

The results

There was plenty of lively, crunchy fruit in evidence to keep palates refreshed, along with engaging styles and high scores from beyond Marlborough, reports Tina Gellie

MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC asserted its superiority in this tasting, and sparked debate among our experts about whether sub-regionality was a benefit, and how other regions could compete.

Bob Campbell MW said Marlborough had built its name on its distinctive 'brand' to the point where 'New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc means 'Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc'. Its dominant position has impacted the rest of the country too, making it hard for wine lovers to judge other regional styles on their own merits without comparing them to Marlborough.

Speaking as a merchant, Mel Brown said it was very hard to highlight regionality to consumers in the UK, where the concept of differing styles was less evident to those used to drinking Brand New Zealand/Marlborough.

Campbell said the strength of the 'Marlborough mothership' was uniformity of style. 'When Mrs Shopper goes to the supermarket and takes any Marlborough Sauvignon off the shelf, she's got a pretty good idea of what it will deliver, and most of the time it will. The risk of branching into sub-regional styles in Marlborough is you move away from that uniformity.

'It's important to keep your loyal customers who want Brand Marlborough, but you also need to engage your Decanter readers who understand and like variation and experimentation, and that's what sub-regionality does.'

He said there was a danger that Marlborough Sauvignon could be seen as an 'industrial product', but that sub-regional and vintage variation plus individual winemaker style 'made things more interesting'.

Cameron Douglas MS said because Marlborough was such a strong category, it was understandable its winemakers wouldn't want to make radical changes to a winning formula. 'Some wines we tasted showed you could push the boundaries a little bit, but not too much.

'Exciting to see the Marlborough quality is still there, which is what a lot of people question' Melanie Brown

Power and pungency have to ring true, but if you're going to use wild ferments, skin contact, oak and lees work, fine, make sure there's balance.'

Marlborough was responsible for 61 of the 93 wines submitted to the tasting, and Brown said that regardless of the numbers it 'outshone' every other region. 'It was exciting to see the quality is still there, which is ultimately what a lot of people question: whether Marlborough can retain that strength and reputation.'

She felt the 'traditional, pure, vibrant style of wine' garnered most of the highest scores, 'which speaks volumes for the industry', proving 'it is not just quantity that is being produced'. Her big criticism for wines that deviated from the norm was when producers did not indicate on the label if they were barrel fermented or oak aged, which would help adventurous consumers while also avoiding surprises for traditional drinkers.

Looking at the other regions, Douglas said Wairarapa and particularly Martinborough 'showed a strong voice', while both Hawke's Bay and Central Otago were under-represented but had some 'great wines to discover'. Brown felt the Nelson wines lacked vibrancy and those from North Canterbury 'did not have the acidity and authentic nature I'd hoped for'.

Our experts said New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc had the ability to age very well - even though that might not have been expressed in this tasting, with most wines from 2016 and 2015 - and said they would happily cellar wines for between six and 10 years from the vintage.

The scores

93 wines tasted

Exceptional
2

Outstanding
3

Highly Recommended
25

Recommended
38

Commended
10

Fair
11

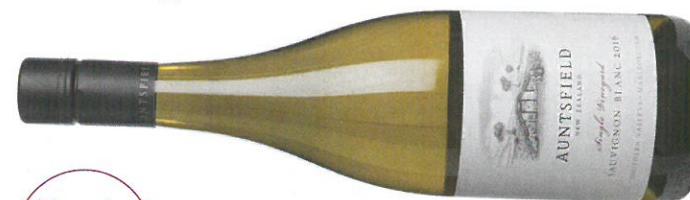
Poor
0

Faulty
4

Entry criteria: producers and UK agents were invited to submit their latest-release NZ Sauvignon Blanc wines priced £12.99 or over, one wine only per producer

NEW ZEALAND SAUVIGNON BLANC

Exceptional 98-100pts



Decanter
Exceptional
98 points

Aunt'sfield, Single Vineyard, Southern Valleys, Marlborough 2016

Decanter average score: 98/100pts Individual judges' scores: Melanie Brown 98 Bob Campbell MW 98 Cameron Douglas MS 98 £13.50-£15.99 Exel, Flagship, Grape & Grain, St Andrews Wine Co, The Wine Twit

When Graeme and Linda Cowley first bought a cattle farm in the 1990s, no vines existed on the property. Much research showed that the region's very first vineyard and winery was established here back in 1873. This affinity of land to vine has certainly carried through to the present day where the 40ha plot of Greywacke rock and fine clay has created this fantastic terroir. Today it's Graeme and Linda's sons, viticulturist Ben and winemaker Luc, who maintain this great legacy.

Melanie Brown Beautifully poised and extravagant: gooseberry, green grass and elderflower, crunchy acid and harmonious, good length. Yum!

Bob Campbell MW Weighty, quite intense red capsicum, gooseberry and nectarine flavours, also showing impressive purity and length.

Cameron Douglas MS Classic mix of fresh and dried herbs, fine citrus and tropical passion fruit and peach hints. This is balanced and fresh, lively and lengthy, a nice wine overall.

Drink 2017-2024 Alc 13%



Decanter
Exceptional
98 points

Tinpot Hut, Marlborough 2016

98 MB 98 BC 98 CD 98

£12.99-£13.99 Widely available via UK importer Liberty Wines

Tinpot Hut's wines are made from owner and winemaker Fiona Turner's own vineyards in Blind River and combined with grapes from other carefully selected sites in Marlborough and Hawke's Bay. Tinpot Hut winery is named after an old historic mustering hut which is a local landmark in the area. Before vines were planted here, sheep roamed the lands, and these huts were crucial in gathering them together. It's a wonderful reminder of Marlborough's sheep farming past, in contrast to what it is arguably most famous for today, Sauvignon Blanc.

MB This is a flinty, dry and textural wine. A concentrated and poised amalgamation of complexity and style, effortlessly pure and well composed with nice phenolics and crisp acidity.

BC A broad Sauvignon Blanc with cut grass and subdued passion fruit flavours. This is quite a lively, energetic wine with a lengthy finish.

CD Classic herbal, grassy and fruity bouquet with flavours of fresh lemon and grapefruit, then red apple and some tropical fruit; vibrant acidity, refreshing, balanced and well made with decent length.

