NéPriCa, Tormaresca, Puglia, Italy, 2014

This really approachable wine is made from a mélange of cabernet sauvignon, primitivo and negroamaro (see R4). It has a firm structure with a moderate degree of tannin balanced by fantastic fruit. It is clean, with good length and, all-in-all, is a jolly good glass of wine at very reasonable cost. 6.00 (bin 138)

R3 Chateau Pinteraie, Cahors, France, 2014

Recently elevated to Chateau status this is about as far removed as possible from the traditional, throat-stripping rough Cahor of one's youth. Made mostly from malbec, the vines are at least 30 years old and traditionally tended. The grapes are then blended with 15% merlot to temper the tannins. The result is a sumptuous fruity wine redolent of redcurrants and cherries, with a slight spiciness and great finesse. 8.00 (bin 83)

R4 12 e mezzo, Negroamaro del Salento, Varvaglione, Italy, 2015

The negroamaro grape is very dark-skinned, as the name suggests, and has associations with Puglia that go back over 1500 years. Almost absurdly quaffable for a red wine, this has a sweet, velvety lushness that's full of charm, but its main claim to fame is the restrained amount of alcohol, 12.5%, hence the name. Not a block-buster, it merely offers instant lingual happiness. 7.00 (bin 128)

R5 Passo Doble, Masi, Tupungato Mendoza, Argentina, 2014

Gosh, this packs a punch. – definitely a wine to drink with robust foods. Malbec and corvina are the grape varieties. The wine has great 'legs' and a fabulous purple hue that's followed up by a ripe full-bodiedness and a hint of tannin on the finish. 7.00 (bin 82)

R6 Campofiorin, Ripasso, Masi, Italy, 2013

From the Veneto, Campofiorin has been one of our favourite wines for many years. The trade-marked 'ripasso' method is a process in which the Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara grapes are first fermented then re-fermented using partly dried grapes. As the label rightly claims, the wine combines simplicity and grace with power and majesty and, rather more prosaically, is rich, fruity, mouth-filling and velvety, with great structure. 8.50 (bin 84)

Sparkling wines by the bottle

PROSECCO

People can be very sniffy about this delicate, sparkling Italian wine, because a lot of it is truly awful. This one is not. It has serious structure and refinement, and plenty of fruit as well as the essential fragrance and frivolity you'd expect from prosecco.

150 Prosecco, Villa Sandi, Valdobbiadene, 2015 Italy 33 pounds
(and by the 175ml flute – 9.00)

CHAMPAGNE

Not many restaurants have something as good as P-J as their house champagne but it came out top in a tasting of 20-plus champagnes that our wine merchants sent in and we couldn't resist it. Perrier-Jouët (pronounced Perrier-Shoo-ette, because of those two dots over the 'e') really is sublime stuff and great value for a Grand Marque. Another champagne that never fails to please is Louis Roederer. I remember the heady days when we drank Cristal as the norm, but that was before lumpen louts got paid far too much for kicking a ball around.

159 Perrier-Jouët, Grand Brut, NV France 65
(and by the 150ml flute – 12.00)
152 Perrier-Jouët, Blason Rosé, NV France 88
160 Louis Roederer Brut Premier, NV France 65
153 Perrier-Jouët, Belle Epoque, 2006 France 180

Perrier-Jouët, Grand Brut (159) has a sprightly but fine mousse and a bouquet redolent of brioche. It is soft and feminine, but with good structure, and has a lovely, slightly citrus, buttery flavour.

Perrier-Jouët, Blason Rosé (152) employs 43% pinot noir in this wonderful rosé with its coppery tint and aroma of raspberries and rose petals. It's full, silky and sensuous (and the bottle is very beautiful).

Perrier-Jouët, Belle Epoque (153) is a dazzler. 50% chardonnay and 45% pinot noir with just a touch of meunier give it a marvellous green-gold colour. It is complex and rich, with delightful hints of honey, vanilla and short bread. Like any good champagne, it drinks as well on its own as with food, especially shellfish.

