

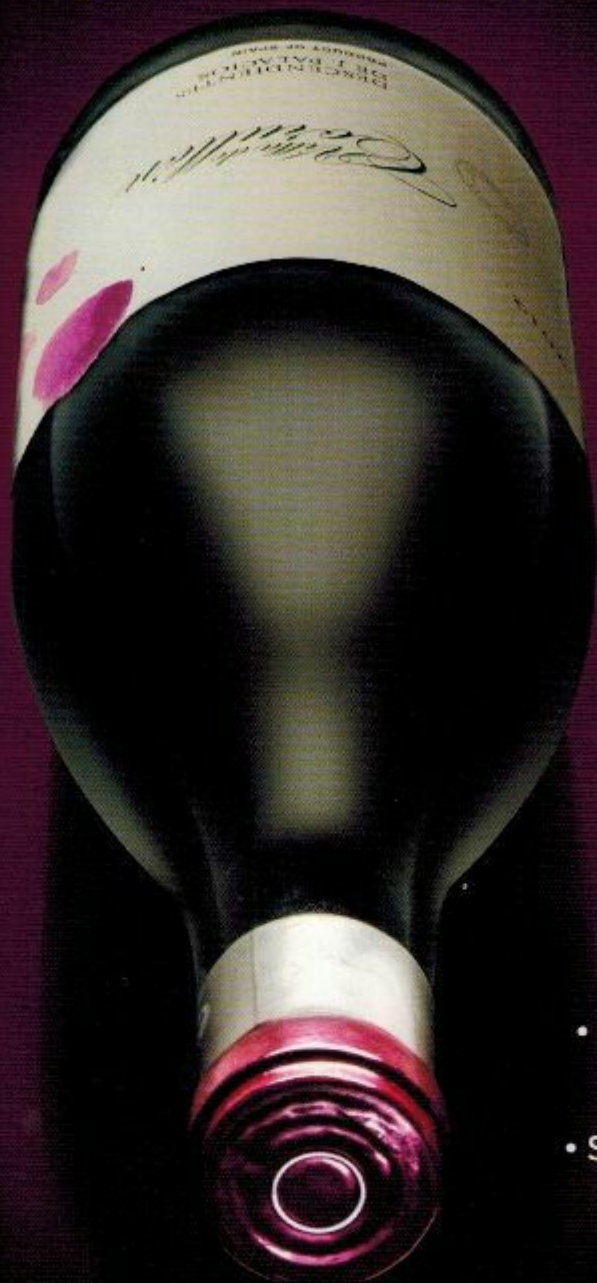
The world's best wine magazine

January 2017 £4.50

Decanter

75 STELLAR BUYS OF 2016

The most exciting wines we've tasted this year



TASTED & RATED

- Margaret River Cab
- Rosé Champagne
- Ribera del Duero

WINES TO CELEBRATE WITH IN 2017

Special wines for
significant events

CHATEAU BATAILLEY

Behind the success
of this fifth growth

ALSO

- Your guide to Hermitage
- Secrets of Swiss wine
- Stellenbosch Cabernet
- Scandinavian restaurants



The most exciting wines of 2016

Decanter experts around the world named the five bottles under £55 that impressed them most this year. After tasting and rating the 195 nominated wines, and assessing them on harmony, complexity and wow factor, our three judges compiled the ultimate top 75 across all styles. Christelle Guibert reports

THIS YEAR, INSTEAD of simply pulling together the top-scoring wines from our 2016 panel tastings, features and supplements, we have cast our net wider, by asking our in-house team, regular contributors and *Decanter* World Wine Awards Regional Chairs which five bottles, under £55, they enjoyed most over the past 12 months.

Our experts provided a brilliant selection that showed real diversity, both geographically and stylistically. While classic regions were represented, we also had wines from Cyprus, Canada, Israel and Japan, as well as a surprisingly high number of orange and amphora wines.

Over two very enjoyable days in October, I was joined by Sarah Jane Evans MW and Andy Howard MW (see below) to taste through the 195 nominations. As with all *Decanter* panel tastings, the wines were tasted blind; only the grape variety and vintage were disclosed.

This year, we wanted to pay particular attention to

wines with 'wow factor'. As Evans summed up: 'We were looking for the most complete wines, the most individual, fascinating and the most genuinely enjoyable. They did not have to be classically perfect wines, just memorable.'

