



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, 2016

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)

W4 Chenin Blanc Reserve, Ken Forrester, South Africa, 2016

The vineyard is worked both sustainably and by hand, the latter being a deliberate move to create more jobs. Thankfully, the wine lives up to the ethical standards, being beautifully structured. Ripe and fruity, you can taste apricots and honey along with a vestige of oak, but really just the merest hint. It is very good with spicy food, saffron and seafood. 7.00 (bin 42)

W6 Ca' dei Frati, Lugana, Italy, 2016

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, 2016

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 2016

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, 2015

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 Pineraie, 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 Wildflower, Valdigue, Monterey, J. Lohr, USA, 2015

Perfect for summer, this is a light-bodied red wine made from the American version of gamay (from which comes Fleurie, for example). It is very approachable, full of juicy fruit and has a good finish. For those who like a red wine with fish, this would be a treat. We serve it chilled but please ask if you'd prefer it at room temperature. 7.00 (bin 108)

R6 Campofiorin, Ripasso, Masi, Italy, 2014

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, 2016 Italy 33 pounds
(and by the 175ml flute – 9.00)

CHAMPAGNE

Our house champagne Frerejean Frères (151) is a harmonious blend of three grapes: 50% chardonnay, 30% pinot noir and 20% pinot meunier. The final blend is aged for five years and enhanced with a gentle dosage at disgorgement. It really is sublime stuff and great value for a Premier Cru.

151	Frerejean Frères, Premier Cru (and by the 125ml flute – 11.00)	France	58
159	Perrier-Jouët, Grand Brut, NV	France	70
152	Perrier-Jouët, Blason Rosé, NV	France	88
160	Louis Roederer Brut Premier, NV	France	75
153	Perrier-Jouët, Belle Epoque, 2006	France	180

Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut (159) (pronounced Perrier-Shoo-ette, because of those two dots over the 'e') 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 buttery flavour.

Another champagne that never fails to please is Louis Roederer. We 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.

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
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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, 2015	NZ	47
22	Trinity Hill, Hawkes Bay, 2016	NZ	30
39	Pouilly Fumé, Dagueneau, 2016	France	37
40	Sancerre, Regis Jouan, 2016	France	36
49	Fairview, Charles Back, Paarl, 2016	SA	24
56	Touraine, Guy Allion, 2016	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, 2016	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	78
48	de Gras, Mont Gras, Colchagua Valley, 2016	Chile	22
35	Chardonnay, Tormaresca, Puglia, 2016	Italy	24
52	Puligny-Montrachet, Le Trezin, Jean-Luc Joillot, 2015	France	70
54	Montagny Buissonnier, Buxy, 2015	France	29
55	Bramito del Cervo, C della Sala, Antinori, 2016	Italy	39
61	Rully, Henri de Villamont, 2013	France	42
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, 2015	NZ	42
47	01-09-2016, Les Vendanges du Domaine Rougie	France	32

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, 2014	France	35
53	Mount Horrocks, Watervale, Clare Valley, 2015	Australia	38
60	Julius, Henschke, Eden Valley, 2014	Australia	56
65	Dr Loosen, Mosel, 2015	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	37 pounds
67	Cuvée des Seigneurs de Ribeaupierre, Trimbach, Alsace, 2007	France	65

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, 2016	Italy	34
28	La Rocca Soave, Pieropan, 2015	Italy	54
30	Vernaccia di S Gimignano, Terruzzi & Puthod, 2016	Italy	28
32	Lugana, Ca' dei Frati, 2016	Italy	33
34	Vermentino, Cala Silente, Santadi, Sardinia, 2016	Italy	31
51	Pecorino, Terre di Chieti, Vellordor, Ronchi 2016	Italy	28
45	A Mano Fiano, Shannon & Sbalchiero, Puglia, 2016	Italy	27
35	Chardonnay, Tormaresca, Puglia, 2016	Italy	24
55	Bramito del Cervo, Cas. della Sala, Antinori, 2016	Italy	41
64	Sannio Falanghina, Vesevo, 2016	Italy	25
68	Gavi di Gavi, Lugarara, 2016	Italy	39
69	Terre di Tufi, Teruzzi & Puthod, Tuscany, 2014	Italy	51