White wines by the bottle

HOUSE WHITE

Our house white is a soave which comes from an area between Venice and Verona. Superb value, it's made by a co-operative but the production is overseen by Matt Thomson, a New Zealander who is one of those trendy 'flying' winemakers. More importantly, the wine has good weight and good fruit (cantaloup melon, should you be interested). It is also beautifully balanced and the crisp finish is well controlled.

| | | | |
|---|---|-------|-----------|
| 1 | Alpha Zeta 'S' Soave, 2016 (and by the 175ml glass – 5.00) | Italy | 20 pounds |
|---|---|-------|-----------|

SAUVIGNON

In its native France, the sauvignon grape makes clean, crisp wines with just a hint of gooseberry and elderflower on the nose. It's a really easy-going grape and one which marries perfectly with shellfish, fish and chicken. Take sauvignon to the New World, though, and it not only undergoes a name change to blanc fumé (or fumé blanc, even), but also develops an accentuated flavour more reminiscent of lychees, mangoes and passionfruit than dear old goosegogs. The Greywacke is made by a Cloudy Bay alumnus and is really opulent, with naturally occurring yeasts creating a year-long fermentation.

| | | | |
|----|---|--------|----|
| 19 | Greywacke Wild Sauvignon, Marlborough, 2014 | NZ | 47 |
| 22 | Trinity Hill, Hawkes Bay, 2015 | NZ | 30 |
| 39 | Pouilly Fumé, Domaine des Berthiers, J C Dagueneau, 2015 | France | 37 |
| 40 | Sancerre, Regis Jouan, 2016 | France | 36 |
| 49 | Fairview, Charles Back, Paarl, 2016 | SA | 24 |
| 56 | Touraine, Guy Allion, 2015 | France | 26 |
| 59 | de Gras, Mont Gras, Colchagua Valley, 2016 | Chile | 22 |

PINOT GRIS (also known as pinot grigio or tokay) and PINOT BLANC

Pinot gris is at its best grown in Alsace, where it produces superbly rich, complex wines. It is vastly different but just as wonderful in the light, vibrant wines of northern Italy, where a floral, slightly spicy note can also be detected. The Ponte del Diavolo has real character but is typical in style. The Russiz, on the other hand, is not typical but a marvellously, rich, sophisticated wine. As for the Pinot Blanc, made with grapes from 50-year old vines, we are in raptures over its sumptuous silkiness.

| | | | |
|----|--|--------|----|
| 27 | Pinot Grigio, Ponte del Diavolo, 2015 | Italy | 26 |
| 57 | Pinot Gris, The Pointer, Marlborough, 2015 | NZ | 36 |
| 66 | Pinot Grigio, Russiz Superiore, 2014 | Italy | 47 |
| 70 | Pinot Blanc, Zellenberg, Marc Tempe 2014 | France | 38 |

White wines by the bottle

CHARDONNAY

One of the world's greatest grapes, chardonnay is used to make one of the world's best wines, namely white burgundy. While French chardonnay tends to be buttery, complex and elegant, Australian chardonnay can be completely OTT, especially when casked in new oak (something we try to avoid listing). Chardonnay marries beautifully with many washed rind and softer cheeses, as well as fish, chicken and cream sauces.

| | | | |
|----|---|--------|-----------|
| 20 | Chablis, Domaine Vocoret, 2015 | France | 34 pounds |
| 23 | Trinity Hill, Gimblett Road, Hawkes Bay, 2015 | NZ | 45 |
| 29 | Meursault, Jean-Michel Gaunoux, 2013 | France | 70 |
| 48 | de Gras, Mont Gras, Colchagua Valley, 2015 | Chile | 22 |
| 35 | Chardonnay, Tormaresca, Puglia, 2015 | Italy | 24 |
| 52 | Puligny-Montrachet, Le Trezin, Jean-Luc Joillot, 2015 | France | 70 |
| 54 | Montagny Buissonnier, Buxy, 2014 | France | 29 |
| 55 | Bramito del Cervo, C della Sala, Antinori, 2015 | Italy | 39 |
| 61 | Rully, Henri de Villamont, 2012 | France | 40 |
| 63 | Pouilly-Fuissé, Domaine Perraton Frères, 2013 | France | 39 |