Drink 2017-2023 Alc 13.5%

Outstanding 95-97pts



Grove Mill, Wairau Valley, Marlborough 2016 96 MB 96 BC 95 CD 96

£12.99 Amazon

Founded in 1988 by a group of grape growers who purchased an old malt house, 'The Mill', and converted it into what we know as a winery today. Grove Mill is not just passionate about making great wine, but also about sustainability. In 2006 it was the first winery to be carbon neutral. The southern bell frog, a symbol of the winery and clearly

labelled on each bottle, represents Grove Mill's protected wetlands, located just beside its vines.

MB This has an intriguing character, full of weight and texture. Thanks in part to its oak ageing and wonderful alignment of savoury and enticing fruit characters. Pulled together effortlessly, creating a wonderful wine.

BC This is an intense, pure and appealing wine with lime, citrus, gooseberry and subtle, nutty lees flavours supported by lovely acidity. It is reminiscent of a very good Sancerre in style and elegance.

CD This wine has everything; wild-ferment characters, lees, mineral, some sulphides, lovely fruit flavours with a pristine expression, layered and just wild, lengthy and lively.

Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13% >

The judges

Melanie Brown



Driven by the desire to highlight New Zealand's most exciting producers, Brown played a key role in building the UK's largest offering of premium New Zealand wine at chef

Peter Gordon's The Providores and Tapa Room in London. From this she established her own wine retailer, The New Zealand Cellar, followed by a wine bar and shop in Brixton.

Bob Campbell MW



The DWWA Regional Chair for New Zealand, Campbell set out in wine as an accountant for Montana Wines in 1973. Moving into marketing and export, he set up The Wine Gallery wine school in

Auckland in 1990, becoming a Master of Wine in the same year. He was founding secretary of Hawke's Bay Vintners and has served as president of Winemakers of West Auckland.

Cameron Douglas MS



Douglas was accepted into the Court of Master Sommeliers in 2007, and remains New Zealand's only Master Sommelier, as well as South Pacific director for the global Guild of Sommeliers.

He is a widely published writer, speaker and consultant to the hospitality industry, as well as taking charge of the wine and beverage programme at AUT University in Auckland.

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Outstanding (continued) 95-97pts



Kono, Tohu Single Vineyard, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016 96 MB 96 BC 96 CD 96

£14.50-£14.99 Widely available via UK importer Connoisseur Estates
Kono, New Zealand's first Māori-owned winery, takes its name from a basket woven from harakeke (New Zealand flax), and its roots lie in the tradition of food being served in these baskets. Such Māori beliefs and traditions are carried throughout the whole process from vine to winery, using 'kaitiakitanga', a Māori sustainability system, reducing negative human impact on the land. It's this philosophy, passed down from their 'Māori tupuna' (ancestors), that ensures future generations will continue to enjoy and respect the land.

MB This is a beautifully fresh, vibrant wine with a soft, savoury edge to it. Cooked peas, tomato leaf and ample gooseberry make this wine juicy and refreshing.

BC This wine is quite seamless, with a touch of sweet-and-sour character providing beautiful balance. Vibrant, with high energy.

CD The wine has quite a pure and pristine bouquet on the nose with a delicious and layered frame on the palate. Mineral, stony, fresh and pure flavours are bursting through. This is a lovely example of balance, length and complexity that will build over time.

Drink 2017-2023 Alc 13%



Churton, Marlborough 2016

95 MB 95 BC 95 CD 95

£14.95-£15.50 Tanners

Churton, established in 1997 by Sam and Mandy Weaver, is a 22ha single vineyard situated on the ridge line between the Omaka and Waihopai valleys in Marlborough. The focus is on four varieties: Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Viognier and Petit Manseng. All the more impressive is the Weavers' use of biodynamic practices in achieving their philosophy of producing wines that show individuality and depth of quality. To add: this is one of New Zealand's last examples of wine bottled with a cork closure.

MB This wine is ripe with a dominating palate and length, asparagus-heightened savoury aromas, zesty acid in an appealing, food-driven wine. It quite simply has so many lovely elements to it.

BC Weighty, concentrated wine with subtle, nutty lees notes integrated into subdued tree-fruit flavours.

CD There is a noticeable use of cork closure with a cork-wood layer to the bouquet, showing complexity and depth from the natural ferment and the complexities of winemaking. The palate reflects the nose, lovely flavours and length; just dry on the finish, complex.

Drink 2017-2025 Alc 14%

Highly Recommended 90-94pts



Rapaura Springs, Reserve, Marlborough 2016

94 MB 94 BC 92 CD 95

£15.49 Auriol Wines, Paul Roberts, Prohibition

This wine is ripe and crunchy, showing some complexity. A stony, mineral layer on the palate is followed by peach, citrus and tropical fruit notes. The wine is beautifully balanced and well made with a good, persistent finish.

Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13.5%

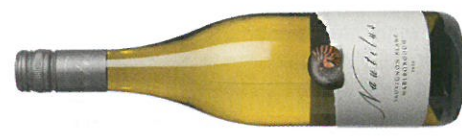


Craggy Range, Te Muna, Martinborough, Wairarapa 2016

93 MB 94 BC 92 CD 94

£16.90 The New Zealand Cellar

This is a gorgeous example of what Martinborough can achieve. Zesty and fruity, the soft nettle notes combine with a slight vegetal character. This has a lovely acid line, which is not too overpowering, and shows great purity. Drink 2017-2023 Alc 13%



Nautilus, Marlborough 2016 93

MB 92 BC 95 CD 92

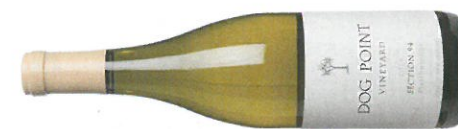
£14.99-£15.99 Camber, Clipper, Dulwich Vintners,

Hailsham Cellars, Harrods, Love Wine, The New Zealand Cellar, The Solent Cellar, York Wines

Textural style with impressive weight, flavour and intensity. Peach, apple and grapefruit then lees and a hint of spice. Decent acidity with just enough concentration and balance.

