The best Pinot Noirs in the world (outside Burgundy)

It’s the grape that stars in some of the world’s most expensive and rarest red wines when grown in its home territory of Burgundy. But how is it performing elsewhere? Our expert panel tasted the best of the rest to find out. Stephen Brook appraises the results.

AFTER THE EXCITING ‘World’s best Chardonnay outside Burgundy’ tasting (March 2015 issue), it seemed logical to apply the same principle to the region’s other great grape, Pinot Noir. Based on the recommendations of our international experts (see p.33), more than 80 wines were selected. But the tasting yielded fewer spectacular scores than the Chardonnay tasting.

It’s quite clear that Pinot Noir can thrive throughout the world, as our tasting rewarded wines from around the globe. Climate, as much as terroir, accounts for this, and there are sweet spots as remote from each other as the Ahr Valley in Germany, Central Otago in New Zealand and the cool coastal areas of South Africa. Here the combination of ideal microclimates and impassioned winemakers seemed to deliver the most exciting wines.

Australia and New Zealand were the most successful regions overall, with Australia dominating the Top 10. Germany also performed strongly – it took the top place, and with one exception all the other German wines also scored highly. Ten years ago most German Pinots were overoaked, but this is not the case today. Canada, which did so well in the earlier Chardonnay tasting, fared less well here, although there were no wines among the lowest third.

Delicate balance
Perhaps it is unsurprising that the Pinot Noir tasting was less impressive than the Chardonnay one that preceded it. Chardonnay is a forgiving variety, which thrives in a wide range of climates and soils around the world. Pinot Noir is more fussy: a notoriously tricky grape to grow and vinify. A touch of botrytis won’t wreck a Chardonnay harvest, but must be avoided strenuously with Pinot, a variety that reacts dramatically to adverse conditions, such as heat spikes.

Raw material matters: the wrong clone in a great spot can result in a disappointing wine

Personal preference

Indeed, personal tastes tend to be particularly pronounced when assessing Pinot Noir: one taster’s ‘delicate’ or ‘refined’ may be another taster’s ‘stringy’ or ‘vegetal’. In this tasting, diverging tastes probably affected Canada most as a category.

Although Pinot lovers understandably complain about the prices for fine Burgundy, some of these alternatives don’t come cheap either. Our top wine, from Stodden, retails at more than £100. Bottles in excess of £40 are frequently found in this line-up, and while some are outstanding, others certainly don’t justify their price-tag.

Clearly there is a wider gap between Burgundy and ‘the rest’ in the case of Pinot than there is for Chardonnay. Over centuries, Burgundian growers have distilled the...
‘Setting aside the Burgundian model, there are wines from the world over to reward Pinot fanciers’

experience of generations of monks and lay farmers. The combination of well-drained soils over limestone, perfectly exposed slopes, old vines, sensible yields and (over the last 15 years at least) meticulous farming, often results in Pinot of unmatched quality, complexity and longevity. It’s too much to expect international Pinot to attain a comparable level in just a few decades. I know an Australian winemaker who has often worked in Burgundy. His own Pinots are very good but for a decade or more weren’t remotely Burgundian. Burgundy’s Côte d’Or and its wines can’t simply be transplanted by copying winemaking techniques.

Yet setting aside the Burgundian model, there are wines from the world over to reward Pinot fanciers. More time, more experience, better clonal or massal selections, greater vine age and a lighter touch in the winery will doubtless lead to impressive results. New World and other winemakers are quick to learn, and were this tasting to be replicated 10 years’ time, I suspect the results would be more exciting.

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### Best-value wines tasted

<table>
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<th>Region</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chile 2013</td>
<td>Gossard, Manor Reserva, Blauburgunder, Alto Adige</td>
<td>£23-£35</td>
<td>Les Caves de Puyrie, Mooreooduc Estate, McIntyre, Mornington Peninsula, Australia 2013 Alc 14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon, USA 2012</td>
<td>Phillips Creek, Cuvée Alexandrines, Columbia Gorge</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand 2013</td>
<td>Quartz Reef, Central Otago</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa 2015</td>
<td>Storm, Moya’s, Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley</td>
<td>£14-£18</td>
<td>Fine Wine, Indigo Wine, Selby, The Sampler</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand 2013</td>
<td>To Whare Ra, Single Vineyard, Marlborough</td>
<td>£29.50-£29.90</td>
<td>Swig, The New Zealand Cellar</td>
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<td>France 2012</td>
<td>Vincent Pinard, Vendanges Entières, Sancerre, Loire</td>
<td>£35.46</td>
<td>JancisRobinson.com</td>
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<td>USA 2013</td>
<td>Rousset’s top three: 1. Stephen Brook, 2. Alex Hunt MW, 3. Xavier Rousset MS</td>
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</tbody>
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### The judges