VIIGNIER

A superb variety, grown mostly in the Rhone Valley, viognier is what makes Condrieu and Chateau Grillet so fantastic. As a generic it produces full-bodied wines that go well with big-flavoured food. The French wine, listed here, is a particularly good example of a traditional viognier seldom found at this price: lush, aromatic and with a steely twist.

| | | | |
|----|---|--------|----|
| 21 | Trinity Hill, Hawkes Bay, Gimblett Road, 2014 | NZ | 42 |
| 47 | 01-09-2015, Les Vendanges du Domaine Rougie | France | 31 |

RIESLING

Pronounced 'reesling', there's a world of difference between well-made Alsacien and German riesling, not to mention Blue Nun - let's not. When it's good and has some bottle age, riesling is amazing, with an intense, lingering flavour redolent of petrol (sounds horrible, but isn't) and an alluring acidity. Depending on how late the grapes are harvested, riesling can vary from dry to sweet. Mosel is low in alcohol, light and wondrously lovely to quaff, especially as an aperitif and/or outside in the sun. A wine for those who prefer medium wine to dry.

| | | | |
|----|---|-----------|----|
| 25 | Riesling Signature, René Muré, Alsace, 2013 | France | 35 |
| 53 | Mount Horrocks, Watervale, Clare Valley, 2015 | Australia | 38 |
| 60 | Julius, Henschke, Eden Valley, 2014 | Australia | 48 |
| 65 | Dr Loosen, Mosel, 2014 | Germany | 24 |
| 79 | Cono Sur, Rserve Especial, Bio Bio Valley, 2014 | Chile | 25 |

White wines by the bottle

GEWURZTRAMINER

Gewurztraminer is synonymous with Alsace, where it's made into stunningly spicy, complex, musky wines - often with an equally stunning price tag. This is the grape that restaurateurs and wine merchants often go for. It's perfect with smoked fish and other spicy food.

| | | | |
|----|---|--------|-----------|
| 44 | Trimbach, Alsace, 2014 | France | 36 pounds |
| 67 | Cuvée des Seigneurs de Ribeaupierre, Trimbach, Alsace, 2007 | France | 58 |

THE ITALIAN MOB (we love Italian wines and they represent terrific value)

Made from the garganega grape, soave is too often a foul, thin, rubbishy wine. Not our house wine, though and definitely not La Rocca. This is a truly outstanding, 'real' Soave Classico, and it is complex, fresh, smooth and rich.

The vernaccia grape is grown in Tuscany and the wines it produces vary enormously from the crisp, dry and light to the golden, rich and full-bodied. Vernaccia di San Gimignano has a characteristic bitter finish but with a soft, smooth body. The Greco di Tufo comes from a vineyard near the Bay of Naples and is called Vesevo because that's the historic name for Vesuvius (betcha didn't know that – and nor did I until I checked the tasting notes). It's the volcanic ash that contributes to the 'terroir'. The wine is aromatic with hints of melon and pears, but has a nice crisp, mineral edge, too.

Terre di Tufi is one of our all-time favourites, as is the Gavi di Gavi made from Cortese grapes in the Piedmont region. The Vermentino has a slight petillance, and is rich, floral and fruity. A Mano is a blend of fiano and Greco di Tufo and is full of tropical fruit.

Honestly, the wines listed below could all be in purple – we think they are terrific to drink and fantastic value compared to other parts of the world.

