

50 star buys of 2015



From the thousands of wines tasted and rated by *Decanter's* expert judges and writers over the past 12 months, we have picked out 50 of the highest-scoring bottles available in the UK. And with 14 of them under £20, there's a host of affordable treats on the following pages to kickstart your seasonal festivities

TO CELEBRATE THE end of another year of great wines, three of our regular experts – Peter Richards MW, Sarah Jane Evans MW and Xavier Rousset MS – have chosen *Decanter's* 50 star buys from the hundreds of wines rated Outstanding in 2015.

Every one scored 18.5/20 (95/100) points and above during the past 12 months and are all still commercially available, with the selection taken from our monthly panel tastings and Weekday Wines, as well as recommendations from our writers that have been published in feature articles and supplements. Our three experts retasted the wines blind (only the principal grape variety and vintage were known) and judged them totally on their own merits.

The tasting included lots of stylistic differences but our panel unanimously agreed on the final 50. The top 10 are highlighted on these first two pages, with the others grouped by region.

The results provoked a few surprises, with white wines and Australia the stars. Rousset found the Australian whites very pure and precise with great minerality

and balance. 'The country's wines have had a tough time, especially Chardonnay, often criticised as too extracted and over-oaked with high alcohol. Producers have reacted to that and it's paying off.' Richards also praised Australia's other popular varieties such as Riesling, Pinot Noir and Syrah for being 'better and more elegant and diverse than ever before'.

No sparkling wines made it into the judges' top 10, but Richards found the two English wines (*see p28*) 'wonderfully expressive and vivid'.

Evans praised the variety of drinking pleasure on offer in these 50 star buys: 'There are wines with glorious individual character – such as Charme and Chryseia from the Douro (*see p32*), the new-wave Argentinian Malbec blends like Ji Ji Ji and Demente (*p27*), and an unexpectedly lovely expression of Marsanne from Oratoire St-Martin (*p31*).'

Many of the wines recommended offer great value for money (prices and stockists have been checked and updated) and can all be bought with confidence as they come with the *Decanter* seal of approval.