A good food wine. Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13%

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts

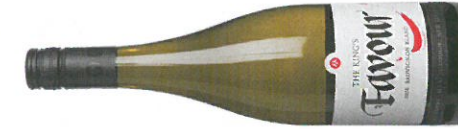


Dog Point, Section 94, Marlborough 2014

92 MB 90 BC 94 CD 91

£23.99-£24.50 Widely available via UK importer Fields, Morris & Verdin

This intense, powerful wine shows ripe mango and tropical fruit aromatics, backed by saline minerality. Oak adds a playful character and a harmonious finish. Drink 2017-2023 Alc 14%

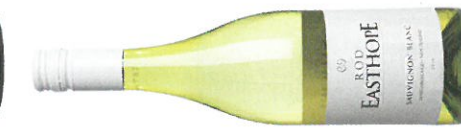


Marisco, The King's Favour, Marlborough 2016

92 MB 94 BC 90 CD 91

£13.99-£14.99 (2015) Majestic, Ocado

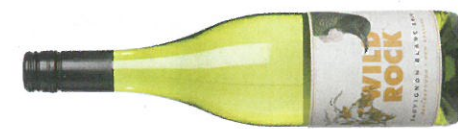
A bone-dry wine with ripe tropical fruit flavours. Quite pungent, showing classic-style citrus, red apple and passion fruit, even a subtle lemongrass undertone. It's a well-made, balanced wine. Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13%



Rod Easthope, Martinborough, Wairarapa 2016 92 MB 92 BC 94 CD 90

£14.99 Naked Wines

This is a perfectly poised Sauvignon Blanc, showing pure lime zest, mineral and nutty yeast character, with beautifully soft vegetal undertones and a long, lees-influenced finish. Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13%



Wild Rock, Marlborough 2016

92 MB 94 BC 92 CD 90

£15.50 Inverarity Morton, The New Zealand Cellar

This wine has lovely fruit character, with gooseberry on the nose, cut grass and lemongrass notes and a hint of nutty lees character. It is appealing and refreshing, refined and elegant. Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13%

'Wines from a single sub-region can achieve a narrower band of flavours and a stronger statement of style'

Bob Campbell MW

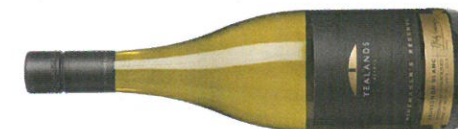


Wither Hills, Clocktower, Marlborough 2016

92 MB 90 BC 95 CD 92

£14 Marks & Spencer

Youthful and lively, pure aromas and flavours of lemon and other citrus, fridge-cold red apple, a hint of barley-sugar and light lees ageing. Lean finish. Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13%



Yealands, Reserve, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2015

92 MB 90 BC 93 CD 92

£15.55-£17 Dulwich Vintners, Exel, Harper Wells,

Great Western Wine, Noel Young, The Tasting House

Refined aromas of citrus and wild flowers, asparagus and gooseberry, showing real Awatere Valley typicity. It is concentrated, zesty and fresh. Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13%

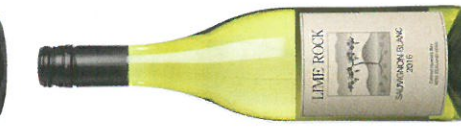


Konrad, Hole in the Water, Marlborough 2016

91 MB 94 BC 90 CD 89

£13.49 Frederic Robinson Brewery, Gerry's

Fresh, lively and varietal bouquet with aromas and flavours of sweet citrus and crisp apple, supported by tropical passion fruit nuance and a herbal spectrum of tomato leaf and capsicum. Drink 2017-2020 Alc 12.5%



Lime Rock, Central Hawke's Bay 2016 91 MB 92 BC 89 CD 91

£18 oW Loeb & Co

This is an oak-influenced Sauvignon Blanc that shows tangy acidity, pear and white peach fruit flavours, contrasting with its fresh white herbal finish. A balanced and well-made wine. Drink 2017-2023 Alc 13%



Little Beauty, Black Edition, Marlborough 2015

91 MB 94 BC 90 CD 90

£26-£28 Davy's, Direct Wine Shipments, Dunell's,

L'Art du Vin, Weavers of Nottingham

Sophisticated, elegant bouquet with some toasty bottle development. Wonderful acidity follows through to the finish, adding texture and balance. Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13.5%



Seifried, Aotea, Nelson 2016

91 MB 90 BC 90 CD 93

£16.50 Discovery Wines, Fenwick, Harrods,

Lewis & Cooper, Neill Wine, The New Zealand Cellar

A familiar and engaging bouquet of fresh fruits with apple, grapefruit and tropical notes, some herb and bell-pepper, spring blossom and a touch of elegance. There's plenty of acidity, giving a crisp finish. Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13%



Te Awa, Leftfield, Nelson 2016

91 MB 90 BC 91 CD 91

£14.05 Cheers, Define Food and Wine, Islington Wine,

The New Zealand House of Wine, Wine Rack

A wine that's bright, fresh and fruity with loads of peach and pineapple, tropical fruit notes. There's a good amount of acidity and a wet-stone note too, making it refreshing and engaging. Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13% >

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



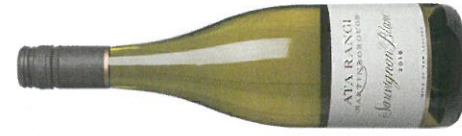
The Darling, Organic, Marlborough 2016
91 MB 95 BC 91 CD 88

£17.99 Ocado
This flinty, crunchy and all-round appealing wine has aromas and flavours of peaches and apples. It retains its varietal character of capsicum and tree fruit. A balanced wine. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13.5%**



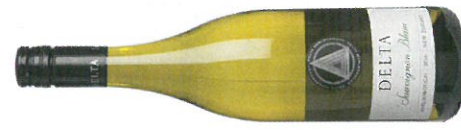
Waipara Springs, Waipara Valley, North Canterbury 2015
91 MB 88 BC 92 CD 92

£13.10 D Byrne & Co, Frontier, Gerrard Seel, Promotion Wine, Waples Wines
This fresh wine with high energy, citrus, mineral and nutty oak character really pulls through. There's great acidity and length, quite pure. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 14%**



Ata Rangi, Martinborough, Wairarapa 2016 90 MB 90 BC 90 CD 90
£15.55-£17.99 Exel, Liberty Wines, Oz Wines, The New Zealand Cellar

This is a pleasing and enticing wine with beautifully constructed fruits, fleshy and fresh. A crisp apple flavour dominates, Granny Smith perhaps, which adds nuance and acidity to this elegant wine. **Drink 2017-2023 Alc 12.5%**



Delta, Marlborough 2016
90 MB 95 BC 86 CD 90

£13.99 Hay Wines, The New Zealand House of Wine
A classic bouquet of ripe pink grapefruit, crisp apple and a layer of tropical fruit; juicy, fresh, vibrant and with just enough concentration. Bags of personality. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13%**

'Some wines we tasted showed you could push the boundaries a little bit, but not too much'

Cameron Douglas MS



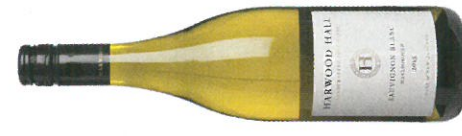
Eradus, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016
90 MB 88 BC 92 CD 90

