

# Decanter

Kaapzicht <sup>gizella</sup> VASSE FELIX  
 NIKOS DOULOUFAKIS Julien Sunier  
 Freixenet <sup>Il Passo</sup> Querciabella  
 GREYSTONE Felton Road  
 Marqués de Murrieta DREW  
 Wiston Estate G. D. VAJRA  
 Castello di Abbada Jean Collet  
 SHAW+SMITH Santa Sofia  
 ALPHA ESTATE <sup>château Fontanès</sup>  
 Château Guiraud \*  
 ANTONIO BURN <sup>F. Luca</sup>  
 MADEIRA Cottage Ferraris  
 DOMAINE MELODY AGNÈS  
 Azores Wine Company PAQUET  
 Domaine Pierre Luneau-Papin  
 Viñedos de Alcohuaz  
 Domaine de la Noblaie FORADORY  
 Chateau Xianmiao \*  
 Louis Michel & Fils DOMAINE ZIND-HUMBRECHT  
 LOUIS JADOT <sup>DOMAINE EDEN</sup>



Muga Marisa Cuomo WARRE'S  
 GONZÁLEZ BYASS  
 CORTEAURA Domaine Guy Farge  
 Trinity Hill Zidarich  
 Domaine Cheviot  
 Taittinger ROGUEVINE  
 Ramos Pinto  
 EDOARDO MIROGLIO  
 Silverado Vineyards  
 Adega Algueira <sup>Antoine Olivier</sup>  
 MARJAN SIMČIČ SPERI  
 Zapran-Veyrolles PIRIE  
 Santolin <sup>Reichsrat von Buhl</sup>  
 Sacred Hill <sup>Seresin Estate</sup>  
 Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey  
 TENUTA SANT'ANTONIO <sup>Domaine</sup>  
 Tabarrini Clavel  
 Demartino \*  
 Weingut Ökonomierat Rebholz  
 AUGUST KESSELER  
 André Perret \*  
 CHÂTEAU CAPBERN GASQUETON \*  
 Domaine Parigot  
 EL ESCOCÉS Volante  
 Susana Balbo \*

# The most exciting wines of 2017

*Decanter* experts around the world named the five bottles under £55 that had impressed them most this year. After tasting and rating the 173 nominated wines, assessing them on harmony, complexity and wow factor, our panel of three judges compiled the ultimate top 75 across all styles. Christelle Guibert sums up the results

TO FINISH THE year in style, our 'stellar buys of the year' is back by popular demand. The equivalent tasting last year was so memorable we decided to follow the same format, asking our contributors, DWWA Regional Chairs and the *Decanter* editorial team to share with us the wines they have most enjoyed drinking during the last 12 months. We stipulated a price limit of £55 per bottle, to ensure the list includes something delicious for every budget.

This tasting is a snapshot of the wines from around the world that our experts loved most. With wines from more than 20 countries, the selection showed real diversity geographically and stylistically. The nominations also illustrated the trends of the past year. Last year we had a surprisingly large number of orange and amphora wines, while this year sees a good number of unusual grape varieties from emerging countries, alongside the usual suspects. Andy Howard MW commented: 'In the world of wine, we all love classics, we all love fantastic white Burgundy, but we also strive to find the new thing that is up and coming or that we haven't heard of. This tasting gave us both of those things at the same time.'

It was certainly a great educational experience for the three of us as we sniffed, swirled and sipped 173 wines over two very enjoyable days. We discovered grapes that none of us had ever heard of, and as Oz Clarke said: 'I was

completely delighted that we had such a fantastic array. Even if they are wines that I'm not so familiar with, these are the wines that the *Decanter* experts love and believe in. It was a learning process for me – absolutely delightful.'

The wines were tasted blind and only the grape variety and vintage were disclosed. They were scored out of 100 points, and also given a score out of 15 for their harmony, complexity and wow factor. They were then ranked according to their overall scores, also taking value into

consideration at this point. We particularly wanted to reward wines which showed a real wow factor, so we were looking for the most individual, fascinating and harmonious wines, but also the most enjoyable.

With 84% of wines hitting the Highly Recommended (90-94pts/100) mark, it was definitely among our most memorable tastings. Unfortunately, such

was the number of great wines that the list is too long to feature all of them on these pages, so we have selected the top 75 wines, and a wider selection can be found online at [www.decanter.com/best-wines](http://www.decanter.com/best-wines)

We hope you have a fantastic time going through the list, perhaps recognising old favourites and making new discoveries, and we are confident that some of these wines will feature in your own list of top wines over the next year – assuming you stock up before it's too late to find them!

**'Such a fantastic array  
– these are the wines  
the *Decanter* experts  
love and believe in'**

Oz Clarke

## The tasters

### Oz Clarke



is a multiple award-winning wine writer and broadcaster. In 2010, he was made an officer of the Ordre du Mérite Agricole in France

### Christelle Guibert



is *Decanter's* international tastings director, with more than 21 years' experience in the wine industry in France and the UK

### Andy Howard MW



is a wine consultant who writes and judges regularly for *Decanter*. He has 30 years' experience as a buyer for retailer Marks & Spencer

**4 Marisa Cuomo, Furore Bianco Fiorduva, Costa d'Amalfi, Campania,**

**Italy 2015** 95 OC 92 CG 95 AH 97

£14 Annessa

A complex mix of unusual grape varieties that gives expressive, exotic fruit and ripe apricot impressions. Herbal tones come through on the palate, complemented by a flicker of spice and cake dough. Crisp acidity balances the sunny fruit ripeness.

**Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 14%

**5 Domaine Guy Farge, Vania, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2016**

95 OC 96 CG 96 AH 92

£25 Chez Stephan

Sophistication lingers around the glass in this blend of 80% Marsanne and 20% Roussanne. Honeysuckle and golden pear skins mingle with white jasmine flowers and tropical fruit. The palate is full and ripe, bursting with richness and creaminess from the oak. An upfront and crowd-pleasing style, yet also serious and delightful. **Drink** 2018-2025 **Alc** 13.5%

**6 González Byass, Tres Palmas Fino, Sherry, Spain**

95 OC 97 CG 91 AH 98

£30-£40/50cl Cambridge Wine Merchants, Carruthers & Kent, Lunya, Soho Wine Supply, The Whisky Exchange

Amazingly intense nutty aromas combined with burnt orange and white flowers unfold beautifully onto a gloriously dry, balanced palate. All the sinew of youth is still there, but there are also layers of honey. A very individual and memorable wine. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 16%



**7 Julien Sunier, Fleurie, Beaujolais, France 2015**

95 OC 93 CG 95 AH 97

£19.95-£23 Berry Bros & Rudd, Roberson

A very fine example of a Gamay that blends the natural exuberance of the grape with great complexity and a warm, sunny character. Dusky blueberries and cherries and a melange of spice and nuttiness. Drinking beautifully but will age easily. **Drink** 2018-2024 **Alc** 13.5%

**8 Corte Aura, Satèn Brut, Franciacorta, Lombardy, Italy**

2010 95 OC 96 CG 95 AH 95

N/A UK [www.corteaura.it](http://www.corteaura.it)

Elegant, creamy, come-hither aromas of fresh yeast and ripe apple come through, leading onto a stylish palate full of bright citrus fruit, honey and heather floral notes. There is a fine, persistent mousse and a drying, mineral edge on the finish.

**Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 12.5%

**9 Trinity Hill, Syrah, Gimblett Gravels, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand 2014**

95 OC 94 CG 96 AH 94

£19.95-£22.99 Banstead Vintners, Carruthers & Kent, Eynsham Cellars, Exel, Harvey Nichols, Liberty, The NZ Cellar

Red cherry perfume and intense peppery notes show this is a generous, elegant style of Syrah. There is a whisper of menthol and bright acidity underpinning a concentrated palate and a firm tannic structure. Great balance and persistence.

**Drink** 2020-2025 **Alc** 13.5%

**10 Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey, St-Aubin 1er Cru La Chatenière, Burgundy, France 2010**

94 OC 92 CG 96 AH 95

POA A&B Vintners

Youthful ripe apples and apricots are complemented by subtle creamy, buttery characters, giving a beautiful weight to this very precise, pure wine. An undertow of minerality suggests this will age for many years. **Drink** 2018-2025 **Alc** 12.5%

**11 Nikos Douloufakis, Aspros Lagos, Crete, Greece 2016**

94 OC 93 CG 93 AH 95

£20 Maltby & Greek

Inviting aromatics of apricot, peach and ripe apple lead onto a weighty, rich palate supported by exotic pineapple and guava and direct acidity. An individual, robust wine showing some earthy, yeasty flavours underneath the Golden Gage syrup. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 14%

**12 Querciabella, Chianti Classico Riserva, Tuscany, Italy 2013**

94 OC 92 CG 94 AH 95

£24-£26 Armit, Fine & Rare, Millésima, Oddbins, Vini Italiani

Violets and herbs meld with tomato acidity and a flick of basil, mint and salt. Tight structure and firm tannins but plenty of vibrant cherry fruit characters. A fine example with finesse, power and complexity. **Drink** 2019-2027 **Alc** 14%



**13 Zidarich, Malvasija, Venezia Giulia, Italy 2015**

94 OC 93 CG 95 AH 95

£29.45-£34.49 Exel, Les Caves de Pyrene

Myriad exotic flavours on show here. Grapey, floral pot-pourri with some nuttiness and bruised apple notes, and spice from the oak. Assertive acidity balances the richness, alongside hints of pear skin and clean fungus. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 12.5%

**14 Warre's, Bottle Aged Late Bottled Vintage Port, Portugal 2004**

94 OC 96 CG 93 AH 94

£19.99-£24.59 Banstead Vintners, Cambridge Wine Merchants, Fortnum & Mason, Hoult's, Ocado, Roberson, Waitrose

Vivid damsons and blackcurrants with liniment and spice, giving a luxuriously sweet, soft mouthful. The rich chocolate notes are kept in check by ripe enveloping tannins, beautifully integrated wood and fresh acidity. **Drink** 2018-2029 **Alc** 20%

**15 Ramos Pinto, RP 20 Quinta do Bom Retiro, 20 Year Old Tawny Port, Portugal**

94 OC 97 CG 93 AH 92

£30/50cl-£57.50/75cl Widely available via UK agent Maisons Marques & Domaines

A powerful and expressive perfume of honey, tar and burnt orange flows from the glass, with a macerated cherry and nutty complexity on the palate. It still has chew to it alongside freshness and nice vivacity. **Drink** 2018-2027 **Alc** 20% >