And memorable they certainly were, with more than 97% hitting the Highly Recommended mark (90 points or more). And as most of the wines are available at independent merchants rather than supermarkets, this offers *Decanter* readers a great opportunity to seek out new wine shops and build relationships with local wine retailers.

So if you are looking for exciting and delicious wines this festive season – wines that have been recommended personally by a *Decanter* expert and further endorsed for their wow-factor in our blind tasting – you're guaranteed to find it here in one of our two lists: the top 50 still wines and the top 25 sparkling, off-dry, sweet and fortified wines.

We hope they'll become some of your favourites too.

The tasters

Sarah Jane Evans MW



is chair of the Institute of Masters of Wine and the *Decanter* World Wine Awards Regional co-Chair for Spain and Sherry

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

19 **Domaine Richaud, Calranne, Rhône, France 2014**

£26 Liberty Wines, Wine Reserve
This is a rich and luscious red wine with oodles of sweet black fruit and ripe berry characters. The Mourvèdre lends structure, while the Carignan gives a distinctive blueberry allure. Hints of coffee and liquorice also come through, making it long and complex. This wine will not disappoint. **Drink** 2017-2021 **Alc** 14.5%

20 **Domaine Guffens Heynen, Tris des Hauts des Vignes, Pouilly-Fuissé, Burgundy, France 2014**

£40 Farr Vintners
A very elegant, classical style of oak-matured Chardonnay. The palate is clean and mineral, with cream and cedar undertones. The oak is spicy and stylish, joining ripe apples and a hint of exotic fruit on a long, stony finish. **Drink** 2017-2022 **Alc** 13.5%

21 **Domaine Delaporte, Cul de Beaujeu, Sancerre, Loire, France 2014**

£31.75 Lea & Sandeman
This is a Pinot Noir made for pleasure. It has beguiling vegetal notes and a great combination of leafy fruit, silky tannins and understated oak. It has the concentration and acidity to age well and shows a real sweetness of fruit and an individual character. **Drink** 2017-2023 **Alc** 13%

22 **Château Olivier, Pessac-Léognan, Bordeaux, France 2015**

£19 (in bond) Millésima
A serious Sauvignon Blanc that is still young but has so much to give. Nettle and hedgerow combine with honey and ripe stone fruits to give a complex melange of flavours and aromas. This is brought together by zingy acidity and gunflint notes, with a lifted feel to the palate. **Drink** 2017-2020 **Alc** 13%



23 **Giovanni Rosso, Serra, Barolo, Piedmont, Italy 2012**

£35 Highbury Vintners
This is a sophisticated Nebbiolo with classic notes of strawberry, rose petal and violets floating on top of grippy tannins and powerfully striking acidity. There is a generous fruit sweetness on the palate followed by a crunchy freshness and clear potential for further ageing. **Drink** 2017-2023 **Alc** 14%

24 **Scacciadiavoli, Montefalco Rosso, Umbria, Italy 2012**

£11.50 The Wine Society
This is really interesting! It is very aromatic and bursting with primary fruits and brambles, combined with subtle oak maturation. It has a tight structure but will open out beautifully, and it finishes with a lift of acidity and rasp of leafy tannins. This is an appetising and characterful wine to accompany food. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 14.5%

25 **Luddite, Saboteur White, Bot River, South Africa 2015**

£20-£31 Bargain Booze, Dorset Wine Co, Harperwells, Highbury Vintners, Lance Strother, Le Vignoble, RS Wines, The Wine Reserve
Intriguing, complex blend of peaches, candied apricot and a savoury grassiness. Driving acidity leads to a tenacious vivacity of sweet spice and exotic fruit balanced by an oily, lingering mouthfeel. Lovely! **Drink** 2017-2020 **Alc** 13%

26 **Vidal Estate, Legacy Syrah, Gimblett Gravels, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand 2014**

£45 Hatch Mansfield
All the pleasure of Syrah's dark, juicy black cherry fruit with a hint of black olive and whiff of cracked pepper to keep it all in balance. It has chewy tannins that are powerful and vibrant and a promising spicy oak note on the finish. **Drink** 2017-2020 **Alc** 13.5%

For full details of UK stockists, see p94