£13.25 Corney & Barrow
This wine has a typical Awatere Valley style of cut grass, nettle, mineral and passion fruit flavours. There's decent acidity on the palate too, making this a nice, refreshing example. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13.5%**



Hāhā, Marlborough 2016
90 MB 92 BC 88 CD 91

£11.50-£15 Imperial Wine Co, Vinarius, VinumTerra
This has real guava enticement. The bouquet is full of ripe citrus and tree fruits. Ripe lemon and grapefruit, some sweet herb and a touch of flint make this a concentrated, energetic and clean wine. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13%**



Harwood Hall, Marlborough 2015 90 MB 92 BC 90 CD 89

£15 Top Selection
An intense wine with elegant softness. Fruity and fresh, lively, with fresh herbs, citrus and peach notes. The length is full and vibrant and balances beautifully with the lively acidity present. **Drink 2017-2020 Alc 13.5%**



Opawa, Marlborough 2016
90 MB 90 BC 90 DC 90

£12.99 Amazon, Selfridges
This is a weighty, flavoursome Sauvignon Blanc with beautiful fruit character; passion fruit, melon, red capsicum and tropical fruit flavours lead into a refreshing, balanced, even finish. **Drink 2017-2020 Alc 13%**



Palliser Estate, Martinborough, Wairarapa 2016 90 MB 88 BC 90 CD 93
£15.20 The New Zealand Cellar

This is a very fruity wine with plenty of fruit concentration, spice and lees characteristics on the nose and mouth. Lime, nectarine, lemon and white peach are just some of the flavours that continue through the palate and on to the finish. **Drink 2017-2023 Alc 13.5%**



Stanley Estates, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016
90 MB 88 BC 93 CD 90

£15.75 D Byrne & Co, Dunell's, Frontier, Promotion Wine, The Halifax Wine Co, The Wine Room, Vagabond
Flavoursome style, with lime zest, gooseberry and cut grass flavours. Intense red and green apple with tropical fruit notes, loads of acidity and nice balance. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 13.5%**



Vidal, Reserve, Marlborough 2016 90 MB 90 BC 91 CD 90

£16.05 Ann et Vin, Cambridge Wine Merchants, Define Food & Wine, The Devine Wine Co, The Vinorium
This has a rich, fruity, varietal and engaging bouquet with layers of herbs and grass. The palate follows the theme, with flavours of peach and citrus, some lees texture, ripe acidity and a hint of sweetness. **Drink 2017-2020 Alc 13%**

