

Top 25 New World sparkling wines

Our experts tasted through 95 latest-release premium bubbly from North and South America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to bring you the best 25 available in the UK today. Andy Howard MW analyses the results

CONSUMPTION OF SPARKLING wines continues to rise in the UK, with *Decanter* reporting (August 2016) that sales were 80% higher than five years ago. Although partly driven by the inexorable growth of Prosecco, this also reflects increased availability of traditional-method sparkling wine – in the UK more is consumed than Champagne, so this tasting of top New World fizz is very topical.

'New World' is an old-fashioned description for wines produced outside of traditional European sources, but is a useful way to categorise wines made in diverse locations like New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, USA and South Africa. Methode Cap Classique was first made in South Africa by Simonsig in 1968, and large-scale investment in top-end regions of California and Australia began in the 1980s.

The importance of the classic Champagne varieties was emphasised in the tasting, with 85% of wines

based on Chardonnay and Pinot Noir blends. Many were of high quality, combining great finesse with a fine mousse and lingering acidity.

Traditional-method production dominated, with excellent examples from cooler areas in the Cape and in particular Tasmania in Australia.

This doesn't mean other areas or varieties can't produce top-quality wines, as shown by the Torrontès from Patagonia in Argentina, Riesling from South Australia's Clare Valley and a delicious pair from the often belittled Aussie category of sparkling Shiraz.

The most encouraging aspect was the excellent performance of vintage wines. Champagne producers might feel this is one of their key differences, but the elegant, refined examples from Australia, Napa and South Africa were revelations. With significant ageing on lees in many cases, these are wines with great character and complexity, allied with precision winemaking.

The tasters



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4 Bon Courage, Jacques Bruère Blanc de Blancs Brut, Robertson, South Africa

2010 92

£14.95-£19 AC Gallie, Alexander Wines, Booths, Cornerstone Deli, Love Wine, Luvians
Aromas of intense honeysuckle, stone fruit, chargrilled limes and roasted nuts which develop into a biscuity richness. The fresh lemon acidity gives a great balance to the palate. **Drink 2016-2019 Alc 12.5%**

1 Ten Minutes by Tractor, Blanc de Blancs Brut, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia 2010

95
£44.95 Harrods
Smoky, elegant, mineral aromas – even a hint of a struck match. A beautiful balance of acidity and freshness: citrus fruits with complex salinity and a touch of buttered toast autolysis. Elegant finish with lemon zest lingering. **Drink 2016-2022 Alc 12%**

2 Domaine Carneros, Le Rêve Blanc de Blancs Brut, Napa, California, USA 2008

93
£63.10 Christopher Keiller, Headstart Retail, Islington Wine
Lovely freshness, with a good mineral edge and a hint of smokiness to the nose. It has lots of fresh, elegant citrus-fruit energy on the palate allied with a soft, generous mousse. **Drink 2016-2018 Alc 12.5%**

3 Arras, EJ Carr Late Disgorged Brut, Tasmania, Australia 2002

92
£60 Caviste, Liberty Wines, Vagabond Wines
Slightly spicy and nutty with some toasty richness and a hint of black tea. On the palate there's ripe, floral and lemon confit notes, cashew nuts and a hint of gun smoke. Full and rounded finish. **Drink 2016-2018 Alc 13.5%**

5 Arras, Rosé Brut, Tasmania, Australia 2005

91
£29 Liberty Wines, Oz Wines
Impressive youthful aromas for its age. An elegant wine with lots of vibrant, intense, red-fruit flavours, crisp acidity and good length of flavour. It will continue to drink well over several years. **Drink 2016-2020 Alc 12.5%**

6 Iron Horse, Classic Brut, Russian River Valley, Sonoma, California, USA 2010

91
£44 Grape & Grind, Harper Wells, Smith & Wollensky, The Wine Treasury, Wimbledon Wine Cellar
Charming aromas of lily and acacia. The palate displays creamy, slightly saline, concentrated fruit flavours. This wine has great balance, elegant acidity and a fresh lime-flavoured finish. **Drink 2016-2020 Alc 13.5%**

7 Klein Constantia, Brut, Constantia, South Africa 2012

91
£17-£19 Dulwich Vintners, SA Wines Online, Tim Syrad Wines
A bouquet of subtle tropical fruit. There is complexity on the palate through lees ageing with hints of brioche. Fresh and lively with a lemon finish. A well-made wine. **Drink 2016-2019 Alc 11.5%**

For full UK stockist details, see p111

8 Arras, Grand Vintage Brut, Tasmania, Australia 2006 90

£28 Liberty Wines, The Rural Vintner
Generous aromas of acacia honey, a touch of lavender and white pepper. A zesty attack, with powerful acidity and freshness on the palate and a spicy note to finish. **Drink** 2016-2017 **Alc** 13%

9 Avondale, Armilla Blanc de Blancs Brut, Paarl, South Africa 2009 90

£23 House of Townend
Ripe nose of candyfloss, honey and pineapple. An attractive soft mousse combines with lovely fresh acidity and flavours of lightly baked biscuit. Very stylish. **Drink** 2016-2018 **Alc** 11.5%

10 Deviation Road, Beltana Blanc de Blancs Brut, Adelaide Hills, South Australia 2008 90

£47 Berkmann
Toasty, biscuit aroma with a complex lift of mango, roasted figs, hazelnuts and papaya. Zesty bubbles work nicely with its waxy richness. A very fleshy and pleasurable wine with a long finish. **Drink** 2016-2020 **Alc** 12%



11 Familia Schroeder, Deseado Torrontès Brut, Neuquen, Patagonia, Argentina NV 90

£12.50-£13.25 AC Gallie, Ellis Wines, Fraziers Wine, Love Wine
Lovely floral nose of elderflower, lavender and aromatic jasmine and rose petals. It's a delicate wine: zesty, clean and fresh, and the ripe orange-flavoured sweetness makes it a fun, easy drop. **Drink** 2016-2017 **Alc** 9%