**Stephen Brook**
Brook has been a contributing editor to Decanter since 1996 and has won a clutch of awards for his writing on wine. The author of more than 30 books, his works include The Complete Bordeaux, now the definitive study of the region. **Brooks’ top three:** 1. Jean Stodden, Splittburgunder Alte Reben, Ahr, Germany 2010 (see p27) 2. Felton Road, Block 5, Bannockburn, Central Otago, New Zealand 2012 (p30) 3. Tolpuddle Vineyard, Coal Valley, Tasmania, Australia 2014 (p31)

**Alex Hunt MW**
Purchasing director at Berkmann Wine Cellars, Hunt became a Master of Wine in 2010. His dissertation was on ripeness trends in California, and he won the medal for excellence in the tasting exam. He now writes a column on taste and tasting for JancisRobinson.com, and is a judge at the Decanter World Wine Awards. **Hunt’s top three:** 1. Jean Stodden, Splittburgunder Alte Reben, Ahr, Germany 2010 (see p27) 2. Newton Johnson, Family Vineyards, Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, South Africa 2013 (p38) 3. Failla, Hirsch Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, California, USA 2013 (p32)

**Xavier Rousset MS**
Jean Stodden, Spätburgunder Alte Reben, Ahr, Germany 2010

£115  ABS Wine Agencies

Smoky undergrowth nose, evolved but quite seductive. Silky in the mouth, long, with a confidently acid-led structure balanced by delicate summer fruit. Shows considerable density for Pinot without being too extracted; a true delight. Drink 2016-2022  Alc 13.5%

THE AHR VALLEY is a most unexpected region. Of its 560ha (hectares) of vineyards, well over half are planted with Pinot Noir (or Spätburgunder in German). But what is more surprising is the location of the Ahr, well to the north of the Mosel Valley and not far from the city of Bonn. Most German Pinot Noir is grown in warmer locations such as the Pfalz or Baden, but it has long thrived in this cool northern enclave. It does so thanks to the valley’s soils, which are of basalt and slate, rock types that absorb sunshine and then reflect it back onto the vines after sundown. The vines climb up these rocky cliff faces, and the narrowness of the valley as a whole creates a most singular microclimate.

That the Ahr Pinots have long been highly regarded in Germany is partly due to the gifted winemakers who have worked here for decades. As well as Stodden, other revered estates include Meyer-Näkel, Adeneuer and Deutzerhof. But for many years Weingut Jean Stodden has been regarded by many as the leading property. Whereas most other estates also produce wines from varieties such as Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Frühburgunder, Stodden’s 6.5ha are almost exclusively planted with Pinot Noir. The average annual production is around 45,000 bottles.

It’s an estate that traces its history back to the 16th century. This 2010 Pinot was vinified by Gerhard Stodden, who had run the estate since 1975, but who unfortunately died, aged 64, in 2013. He has been succeeded by his son Alexander, who for some years had been working alongside him. As is often the case in Germany, even a small estate produces a large range of bottlings. The style had long been modelled on Burgundies from the Côte de Nuits, and Stodden sought to produce wines with structure and depth, aged for at least 16 months in medium-toast French oak.

At Stodden there are no fewer than three grosses gewächs bottlings from outstanding sites, as well as lighter styles for early drinking. The finest selection is always the Alte Reben (old vines), which triumphed in this tasting. It’s interesting to note that 2010 was not generally regarded as an outstanding vintage here, and Ahr wines from 2009, 2011 and 2012 are more highly rated.

Above: Pinot Noir harvest at the Jean Stodden vineyards, overlooking the Ahr river

Top wine of the tasting

Jean Stodden, Spätburgunder Alte Reben, Ahr, Germany 2010
**RUNNERS-UP**

**Moorooduc Estate, McIntyre, Mornington Peninsula, Australia 2013 £35 Coe Vintners**

Ripe, oaky raspberry nose that has panache. Good attack, lean and precise, and has clarity of fruit. Not a weighty style but has an almost racy structure. Not yet hugely complex, but it is balanced and will age quite well. *Drink 2016-2024 Alc 14%*


Sweet cranberry nose, quite intense; smoky bacon and toasted oak. Real drive and persistence on the palate. Fine backbone of acidity, giving some tension and bite. Silky, dynamic, nuanced, long. *Drink 2016-2024 Alc 14%*