Recommended 86-89pts

Wine	Score	MB	BC	CD	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Amisfield, Central Otago 2016	89	90	89	89	The wine is tangy, with a chalky texture; mineral and toasty flavours. A really engaging example, fresh herbs, citrus and white-fleshed stone fruit.	12.5%	2017-2022	£16.99	Find Me That Wine, Home Delivery Wine, Inverarity Morton, The Light House Wine Store, Winedirect, Wine Utopia
Babich, Black Label, Marlborough 2016	89	89	89	88	Fresh, lively, steely and youthful on the nose, and consistent on the palate; simple and refreshing lemon and red apple fruit flavours come to the fore.	13%	2017-2021	£14.50	The New Zealand House of Wine
Blank Canvas, Marlborough 2016	89	90	88	88	Consumer-friendly, typical Marlborough style wine with passion fruit and capsicum notes. Crisp and dry, with flavours that reflect the nose.	13%	2017-2021	£16.15-£17.99	Exel, Liberty Wines
Clos Henri, Marlborough 2015	89	88	89	90	Appealing style with intensity, freshness and complexity. Youthful bouquet with grapefruit and fresh herbal layers; flavours of citrus, apple, wild honey.	13.5%	2017-2022	£21-£23.49	Les Caves de Pyrene, The New Zealand Cellar
Coopers Creek, Marlborough 2016	89	89	91	88	Banana leaf on the nose makes this an unusual example. We have apple, gooseberry, green capsicum and lemon grass flavours. Nice purity and drive.	12.5%	2017-2022	£14.50	All About Wine, Oakham Wines, Wine Geek
Hunter's, Wairau Valley, Marlborough 2016	89	86	90	90	A lean, bone-dry wine showing real purity and crisp acidity on the palate; fresh lemon and apple, with pink grapefruit, passion fruit and red capsicum.	13%	2017-2023	£13.95	Castang, Experience Wine, Field & Fawcett, Jeroboams, Michael Jobling, Regency Wine, The Whalley Wine Shop
Te Pā, Oke, Marlborough 2015	89	86	90	90	A rich, nutty wine, showing generous flavours of baked citrus and peach. The wine is impressively textural in style with some vegetal undertones.	13.5%	2017-2021	£17.99	Broadland Wineries
TerraVin, Marlborough 2015	89	89	88	89	A wine with some impact, and plenty of oak influence. It has texturally engaging flavours of candy, peach, some citrus and acidity.	13.5%	2017-2020	£16.99	Simply Wines Direct
Clos Marguerite, Marlborough 2016	88	90	89	86	Sweet crushed pea and asparagus jump from the glass in this aromatic example. Toasty barrel influence adds complexity to melon and nectarine.	13.5%	2017-2021	£16.65	Bottle Apostle
Man O' War, Waiheke Island 2016	88	89	88	88	Open and forward varietal bouquet with flavours of mandarin and peach. Generous acidity is also there, providing a tangy, refreshing finish.	13%	2017-2022	£16.50	Great Western Wine, Hailsham Cellars, The New Zealand Cellar
Rod McDonald, Te Awanga, Hawke's Bay 2016	88	84	90	89	In this wine we have pure, ripe passion fruit, citrus and elderflower. The palate continues with a kaleidoscope of guava, lemon, peach and grapefruit.	12%	2017-2022	£13.99	Soho Wine Supply
Spy Valley, Marlborough 2016	88	92	87	86	Fruity bouquet with aromas of citrus and apple, and an oxidative note. Pure crunchy acid and fruit, perfect synergy of herbaceous and fruit characters.	13%	2017-2021	£12.05-£12.99	Bring a Bottle, Drinkmonger, Exel, Majestic, Slurp, The Wine Society, Winedirect
Tupari, Boulder Rows, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2015	88	88	87	90	A soft, floral and aromatic example. Light and fresh with baking spice aromas. The palate is full of flavour: lime, green capsicum and even lemon custard.	13%	2017-2020	£18.50	Oddbins
Two Rivers, Altitude, Southern Valleys, Marlborough 2016	88	92	86	86	A wine style that needs to be encouraged! Ripe apple sweetness, citrus peel, apple and thyme with plenty of acidity and a good length.	13%	2017-2022	£20.99	Lea & Sandeman
Anchorage, Nelson 2015	87	85	89	87	Herbal style, cut grass, gooseberry and green capsicum. The palate has a light, creamy texture with plenty of acidity, making it a mouthwatering wine.	12%	2017-2021	£16.50	Peter Watts
Astrolabe, Kekerengu Coast, Marlborough 2015	87	83	90	87	This is a developing wine, a bouquet and palate that suggests angelica and sweet herb, yellow apple and grapefruit. Intense acidity and a good length.	13%	2017-2019	£17	Armit
Bladen, Marlborough 2016	87	88	89	85	A concentrated Sauvignon Blanc, with tangy nectarine, lemongrass and subtle melon flavours. A soft mineral edge gives the wine a modest finish.	13%	2017-2021	£13.25-£13.99	Gerrard Seel, Hard to Find Wines
Catalina Sounds, Marlborough 2016	87	89	84	89	Fresh and fruity, varietal lift and flavours of peach and apple, some citrus and tropical suggestions. The finish has a mealy texture, salty and dry.	13%	2017-2020	£13.99-£14.10	D Byrne & Co, Denby Dale Wines, Kwoff, Viva Vino
Gem, Marlborough 2008	87	90	86	86	The nose embraces cooked peas and herbs, and this stays true on the palate. It's a Sauvignon Blanc showing decent acidity and varietal definition.	13%	2017-2019	£24	Corks of Cotham, Thirty-Nine 10, Top Selection
Giesen, August 1888, Marlborough 2012	87	89	83	88	Pineapple, cream, flint and minerals provide a smorgasbord of flavour on the palate. There's great acidity and citrus, showing remarkable freshness.	14.5%	2017-2020	£19.25-£19.50	H2Vin, The New Zealand Cellar
Harrods, Marlborough 2015	87	88	88	85	This is a youthful wine with aromas and flavours of freshly gathered fruits, some spice and flint, lime and passion fruit. It has great purity and length.	13%	2017-2020	£16	Harrods
Invivo, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2015	87	85	90	86	A reasonably concentrated style with peppery, nettle-like characters and other grassy notes. It displays nice purity, with subtle mineral hints.	12.5%	2017-2021	£12.99	Asda, Majestic, Tesco
Matahiwi Estate, Wairarapa 2016	87	88	86	86	Harmonious fruit characteristics with a lovely saline edge give character to this wine. Nectarine and lime zest flavours, plus a hint of nutty yeast lees.	12%	2017-2022	£13.08-£14.99	C&O Wines
McElhinney, Cause & Effect, Marlborough 2016	87	85	87	88	The bouquet is full of oak spices, roasted stone fruits and baked lemon peel. The palate is almost caramelised and creamy, giving a definitive finish.	13.5%	2017-2022	£16.99	Naked Wines
Mt Difficulty, Bannockburn, Central Otago 2016	87	90	85	86	This wine is elegant in style with vibrant stone fruit flavours. The green apple and high acidity present make it a refreshing, energised example.	13.5%	2017-2022	£17.99	Ellis of Richmond, The New Zealand House of Wine
Mt Beautiful, North Canterbury 2016	87	88	83	91	Salty, mineral, layered and quietly complex on the nose, the palate offering more of the same: generous and juicy in style.	14%	2017-2022	£12.99	Genesis
Paddy Borthwick, Wairarapa 2015	87	88	88	85	A wine with a lemony edge to it. Very herbaceous, with aromas and flavours of hay, citrus and some stone fruit notes.	13%	2017-2020	£14	Armit
Rippon, Lake Wanaka, Central Otago 2015	87	85	89	88	This is a wine which is nicely weighted, toasty, with lees nuttiness. Fresh crisp herbal flavours mix with citrus and white peach; it's a very pure example.	12%	2017-2021	£19.50	Lea & Sandeman, The New Zealand Cellar
Rock Ferry, The Corners Vineyard, Marlborough 2013	87	89	90	82	Scents of cooked asparagus followed by good acidity and tropical fruit flavours. Green capsicum and herbs bring an appealing edge.	13.5%	2017-2020	£18.99	Wine Utopia
Saint Clair, James Sinclair, Marlborough 2016	87	83	88	90	A wine with good weight and an engaging bouquet. Aromas of fresh citrus and apple follow a palate of gooseberry, lemon grass and nettle.	12.5%	2017-2021	£18	Marks & Spencer

Recommended (continued) 86-89pts

Wine	Score	MB	BC	CD	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Schubert, Wairarapa 2016	87	85	88	89	This is a fresh and tangy wine with tree fruit and citrus flavours. It's full of acidity, nicely complementing the lemon and grapefruit characters.	13.5%	2017-2022	£15.19	Ellis of Richmond, The New Zealand House of Wine
Tiki, Marlborough 2016	87	85	93	84	Initial aromas of herb and dried spice, apple and lemon. Gooseberry and red capsicum follow on the palate, enhanced by its refreshing acidity.	13%	2017-2020	£13.49	Amazon, Castelnau
Urlar, Gladstone, Wairarapa 2016	87	84	87	89	An accessible Sauvignon Blanc with tree fruit, quince and nectarine flavours. There are some mineral undertones to this balanced wine.	13%	2017-2021	£11.40-£13.99	Exel, Great Western Wine, Hailsham Cellar, Harper Wells, Pall Mall Wine, The Tasting House
Wairau River, Marlborough 2016	87	85	89	88	A wine with good concentration; grapefruit, apple and green plum. However, slightly savoury fruit also adds character, with a refreshing, crisp, dry finish.	13.5%	2017-2020	£13.49	Ellis of Richmond, The New Zealand House of Wine, Vin Cognito
Dom Maxwell, Waipara Valley, North Canterbury 2016	86	85	88	85	White peach on the nose that flows through to the palate. There are layers of mineral character and good zesty acidity.	13%	2017-2021	£13.99	Naked Wines
Framingham, Marlborough 2016	86	86	85	88	It's a clean, fresh, lively and varietal wine with aromas and flavours of peach and citrus with some sweeter lemon notes. A well-made wine.	13%	2017-2020	£12.99-£14.99	Exel, Les Caves de Pyrene, The New Zealand Cellar
Mount Brown, Waipara Valley, North Canterbury 2016	86	84	84	89	A mixed bouquet of herbs, angelica, white-fleshed fruits and wild flowers. This follows through on the palate, making it balanced and complex.	13%	2017-2021	£13.95	Davy's
Zephyr, MK III, Marlborough 2015	86	82	88	89	There is a fine balance between bouquet and palate of flavours with this wine. Intrigue and complexity, good flavour concentration and length.	14%	2017-2019	£19.50	D Vine Cellars, Harper Wells