| | | | |
|----|--|-------|----|
| 1 | Alpha Zeta 'S' Soave, 2016 | Italy | 20 |
| 18 | Pratto, Ca' dei Frati, 2010 | Italy | 45 |
| 24 | Greco di Tufo, Vesevo, 2015 | Italy | 34 |
| 28 | La Rocca Soave, Pieropan, 2013 | Italy | 54 |
| 30 | Vernaccia di S Gimignano, Terruzi & Puthod, 2015 | Italy | 26 |
| 32 | Lugana, Ca' dei Frati, 2015 | Italy | 33 |
| 34 | Vermentino, Cala Silente, Santadi, Sardinia, 2015 | Italy | 31 |
| 51 | Pecorino, Terre di Chieti, Vellordor, Ronchi 2015 | Italy | 28 |
| 45 | A Mano Fiano, Shannon & Sbalchiero, Puglia, 2015 | Italy | 27 |
| 35 | Chardonnay, Tormaresca, Puglia, 2015 | Italy | 24 |
| 55 | Bramito del Cervo, Cas. della Sala, Antinori, 2015 | Italy | 38 |
| 64 | Sannio Falanghina, Vesevo, 2015 | Italy | 25 |
| 68 | Gavi di Gavi, Lugarara, 2015 | Italy | 39 |
| 69 | Terre di Tufi, Teruzzi & Puthod, Tuscany, 2014 | Italy | 49 |
| 71 | Vinnae Ribolla Gialla, Jermann, 2014 | Italy | 48 |

White and rosé wines by the bottle

BRILLIANT BLENDS and LESS USUAL GRAPE VARIETIES

So many wine-makers are throwing away the rule book (especially that devised by bureaucrats) and creating spectacular wines from a (sometimes unlikely) blend of grapes. This section may also have the odd country wine in it - normally cheap and cheerful, but perfectly respectable – and in the case of the picpoul (a grape variety also spelled piquepoul), quite marvellous.

Fraser Gallop is made from 70% semillon and 30% sauvignon and is clean and fresh. We are also fond of the South African chenin blanc, both in its simpler form and FMC, which is made from hand-selected grapes and (judiciously) oak-aged. Grolleau Gris is a rarity with only 13 producers growing the grape – a shame as the resulting wine is fresh, with nice minerality and great structure. Better than most muscadets, it is similarly excellent with fish and shellfish. Bin 50 is from Cairanne in the Southern Rhones and a delightfully sophisticated, well-made wine showing peachy fruits with a slightly salty nuance

| | | | |
|----|--|-----------|-----------|
| 17 | Fraser Gallop, Margaret River, 2012 | Australia | 40 pounds |
| 26 | Picpoul de Pinet, Domaine Beauvignac, 2015 | France | 25 |
| 36 | Grolleau Gris, Dom. du Haut Bourg, Loire, 2014 | France | 21 |
| 37 | Albarino, Martin Códax, Rias Baixas, 2015 | Spain | 35 |
| 42 | Chenin Blanc Reserve, Ken Forrester, 2015 | SA | 27 |
| 43 | Fasto, Verdejo, Rueda, 2014 | Spain | 24 |
| 58 | Crozes Hermitage, Domaine des Entrefeux, 2013 | France | 35 |
| 31 | Montesquiou, Cuvade precieuse, Jurancon sec 2015 | France | 32 |
| 78 | FMC, Stellenbosch, 2014 | SA | 55 |
| 50 | Dom. Oratoire St Martin, Cairanne, 2014 | France | 33 |

ROSE

Australian rosé is exceedling lush and accessible, with overt cherry-berry flavours and markedly pink colouring. The Italian Alpha Zeta and Rosato listed below are similarly uncomplicated and make for happy summer drinking.

But many wine makers are really concentrating on improving rosé's frivolous reputation and succeeding in making wonderfully elegant and classy wines. Riviera del Garda Bresciano is a great example. While it is ineffably charming with its plump middle the finish is restrained and fine. Best of all is Sacha Lichine's Rock Angel, made from the ancient Tibouren grape. Jancis Robinson describes it as, "alluring ... beautifully balanced, satin-smooth and ... a seriously fine wine." With its steely finish we couldn't agree more.

| | | | |
|----|--|-----------|----|
| 33 | Riviera del Garda Bresciano, Cà dei Frati, 2015 | Italy | 34 |
| 38 | Rose of Virginia, Charles Melton, 2014 | Australia | 38 |
| 41 | Pinot Grigio Rosato, Ponte Pietra, Veneto, 2015 | Italy | 23 |
| 46 | Alpha Zeta, Rosato, 2015 | Italy | 20 |
| 62 | Rock Angel, Ch. d'Esclans, Cotes du Provence, 2015 | France | 47 |

