

14 best Pinot Noir wines

From Burgundy to Brazil, we pick the world's finest offerings of a summer favourite

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INDEPENDENT, Tuesday 16 August 2016

It's Pinot Noir day on August 18 and time to celebrate one of the world's most popular wine grapes. A thin-skinned grape, it produces wines with an intensity that oozes summer flavours of ripe cherries, wild strawberries and crushed berries. Add to that a velvety smoothness and an underlying complexity and you have a silky wine that's hard to beat. Its heartland may be in Burgundy but superb examples can also be found in New Zealand, Chile, Brazil, Argentina and even in Germany and Switzerland.

1. Astro Costera Santa Macarena Pinot Noir 2015, 14%: £9.99, Virgin Wines



This is being marketed as Chile's answer to fine Burgundy and there's no arguing with the fact that Astro Costera ("single star"), produced from a vineyard close to the Pacific Ocean is something special. Loads of berry flavours allied to a coastal, almost saline tang make it a bargain at this price.

2. Nuits-Saint-Georges Tribourg 2012, 13%: £31, Yapp



This is what the Pinot Noir grape is all about. Smooth and supple, this medium-bodied Burgundy classic from the Tribourg region has an abundance of fruit and berry flavours, complemented by undertones of licorice and game with a hint of oak spice. Good to drink now, but could be kept for another decade.

3. Pinot Noir No. 3 2011, 13%: £43.20, Alpine Wines



You wouldn't necessarily equate Switzerland with a premier Pinot Noir, but this superb wine from the Schlossgut Bachtobel estate in the east of the country – family owned since 1874 – has it all. It has complex fruit flavours, with hints of cloves, spices and cocoa and a subtle oak bouquet. No need for fancy names, too. The proof's in the drinking.

4. Domaine Bousquet Pinot Noir 2013, 14.5%: £13.95, Vintage Roots

From a vineyard that nestles in the foothills of the Andes, here's a Pinot Noir that couples the know-how of French winemaking with Argentina's exceptional climate. Certified organic, the wine spends 10 months in oak barrels, and with its silky tannins and plum and cherry flavours, goes well with red or cured meats.

5. Berry Bros New Zealand Pinot Noir 2014, 13.5%: £15.95, Berry Bros and Rudd

Part of the Berry Bros own label range, this New Zealand Pinot Noir is bright, intense and almost cleansing in its character with lashings of cherry and red-fruit flavours and a pleasing oakiness. It's produced by the award-winning Greystone winery in the famous Waipara Valley wine area in the south island.

6. Riqueza Cellar Reserve Pinot Noir 2014, 13%: £11.99, Waitrose

A wine that comes all the way from the southern wine region of Campanha in Brazil, this is a superbly drinkable, bold and bright Pinot Noir. The plum and red berry flavours are augmented by the smooth tannins and a hint of spice. Enjoy with roast chicken or pasta.

7. Seresin Home Pinot Noir 2010, 14%: £30.93, Amazon

From a New Zealand vineyard owned by cinematographer Michael Seresin, who's worked on Dawn of the Planet of the Apes and Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, comes a Pinot Noir with its own particular magic. Hand-picked and sorted certified organic grapes from this Marlborough estate produce a wine that's matured for 11 months. Jam-packed with fruit flavours with woody overtones, it's a wine to savour.

8. Doudet-Naudin Pinot Noir 2014, 12.5%: £6.49, Co-operative Food

Great value at under £7, this is an enticing and smooth Pinot Noir from Burgundy with oodles of raspberry, cherry and currant flavours that harmonise with the hint of oak and the soft tannins. Enjoy it with mushroom dishes or pulled pork.

9. M&S Palataia Pinot Noir 2014, 13.5%: £10.50, Marks & Spencer

Germany wouldn't necessarily be the first choice for a Pinot Noir but this superb wine produced in the Palatinate wine-growing region by Matthias Gaul and former M&S wine-buyer Gerd Stepp is a smasher at a reasonable price. It's got luscious fruits flavours, palate-pleasing tannins and notes of herbs and oak.

10. Mt. Difficulty Bannockburn Pinot Noir 2013, 14%: £25.99, Waitrose

It's a little pricey, but this well-balanced wine from vineyards in Central Otago, New Zealand, has a rich, velvety smoothness with concentrated red berry and floral notes and a hint of spice. It's also the official wine of the New Zealand Olympic Team, which should give it a winning edge.

11. Errazuriz Aconcagua Costa Pinot Noir 2014, 13%: £10.30, Stone, Vine & Sun

Sourced from the Manzanar Vineyard in Chile's Valle de Aconcagua just 12km from the Pacific, this award-winning Pinot Noir, aged for 10 months in French oak barrels, has a rich but subtle nose of red fruit and wild strawberries with a textured depth and an elegant and lengthy finish.

12. Bourgogne Pinot Noir Couvent des Jacobins, Louis Jadot 2013, 12%: £13.49, Wine Rack

Here's a Pinot Noir from northern Burgundy which slides off the tongue with a silky smoothness. Aged for six months in oak casks, it's a medium to light wine with pronounced berry flavours and a floral aroma. Enjoy it with chicken, casseroles, meat dishes or cheese.

13. The King's Wrath Pinot Noir 2014, 13.5%: £14.24, Ocado

There are lashings of plums, red berries and wild strawberries in this New Zealand Pinot Noir, named after a misdeed by a forebear of the Marisco family who own the Marlborough vineyard where this originates. Elements of spice, smoke and herbs give it a bold and layered flavour. It'll stay at this reduced price of £14.24 until August 23.

14. Most Wanted Pinot Noir 2014, 13.5%: £9.99, Sainsbury's

This is a medium-bodied New Zealand Pinot Noir at a very good price. Cherries, plums and red berries jostle for your attention on the palate and there's an oaky smoothness that helps it to linger on the tongue. Can be drunk now, but it will even taste better if kept for another 12 months.