Commended 83-85pts

■ Brancott Estate, Terroir Series, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016 85, 13.9%, 2017-2020, £13.29
 Amazon, Bargain Booze, Ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco Wine by the Case, Wine Rack ■ Greystone, Barrel Fermented, Waipara Valley, North Canterbury 2016 85, 13.5%, 2017-2020, £14.99 Waitrose ■ Kim Crawford, Spitfire, Marlborough 2016 85, 14%, 2017-2020, £15.25-£16.99 Exel, Liberty Wines, The New Zealand Cellar ■ Neudorf, Nelson 2016 85, 13%, 2017-2021, £19.50 Widely available via UK importer Fields Morris & Verdin ■ Waimea, Nelson 2016 85, 13%, 2017-2020, £12.99 Majestic ■ Crown Range Cellar, Drowsy Fish, Nelson 2015 84, 13%, 2017-2020, N/A UK www.crownrangecellar.com ■ Greywacke, Wild Sauvignon, Marlborough 2015 84, 14%, 2017-2021, £21.50-£27.99 Corks Out, Drinkmonger, Exel, Flagship

Wines, Majestic, The New Zealand Cellar, The Wine Reserve ■ Te Mata, Hawke's Bay 2016 84, 13%, 2017-2021, £19.99 BJR Hanby, Bodnant Welsh food, Hailsham Cellars, The New Zealand Cellar ■ Villa Maria, Reserve, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016 84, 13.5%, 2017-2019, £15.40 Fountainhall Wines, Hailsham Cellars, Sainsbury's, The Drink Shop, The New Zealand House of Wine ■ Main Divide, Marlborough 2016 83, 13.5%, 2017-2020, £14.99 Hailsham Cellars, St Andrews Wine Co, The New Zealand Cellar

Fair 76-82pts

■ Mahi, Boundary Farm, Marlborough 2014 82 ■ Elephant Hill, Hawke's Bay 2015 81 ■ Jackson Estate, Stinch, Marlborough 2016 80 ■ Bill and Claudia Small, Wolfie Serious, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016 79 ■ Spencer Hill, Reserve Fumé,

Nelson 2014 79 ■ Bellbird Spring, Block Eight, Waipara Valley, North Canterbury 2014 78 ■ Gladstone, Wairarapa 2016 78 ■ John Forrest Collection, Wairau Valley, Marlborough 2013 78 ■ Trinity Hill, Hawke's Bay 2016 78 ■ Folium, Reserve, Marlborough 2015 77 ■ Mike Paterson, Lay of the Land, Destination, Marlborough 2016 76

Faulty

■ Seresin, Marlborough 2015 (oxidised) ■ Sileni, Straits, Marlborough 2016 (suspicion of rot) ■ Supernatural Wine Co, Green Glow, Hawke's Bay 2014 (oxidised) ■ Walnut Block, Nutcracker, Marlborough 2016 (high volatile acidity)

For full details of UK stockists, see p97

My top three
Melanie Brown

■ Kono, Tohu Single Vineyard, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016
 Soft fruits and vibrant structure: perfect synergy of lifted aromatics, a fresh and enticing palate, just a hint of sweetness. A signature Sauvignon personality makes for an exceptionally good-value drop. Not to be missed. **96 Drink** 2017-2023

■ Wild Rock, Marlborough 2016
 A wonderfully energetic expression. Seamless balance of savoury and tropical fruit characters, and just the right amount of grassy nuance. Beautiful – left me gagging for more! **94 Drink** 2017-2021

■ Dog Point, Section 94, Marlborough 2014
 Intensely powerful with a wonderfully pure Sauvignon signature, harmonious oak balance with a textural concentration that's effortlessly pleasing. A sexy Sauvignon with class and poise – perhaps the Marilyn Monroe of NZ Sauvignon! **90 Drink** 2017-2023

My top three
Bob Campbell MW

■ Auntsfield, Single Vineyard, Southern Valleys, Marlborough 2016
 Rich and flavoursome with typical weight and concentration for a wine from this clay-rich sub-region. Tropical fruit, passion fruit, guava and apricot flavours plus a seasoning of brioche. It's quite a mouthful. **98 Drink** 2017-2024

■ Kono, Tohu Single Vineyard, Awatere Valley, Marlborough 2016
 Pure and poised, a classic high-energy Awatere style – typical nettle, green capsicum and oyster shell mineral. Simply seamless, vibrant. **96 Drink** 2017-2023

■ Nautilus, Marlborough 2016
 A lovely textural, medium-bodied style with impressive weight and intensity. Appealing purity of fruit, with hints of toasted nuts. **95 Drink** 2017-2022

NB: the tasters' top wines are not necessarily their top-scoring, rather those which, on learning the wines' identity, they feel are the most notable given their provenance, price or other factors

My top three
Cameron Douglas MS

■ Auntsfield, Single Vineyard, Southern Valleys, Marlborough 2016
 Encapsulates what's at the heart of Marlborough's Sauvignon Blanc message – energy, precise attack and flavours that last. Classic. **98 Drink** 2017-2024

■ Churton, Marlborough 2016
 A lovely ripe spectrum of fruit at the core surrounded by layers of lees-led light savoury moments and hints of asparagus. Zesty, mealy structure, weightier with a lovely lengthy finish. **95 Drink** 2017-2025

■ The Darling, Organic, Marlborough 2016
 Flinty, crunchy aroma and texture; great fruit complexity and a hint of spice too, from lees and perhaps older oak. Served at cellar temperature and not 4°C with the beers, this is delightful. **88 Drink** 2017-2021