Red wines by the bottle

HOUSE RED

Chile is doing a brilliant job these days of producing wines that give the Old World a real run for its money. In an across-the-board tasting, our house merlot was chosen because of its good structure and length, a desirable hint of tannin and plenty of smooth fruit – and the new 2014 vintage is even more appealing than the last.

| | | | |
|---|---|-------|-----------|
| 2 | Momentos, Los Boldos, Valle de Rapel, 2014 (and by the 175ml glass – 5.00) | Chile | 20 pounds |
|---|---|-------|-----------|

GAMAY

This is the grape that makes Beaujolais, a wine that should be drunk when it's fresh, young, vibrantly fruity and still purple. Gamay goes well with chicken, youthful cheeses and gutsy fish, such as red gurnard or sardines. Valdigué is believed to be the original gamay (and we tend to prefer it). The French often serve Beaujolais chilled and if you prefer it this way, please just say.

| | | | |
|-----|--|--------|----|
| 85 | Chiroubles, Ch. de Raousset, Remy Passot, 2014 | France | 26 |
| 91 | Fleurie, Louise Tête, 2014 | France | 33 |
| 108 | Wildflower (Valdigué), Monterey, J. Lohr, 2014 | USA | 27 |

PINOT NOIR

The grape that gives Burgundy its essential character, pinot noir is gorgeously juicy with – when correct – sumptuous cherry-berry flavours, a velvety texture and a great structure. It does not fair so well in hot climates but the pinots from temperate climates such as Oregon and New Zealand can be every bit as rewarding as a French pinot noir.

We particularly like Greywacke, created by Kevin Judd, chief winemaker at Cloudy Bay, for its rounded weightiness, with hints of berries, spice and a little smokiness. Sales of Crimson support a charitable conservation trust which plants and protects native NZ trees, the colour of which inspired the name. The wine takes a few minutes to open up and is then quite savoury, with the cherry fruits piqued by hints of thyme and sandalwood.

| | | | |
|-----|--|--------|----|
| 92 | Mercurey, 1er Cru, 'Les Crets', Suremain, 2013 | France | 42 |
| 93 | Ata Rangi 'Crimson', Martinborough, 2014 | NZ | 42 |
| 103 | Pinot Noir, Innocent Bystander, Yarra Valley, 2015 | Aus | 33 |
| 114 | Focara, Colli Pesaresi, Marche, Mancini, 2011 | Italy | 50 |
| 116 | Greywacke, Marlborough, 2013 | NZ | 63 |
| 118 | Sebastiani, Sonoma Coast, 2014 | USA | 39 |
| 119 | Bourgogne Rouge, Chateau la Charriere, 2014 | France | 34 |
| 144 | Carneros, Saintsbury, 2013 | USA | 60 |
| 146 | Wild Earth, Central Otago, 2012 | NZ | 45 |

Red wines by the bottle

MERLOT

Often blended with cabernet sauvignon and/or cabernet franc, this is well worth looking at as a substitute for claret – not least because the most expensive claret in the world, Petrus, is made from 100% merlot. The grape ensures a smooth, soft and affable wine.

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|-----------|
| 2 | Momentos, Los Boldos, Valle de Rapel, 2014 | Chile | 20 pounds |
| 90 | Chateau Coutelin-Merville, St Estephe, 2002 | France | 40 |
| 111 | Montagne Noire, Vin de Pays d'Oc, 2015 | France | 25 |
| 126 | Chateau cru Godard, Cotes de Bordeaux, 2012 | France | 28 |
| 127 | Chateau de Bellevue, Lussac, St Emilion | France | 38 |
| 130 | Ch Gravieres, Graves, 2012 | France | 32 |
| 131 | Deakin Estate, Victoria, 2015 | Australia | 24 |
| 132 | Los Osos, Paso Robles, J.Lohr, 2013 | USA | 34 |

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Many of these wines have the addition of a little cabernet franc or merlot but that is quite usual even in the finest Bordeaux. Cabernet sauvignon brings inimitable distinction to wines from France to the Napa Valley. With high acidity and tannins, and a nose redolent of cedar and blackcurrants, there is no end to the complexity, nor the strength and structure of the wines. The problem is that really good Bordeaux is so expensive that only those who avoid paying taxes can now afford it; thus we are forced to the New World and artisan producers to try to fill the gap. The Santa Rita and Jester, for example, are amazing: instantly identifiable as cabernet sauvignon, with concentrated fruit and brilliant balance.