12 Familia Zuccardi, Vida Orgánica Chardonnay Brut, Mendoza, Argentina 2014 90

£14.95 Alliance Wine, Brockley Deli, York Wines
A complex nose of chargrilled limes, white summer blossom and almonds. On the palate there's generous rich apple notes with a slightly tart kick. Very moreish. **Drink** 2016-2017 **Alc** 12.5%

13 Jansz, Brut, Pipers River, Tasmania, Australia 2010 90

£21-£25 AC Gallie, Amazon UK, Dulwich Vintners, Frazier's Wine, Love Wine, Oddbins
Slightly smoky aromas with mineral notes. The palate has great acidity, freshness and complexity of flavour including red apple and strawberry. A good, balanced wine. **Drink** 2016-2019 **Alc** 12.5% ➤

For full UK stockist details, see p111

14 Quartz Reef, Rosé Brut, Central Otago, New Zealand NV 90

£28 *Cru World Wine*

An earthy, slightly tart nose of wild strawberries and redcurrants. The palate is fresh – full of strawberries and raspberries. An attractive wine with a good finish and bright bubbles. **Drink 2016-2018 Alc 12.5%**

15 Quartz Reef, Brut, Central Otago, New Zealand NV 90

£25 *Cru World Wine*

Tropical richness and herbal notes on the nose. The palate boasts generous, crunchy red berry fruits and lightly toasted pistachio nuts. A welcome tangy lemon note brings freshness. A good fizz for food. **Drink 2016-2020 Alc 12.5%**

16 Pirie, Brut, Tasmania, Australia NV 90

£25-£30 *AC Gallie, Alexander Wines,*

Cornerstone Deli, Ex-Cellar, Lockett Bros, Love Wine, The Halifax Wine Co

Fresh fruit and a saline, mineral nose. The palate is extremely vibrant, with notes of heavy ripe fruit and nuts. The finish is long with a lovely unforced mousse. A charming example. **Drink 2016-2018 Alc 11.5%**



17 Tohu, Rewa Blanc de Blanc Brut, Marlborough, New Zealand 2013 90

£25 *Hampton Cheese & Wine Co*

Inviting aromas of butter, brioche and biscuit. A beautiful, well-made style, showing ripe tropical fruit flavours and crisp, lean acidity. **Drink 2016-2019 Alc 12%**

18 Twee Jonge Gezellen, Krone Rosé Brut, Western Cape, South Africa 2015 90

£16-£19 *The Vineking, The Good Wine Shop*

A subtle, earthy nose of good red fruits. The palate is generous with flavours of red berries and a leafy, dusky edge. A zesty, refined finish. **Drink 2016-2017 Alc 12%**

19 Bon Courage, Jacques Bruère Rosé Brut, Robertson, South Africa 2010 89

£14.95-£19 *AC Gallie, Alexander Wines,*

Booths, Ex-Cellar, Love Wine, The Shenfield Wine Co

Elegant nose of toasted nuts and red fruit, while the palate is full of zingy fresh acidity and subtle strawberries. Crisp and tart on the finish, this will age well. **Drink 2016-2020 Alc 12%** ➤

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20 **Deviation Road,
Loftia Brut,
Adelaide Hills,**

South Australia 2012 89

£28 **Berkmann**

Toasty and rich aromas with a touch of yellow fruit. The palate is weighty and powerful, showing notes of lemon, vanilla and an evolution of lees ageing. This is a wine of good balance, freshness and length on the finish. **Drink** 2016-2018 **Alc** 12.5%

21 **Domaine Carneros,
Brut, Napa,
California, USA**

2011 89

£24-£27 **Widely available via UK agent**

Hatch Mansfield

A smoky, toasty nose showing hints of vanilla and marshmallows. The palate is fresh, with good weight of lemon fruit and fine concentration.

Drink 2016-2020 **Alc** 12%

22 **Dowie Doole,
Moxie Shiraz
Brut, McLaren**

Vale, South Australia NV 89

£19 **Armit Wines**

A bouquet of blackberry, raspberry, spice, ginger and violets. The palate is faithful to the nose, with a generous mousse, fresh acidity and integrated oak. A slightly sweet spearmint note gives it a lovely fresh finish.

Drink 2016-2018 **Alc** 13.5%



23 **Paultets,
Trillians
Riesling Brut,**

**Polish River, Clare Valley,
South Australia NV** 89

£13.15 **Ellis Wines, Love Wine, Woodstock**

An unusual and intriguing nose of white pepper, cloves and lime. Lime continues onto the palate where it is joined by honeysuckle and green apples. The finish is full of fresh ripe fruit and toast notes. **Drink** 2016-2017 **Alc** 12.5%

24 **Simonsig,
Cuvée Royale
Blanc de Blancs**

**Brut, Stellenbosch, South
Africa 2011** 89

£16 **c&O Wines**

Beautifully rich toasted hazelnuts, brioche, buttered toast and lemon curd on the nose. The palate is rich in flavour, where baked bread and biscuit notes dominate. Has real personality.

Drink 2016-2017 **Alc** 12.5%

25 **Taltarni, Shiraz
Brut, Victoria,
Australia 2013** 89

£16-£17 **Camber Wines, D Byrne & Co,**

Hitchin Wine Co, Kwoff

A touch of spicy black fruits, fruit cake spice, cloves and zingy freshness are present on the nose. A leathery, slightly meaty character on the palate gives this wine such variety, including a leafy menthol edge on the finish.

This would be great with dried meats.

Drink 2016-2018 **Alc** 13.5%

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