UK stockists

Where to find the wines featured in *Decanter* this month

23 Wine & Whiskey (www.23wineandwhiskey.com)

ABS Wine Agencies, Lincs (www.abswineagencies.co.uk)
 AG Wines, London (www.agwines.com)
 Aimee's Wine House, Bristol (www.aimeeswinehouse.co.uk)
 All About Wine (www.allaboutwine.co.uk)
 Alliance Wine, Ayrshire (www.alliancewine.co.uk)
 Alpine Wines (www.alpinewines.co.uk)
 Amazon UK (www.amazon.co.uk)
 Amps Fine Wines, Northants (www.ampsfinewines.co.uk)
 Anglia Wine Merchants, Cambridgeshire (www.angliawines.co.uk)
 Ann et Vin, Notts (www.annetvin.com)
 Armit Wines, London W11 (www.armit.co.uk)
 Asda (www.asda.co.uk)
 Auriol Wines, Hampshire (01252 843190)
 Averys, Bristol (www.averys.com)

Bargain Booze, Cheshire (www.bargainbooze.co.uk)
 Berkman Wine Cellars, London (www.berkman.co.uk)
 Berry Bros & Rudd, London (www.bbr.com)
 Big Red Wine Co, Suffolk (www.bigredwine.co.uk)
 BJR Hanby, N Yorks (01937 833 893)
 Black Dog Wine Agency, Cheshire (www.blackdogwineagency.co.uk)
 Blas ar Fwyd, Conwy, Wales (www.blasarfwyd.com)
 Bodnant Welsh Food, Conwy (www.bodnant-welshfood.co.uk)
 Bon Cœur Fine Wines, North Yorks (www.bcfw.co.uk)
 Bon Vivant, Edinburgh (www.bonvivantedinburgh.co.uk)
 Booths (www.booths.co.uk)
 Bottle Apostle, London (www.bottleapostle.com)
 Boutinot Wines, Cheshire (www.boutinot.com)
 Bring a Bottle (www.bringabottle.co.uk)
 Broadland Wineries, Norfolk (www.broadland-wineries.com)
 Brook & Vine, Sussex (www.brookandvine.co.uk)
 Buon Vino, North Yorks (www.buonvino.co.uk)
 Burgess & Hall (www.burgessandhall.com)
 Butlers Wine Cellar, Brighton (www.butlers-winecellar.co.uk)
 Buy Great Wine, Surrey (www.buygreatwine.co.uk)

C&O Wines (www.cowines.com)
 Camber Wines, Portsmouth (www.camberwines.co.uk)
 Cambridge Wine Merchants (www.cambridgewine.com)
 Castang Wines, Cornwall (www.castang-wines.co.uk)
 Castelnau Wine Agencies (www.castelnau.co.uk)
 Cava Spiliadis (www.cavaspiadis.co.uk)
 Caviste, Overton (www.caviste.co.uk)
 Champagnes & Châteaux, London (www.champagnesandchateaux.co.uk)
 Chapel Down Winery, Kent (www.englishwinesgroup.com)
 Cheers Wine Merchants, Swansea (www.cheers-wine-merchants.co.uk)
 Christopher Piper, Devon (www.christopherpiperwines.co.uk)
 Clark Foyster, London (www.clarkfoysterwines.co.uk)
 Clipper Wines, Southsea (0209 281 2133)
 Co-op (www.co-operative.coop)
 Connoisseur Estates, Berkshire (www.connoisseurstates.co.uk)
 Corking Wines, N Yorks (www.corkingwines.com)
 Corks of Cotham, Bristol (www.corksof.com)
 Corks Out, Stockton Heath (www.corksout.com)
 Corney & Barrow, London (www.corneyandbarrow.com)
 Crown Range Cellar (www.crownrangecellar.com)
 Crush Wines, Wilts (www.crush-wines.com)

Imperial Wine Co, Suffolk (www.imperialwine.co.uk)
 Inverarity Morton/Forth Wines, Glasgow (www.inveraritymorton.com)
 Islington Wines, London (020 7700 5686)
 James Nicholson, Co Down (www.jnwine.com)
 Jeroboams (www.jeroboams.co.uk)
 John Hattersley Wines, Derbyshire (www.johnhattersley.com)
 Just in Cases (www.justincases.co.uk)
 Justerini & Brooks, London SW1 (www.justerinis.com)

Kingsbridge Wine Room (www.vivowines.co.uk)
 Kwoff, Lancs (www.kwoff.co.uk)
 L'Art du Vin, Edinburgh (www.aduv.co.uk)
 L'Assemblage, West Sussex (www.lassemblage.co.uk)
 Laitwhaites (www.laitwhaites.co.uk)
 Latitude Wines, Leeds (www.latitudewine.co.uk)
 Lay & Wheeler, Essex (www.laywheeler.com)
 Le Bon Vin, Sheffield (www.lebonvin.co.uk)
 Lea & Sandeman, London (www.leasandeman.com)
 Les Caves de Pyrene, Surrey (www.lescaves.co.uk)
 Lewis & Cooper, N Yorks (www.lewisandcooper.co.uk)
 Liberty Wines, London SW8 (www.libertywine.co.uk)

Eclectic Tastes, Dundee (www.eclectictastes.co.uk)
 EeBria (www.eebria.com)
 Ellis of Richmond, Middlesex (www.ellisofrichmond.co.uk)
 Evington's Wines, Leics (www.evingtons-wines.co.uk)
 Exel Wines, Perth (www.exelwines.co.uk)
 Experience Wine, Truro (www.experiencewine.co.uk)
 Fareham Cellar, Hampshire (www.farehamwinecellar.co.uk)
 Farr Vintners, London (www.farrvintners.com)
 Fenwick Wine Shop, Newcastle-on-Tyne (0191 232 5100)
 Field & Fawcett, York (www.fieldandfawcett.co.uk)
 Fields Morris & Verdin, London (www.fmvwines.com)
 Find Me That Wine (www.findmethatwine.com)
 Fine & Rare, London (www.frw.co.uk)
 Flagship Wines, Herts (www.flagshipwines.co.uk)
 Fountainhall Wines, Aberdeenshire (www.fountainhallwines.co.uk)
 Four Walls Wine, Sussex (www.fourwallswine.com)
 Frederic Robinson Brewery (www.robinsonsbrewery.com)
 From Vineyards Direct (www.fromvineyardsdirect.com)
 Frontier Fine Wines, Ipswich (www.frontierfinewines.co.uk)

Gauntleys of Nottingham (www.gauntley-wine.co.uk)
 Genesis Wines, London (www.genesiswines.co.uk)
 Georges Barbier, London SE12 (www.georgesbarbier.co.uk)
 Gerrard Seel, Cheshire (www.gerrardseel.co.uk)
 Gerry's, London (www.gerrys.co.uk)
 Goedhuis & Co, London (www.goedhuis.com)
 Grape & Grain, Somerset (01373 462 455)
 Great Grog, Edinburgh (www.greatgrog.co.uk)
 Great Western Wine, Bath (www.greatwesternwine.co.uk)
 Great Wines Direct (www.greatwinesdirect.co.uk)