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|----|
| 80 | Jester, Mitolo, McLaren Vale, 2014 | Australia | 32 |
| 87 | Vina Santa Rita, Casa Real, Maipo Valley, 2012 | Chile | 65 |
| 89 | de Gras, Reserva, Mont Gras, Colchagua Valley, 2015 | Chile | 22 |
| 106 | Chateau d'Angludet, Margaux, 2009 | France | 65 |
| 115 | Glen Carlou, Paarl, 2014 | SA | 28 |
| 109 | Chateau Paveil de Luze, Margaux, 2008 | France | 52 |
| 147 | Peter Dennis, McLaren Vale, 2009 | Australia | 30 |

SYRAH (aka SHIRAZ)

Syrah in France and shiraz in the New World, it's the same grape, always producing massive, spicy, fruity, tannic, richly coloured wines that go on and on.

| | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|----|
| 73 | Cotes du Rhone, Domaine de Beurenard, 2015 | France | 27 |
| 81 | Chateauneuf du Pape, Gerard Jacumin, 2013 | France | 47 |
| 107 | Mandra Rossa, Sicily, 2015 | Italy | 23 |
| 121 | Goats Do Roam (ha!), Charles Back, Paarl, 2015 | SA | 24 |
| 149 | Tooma River, Reserve, Warburn Estate, 2015 | Australia | 22 |
| 117 | Ventoux AC, Martinelle, 2015 | France | 32 |

Red wines by the bottle

THE ITALIAN MOB – MONTEPULCIANO, SANGIOVESE, NEBBIOLO, NERO D'AVOLA, CARIGNANO, etc.

Montepulciano makes vivid, guzzling, generous wines and, confusingly, it's also the name of an important wine-growing area. With bitter-cherry fruit, sangiovese features in many of Italy's greatest wines, especially Chianti. Nowadays it is often blended with cabernet sauvignon or merlot to produce a claret-like wine that goes very well with beef or lamb.

Possibly the best Italian red grape, nebbiolo is what goes into Barolo and Barbaresco and makes fine, high-class wines that continue to improve for years.

The Campofiorin is a long-term favourite of ours. It is double-fermented, using a percentage of semi-dried grapes, and is a fine, fruity, really well-structured wine. NePriCa is made from a melange of cabernet sauvignon, primitivo and negroamaro, and is very approachable with fantastic fruit. La Poja, La Grola, and Brolo di Campofiorin are outstanding examples of single vineyard 'Super Venetians'.

Carmignano is on the list because it is really fat and fruity with 'good' tannin and excellent structure. The Salice Salentino again has lots of fruit and charm, and the Primitivo is similarly juicy but with a longer finish. The Sondaia is a real mouthful, green and herby, with a great finish. 12 e mezzo is from Puglia and hugely quaffable, but its greatest claim to fame is the 12.5% alcohol (hence the name) which is something of a restrained rarity in a world of 15% alcohol wines. There's lots more to say but this is a wine list, not Mein Kampf, so I will stop.