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, 2016	France	25
36	Grolleau Gris, Dom. du Haut Bourg, Loire, 2016	France	21
37	Albarino, Martin Códax, Rias Baixas, 2016	Spain	35
42	Chenin Blanc Reserve, Ken Forrester, 2016	SA	27
43	Fasto, Verdejo, Rueda, 2015	Spain	24
58	Crozes Hermitage, Domaine des Entrefeux, 2013	France	35
31	Montesquiou, Cuvade precieuse, Jurancon sec 2015	France	32
78	FMC, Stellenbosch, 2015	SA	60

ROSE

Australian rosé is exceeding 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, 2016	Italy	34
38	Rose of Virginia, Charles Melton, 2015	Australia	38
41	Pinot Grigio Rosato, Ponte Pietra, Veneto, 2016	Italy	23
46	Alpha Zeta, Rosato, 2016	Italy	20
62	Rock Angel, Ch. d'Esclans, Cotes du Provence, 2016	France	53

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 Chile 20 pounds
(and by the 175ml glass – 5.00)

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, 2015 France 26
91 Fleurie, Louise Tête, 2014 France 33
108 Wildflower (Valdigué), Monterey, J. Lohr, 2015 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, 2015 NZ 45
103 Pinot Noir, Innocent Bystander, Yarra Valley, 2016 Aus 33
116 Greywacke, Marlborough, 2014 NZ 63
118 Sebastiani, Sonoma Coast, 2014 USA 39
119 Bourgogne Rouge, Loupet-Cholet, 2014 France 34
144 Carneros, Saintsbury, 2013 USA 60
146 Wild Earth, Central Otago, 2014 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 Paves de Pez, St Estephe, 2012	France	50
126	Chateau cru Godard, Cotes de Bordeaux, 2014	France	28
127	Chateau de Bellevue, Lussac, St Emilion, 2011	France	38
130	Ch Gravieres, Graves, 2014	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	70
89	de Gras, Reserva, Mont Gras, Colchagua Valley, 2016	Chile	24
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, 2016	France	28
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, 2016	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, 2012	Italy	49
75	La Segreta, Planeta, Sicily, 2014	Italy	25
84	Campofiorin, Ripasso, Masi, 2014	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, 2015	Italy	23
112	Sondaia Poggio al Tesoro, Bolgheri, 2012	Italy	65
120	Brolo (not Barolo!) di Campofiorin, Masi, 2013	Italy	43
122	Primitivo della Puglia, Bostromagno, 2015	Italy	28
123	La Poja, Allegrini, 2009	Italy	95
124	Carmignano, Villa di Capezzana, 2013	Italy	52
128	12emezzo, Negroamaro del Salento, 2015	Italy	28
133	Palazzo della Torre, IGT, Allegrini, 2013	Italy	46
134	La Grola, Allegrini, 2013	Italy	52
137	Coste Rubin, Barbaresco, Fontanafredda, 2013	Italy	72
138	Neprica, Tormaresca, Puglia, 2015	Italy	24
148	Barolo di Serralunga d'Alba, Fontanafredda, 2013	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. Baluarte Roble is a decent, uncomplicated country wine made with tempranillo, merlot & garnacha. Lightly oaked but with plenty of crunchy fruit, it represents excellent value.

86	Baluarte Roble, Chivite, Navarra, 2015	Spain	22 pounds
88	Rioja, Ramon Bilbao, 2015	Spain	24
102	Trinity Hill, Gimblett Gravels, 2015	NZ	45
142	Rioja Reserva, Vina Valoria, 2012	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 Pineraie, it is wonderful, bearing no resemblance to the palate-stripping, headache-inducing Cahors of old. Vistalba is a stonking-big wine we are very fond of and is a blend of 80% malbec and 20% cabernet sauvignon.

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.

77	Carmenere Reserva, de Gras, Mont Gras 2016	Chile	24
82	Passo Doble, Masi, Tapungato, 2015	Argentina	25
83	Chateau Pineraie, 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	70
98	Saint-Nicolas-de-Bougueil, Dom. du Mortier, 2014	France	33
129	Dom. Labranche-Laffont, Madiran AC, 2014	France	28
99	Vistalba Corte C, Mendoza, 2013	Argentina	26