H2Vin, London (www.h2vin.co.uk)
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 Hard to Find Wines, London (www.htfwines.co.uk)
 Harper Wells, Norwich (www.harperwells.com)
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 Harvey Nichols, Northampton (www.harveynichols.com)
 Hawkins Bros (www.hawkinsbros.co.uk)
 Hay Wines, Lebury (www.haywines.co.uk)
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 Hedonism, London W1K (www.hedonism.co.uk)
 Hennings Wine, W Sussex (www.henningswine.co.uk)
 Hic Wine Merchants, W Yorks (www.hic-winemercants.com)
 Highbury Vintners, London (www.highburyvintners.co.uk)
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Love Wine, Jersey (www.lovwine.je)
 Luvians Bottle Shop, Fife (www.luvians.com)
 M&M Personal Vintners (www.mikeoldfieldwines.co.uk)
 Majestic (www.majestic.co.uk)
 Maltby & Greek (www.maltbyandgreek.com)
 Marks & Spencer (www.marksandspencer.com)
 Master of Malt (www.masterofmalt.com)
 Michael Jobling Wines, Newcastle (www.michaeljoblingwines.com)
 Mill Hill Wines, London NW7 (www.millhillwines.com)
 Millésima (www.millesima.co.uk)
 Naked Wines (www.nakedwines.com)
 ND John, Wales (www.ndjohn.co.uk)
 Neill Wine (www.neillwine.com)
 Noble Fine Liqueur, London (www.noblefinealcohol.co.uk)
 Noble Green, Middlesbrough (www.noblegreenwines.co.uk)
 Noel Young, Cambridge (www.nywines.co.uk)
 North & South Wines, London SW11 (www.northandsouthwines.co.uk)

Oakham Wines, Rutland (www.oakhamwines.co.uk)
 Ocado (www.ocado.com)
 Oddbins (www.oddbins.com)
 Old School Wines, Stoke-on-Trent (www.oldschoolwines.co.uk)
 OW Loeb & Co, London SE1 (www.owloeb.com)
 Oz Wines, London (www.ozwines.co.uk)
 Pall Mall Wine, London SW1Y (07500 018 715)
 Pallant Wines, W Sussex (www.pallantofarundel.co.uk)
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 Partridges, London (www.partridges.co.uk)
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 Liberty Wines, London SW8 (www.libertywine.co.uk)

The Finest Bubble (www.thefinestbubble.com)
 The Good Spirits Co, Glasgow (www.thegoodspirits.co.uk)
 The Grape to Glass Wine Shop, Colwyn Bay (www.thegraptoglass.co.uk)
 The Greek Delicatessen, London N21 (www.thegreekdeli.com)
 The Halifax Wine Co, W Yorks (www.halifaxwinecompany.com)
 The Leamington Wine Co (www.leamingtonwine.co.uk)
 The Light House Wine Store (www.lighthousewines.co.uk)
 The New Zealand Cellar (www.thenewzealandcellar.co.uk)
 The New Zealand House of Wine, Haslemere (www.nzhouseofwine.co.uk)
 The Oxford Wine Co (www.oxfordwine.co.uk)
 The Rural Vintner, East Sussex (www.ruralvintner.co.uk)
 The Solent Cellar, Lymington (www.solentcellar.co.uk)
 The Tasting House, Reading (www.tastinghouse.co.uk)
 The Vining, Reigate (www.thevining.co.uk)
 The Vineyard, Dorking (www.wineunlimited.co.uk)
 The Vineyard, Galway (www.thevineyard.ie)
 The Vineyard, Isle of Man (www.thevineyard.co.im)
 The Vineyard, Ramsbottom, Lancs (www.thevineyardwineshop.co.uk)
 The Vinorium (Z&B Vintners), Kent (www.thevinorium.co.uk)
 The Whalley Wine Shop, Clitheroe, Lancs (www.thewhalleywineshop.com)
 The Wine Reserve, Surrey (www.thewinereserve.co.uk)
 The Wine Room (www.wine-room.co.uk)
 The Wine Society (www.thewinesociety.com)
 The Wine Twt (www.thewinetwt.com)
 The Winery, London W9 (www.thewineryuk.com)
 The Wright Wine Co, Yorks (www.wineandwhisky.co.uk)
 Theatre of Wine, London (www.theatreofwine.co.uk)
 Thirty Nine 10 (www.thirtynine10.co.uk)
 Top Selection (www.topselection.co.uk)
 Toscanaccio, Winchester (www.toscanaccio.co.uk)
 Tour de Force Wines, London W1 (www.tourdeforcewines.com)
 TryWines, Newbury (www.trywines.co.uk)

Oakham Wines, Rutland (www.oakhamwines.co.uk)
 Ocado (www.ocado.com)
 Oddbins (www.oddbins.com)
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 Haynes Hanson & Clark (www.hhand.co.uk)
 Hedonism, London W1K (www.hedonism.co.uk)
 Hennings Wine, W Sussex (www.henningswine.co.uk)
 Hic Wine Merchants, W Yorks (www.hic-winemercants.com)
 Highbury Vintners, London (www.highburyvintners.co.uk)
 Home Delivery Wine (www.homedeliverywine.com)
 Honest Grapes (www.honestgrapes.co.uk)

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 James Nicholson, Co Down (www.jnwine.com)
 Jeroboams (www.jeroboams.co.uk)
 John Hattersley Wines, Derbyshire (www.johnhattersley.com)
 Just in Cases (www.justincases.co.uk)
 Justerini & Brooks, London SW1 (www.justerinis.com)

Kingsbridge Wine Room (www.vivowines.co.uk)
 Kwoff, Lancs (www.kwoff.co.uk)
 L'Art du Vin, Edinburgh (www.aduv.co.uk)
 L'Assemblage, West Sussex (www.lassemblage.co.uk)
 Laitwhaites (www.laitwhaites.co.uk)
 Latitude Wines, Leeds (www.latitudewine.co.uk)
 Lay & Wheeler, Essex (www.laywheeler.com)
 Le Bon Vin, Sheffield (www.lebonvin.co.uk)
 Lea & Sandeman, London (www.leasandeman.com)
 Les Caves de Pyrene, Surrey (www.lescaves.co.uk)
 Lewis & Cooper, N Yorks (www.lewisandcooper.co.uk)
 Liberty Wines, London SW8 (www.libertywine.co.uk)