| | | | |
|-----|--|-------|-----------|
| 71 | Jorio, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo, U.Ronchi, 2014 | Italy | 33 pounds |
| 72 | Cúmaro, Conero riserva, Umani Ronchi, 2011 | Italy | 49 |
| 75 | La Segreta, Planeta, Sicily, 2014 | Italy | 25 |
| 84 | Campofiorin, Ripasso, Masi, 2013 | Italy | 32 |
| 101 | Santa Cecilia, Planeta, Sicily, 2011 | Italy | 48 |
| 104 | Peppoli, Chianti Classico, Antinori, 2015 | Italy | 37 |
| 105 | Salice Salentino Riserva, Trulli, 2013 | Italy | 25 |
| 107 | Mandra Rossa, Syrah, Sicily, 2014 | Italy | 23 |
| 112 | Sondaia Poggio al Tesoro, Bolgheri, 2012 | Italy | 65 |
| 120 | Brolo (not Barolo!) di Campofiorin, Masi, 2012 | Italy | 43 |
| 122 | Primitivo della Puglia, Bostromagno, 2014 | Italy | 28 |
| 123 | La Poja, Allegrini, 2009 | Italy | 95 |
| 124 | Carmignano, Villa di Capezzana, 2013 | Italy | 52 |
| 128 | 12emezzo, Negroamaro del Salento, 2015 | Italy | 27 |
| 133 | Palazzo della Torre, IGT, Allegrini, 2013 | Italy | 46 |
| 134 | La Grola, Allegrini, 2012 | Italy | 52 |
| 137 | Coste Rubin, Barbaresco, Fontanafredda, 2013 | Italy | 72 |
| 138 | Neprica, Tormaresca, Puglia, 2014 | Italy | 24 |
| 148 | Barolo di Serralunga d'Alba, Fontanafredda, 2011 | Italy | 72 |

Red wines by the bottle

TEMPRANILLO

Also known as tinto fino, this is the foundation grape for Rioja, as well as the much revered wines of Ribera del Duero. While most wines are made from pure tempranillo, there are many that include a touch of other varietals, such as graciano, garnacha (grenache), cariñena and monastrell.

Trinity Hill is the first tempranillo to be made in New Zealand and has won a number of awards: it, too, is blended, using a small amount of touriga nacional. Pagos de Araiz is a decent, uncomplicated country wine made with tempranillo and cabernet sauvignon. Lightly oaked but with plenty of fruit, it represents excellent value.

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| 86 | Pagos de Araiz, Navarra, 2014 | Spain | 21 pounds |
| 88 | Rioja, Ramon Bilbao, 2013 | Spain | 24 |
| 102 | Trinity Hill, Gimblett Gravels, 2015 | NZ | 45 |
| 142 | Rioja Reserva, Vina Valoria, 2011 | Spain | 32 |
| 145 | Baron de Navarro, Ribera del Duero, 2015 | Spain | 27 |

BRILLIANT BLENDS AND LESS USUAL GRAPE VARIETIES

Many eminent wine-makers are throwing away the rule book and creating spectacular wines from a sometimes unlikely blend of grapes. In effect, the cachet of a single grape variety has been consigned to old-fashioned oblivion.

The Passo Doble, for example, is made under the guidance of leading Italian wine producer, Danny Mac, and is a jolly fine wine. Finca Decero is a blend of malbec, cabernet sauvignon, petit verdo and tannat and is full, fat, grapey and luscious. As for the Cahors, Chateau Pinteraie, it is wonderful, bearing no resemblance to the palate-stripping, headache-inducing Cahors of old.

We fell in love with Priorat Humilitat at Moro, one of our favourite London restaurants. The grape varieties of 50% carinena and 50% garnacha create a beautifully balanced, splendid glass of wine. St Nicolas de Bougueil is 100% cabernet franc, very fresh and easy. Made predominantly from 45-year-old vines, the Madiran offers ripe intense fruit with a long sustained finish.

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| 77 | Carmenere Reserva, de Gras, Mont Gras 2015 | Chile | 24 |
| 82 | Passo Doble, Masi, Tapungato, 2014 | Argentina | 25 |
| 83 | Chateau Pinteraie, Cahors, 2014 | France | 29 |
| 94 | Priorat, Humilitat, Massard & Brunet, 2014 | Spain | 42 |
| 96 | Priorat, Mas La Mola, 2011 | Spain | 52 |
| 97 | Finca Decero, Amano, Mendoza, 2010 | Argentina | 69 |
| 98 | Saint-Nicolas-de-Bougueil, Dom. du Mortier, 2014 | France | 33 |
| 129 | Dom. Labranche-Laffont, Madiran AC, 2012 | France | 28 |