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**DR RICHARD MCINTYRE’S property in the Mornington Peninsula south of Melbourne is best known for its Chardonnay, but also enjoys a high reputation for its Pinot Noir. The winery was established in 1982, when the surgeon met Mornington Peninsula pioneers such as Gary Crittenden, who encouraged him to establish a vineyard. He initially planted 2ha of vines. Today there are 10ha of vineyards. Production is limited to around 2,500 cases and much of it is sold from the cellar door – the estate is easily accessible from Melbourne, an hour’s drive away.**

The McIntyre vineyard was planted in 1983. A gently sloping site, facing north and northwest, it has soils of sand over clay. Yields rarely exceed 30hl/ha. Like many Pinot producers, McIntyre favours a non-interventionist approach, though the grapes are all destemmed. After fermentation in open-top steel vats with indigenous yeasts and manual punchdowns, the wine goes through its malolactic fermentation in barrels, and is then aged for 15 months on 25% new French oak with just one racking. It is bottled without fining or filtration.

2013 was a warm vintage, especially during the weeks just before the harvest, and McIntyre describes the wines as more ‘flamboyant’ than those from 2012. This was also the first vintage when he was able to use fruit from vines that had been grafted over from the Cabernet Sauvignon planted in 1983 to a variety of top Pinot clones. McIntyre has experimented with whole-bunch fermentation, but decided that this wine had sufficient texture and structure to allow it to be vinified without any stems. He was clearly right.

**THIS COASTAL PROPERTY, in the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley near Hermanus, was founded by Dave and Felicity Johnson in 1996, when they planted their first vines, and their first vintage followed a year later. Since 2001 the winemakers have been drawn from the next generation in the form of their son Gordon and his wife Nadia, who also comes from a winemaking family in Robertson. There are 18ha under vine and production is divided equally between red and white wines. Pinot Noir from here is highly regarded, but so are their Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Rhône-style reds. Wines are made not just from Hemel-en-Aarde fruit but from vineyards in nearby Elgin and Walker Bay. The grapes are picked by hand.**

The Family Vineyards range features wines made from grapes grown on the best parcels. In the case of the Pinot Noir, this is the mid-slope sector in the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde, where there is a balance of gravel and shallow clay soils. The vines, planted to moderate density, were up to nine years old in 2013; yields were modest at about 32hl/ha. The growing season saw moderate temperatures and above-average rainfall, delivering bright, supple-fruited wines.

Gordon Newton Johnson favours non-interventionist winemaking: the winery is gravity-operated on four levels. After the grapes are thoroughly sorted, they are fermented in steel tanks with indigenous yeasts and only punchdowns are used to extract the fruit and tannins. After racking, the wine went through its malolactic fermentation in one-third new barrels, in which the wine remained for 12 months.
OUTSTANDING WINES

Ceritas, Hellenthal Vineyard, Old Shop Block, Sonoma Coast, California, USA 2013

N/A UK www.ceritaswines.com

Quite dark, brooding aromas with a raspberry coulis twist.

Full and tight on the alcohol, with fresh tannins.

Drink 2016-2025 Alc 12.5%.

JOHN RAYTEK LEARNED his winemaking shilts, and in New Zealand before arriving in the Sonoma Coast to work at Flowers winery. In 2005 he teamed up with Phoenix Bao, now his wife, to create the Ceritas label. She looks after the farming, while he is more focused on cellar work. Her parents own the Porter Baco vineyards in Sonoma Coast. planted in 1980, the dry-farmed Hellenthal vineyard is located in the high coastal ridges of the Sonoma Coast, close to the better-known Hirsch and Marcassin vineyards. The grapes are fermented with natural yeasts and a varying proportion of whole clusters, ranging from none to around 60%, with extraction rising to 25%. The wines are much sought-after and are sold swiftly to favoured restaurants and to the winery’s mailing list.

Domaine Donatsch, Unique, Malans, Graubünden, Switzerland 2013

£70 Alpines Wines

Rich and powerful cherry-plum nose, with the oak well integrated. Delicately nuanced with fruit and extract rather than tannin. Shows matching brightness to just the right amount of depth.

Showers of medium alcohol, with fresh tannins.

Drink 2016-2025 Alc 13.5%.

PINOT NOIR is grown successfully in the Valais, but there is another sweet spot for the variety in the German-speaking Graubünden canton. Here, some 70 miles southeast of Zürich lies the village of Malans, home to Donatsch and other growers. Donatsch gained a high profile early on, when it became the first producer in the region to age wines in barriques, in the 1970s. The domaine has been in existence for about 100 years, and is now run by Thomas Donatsch and his son Martin, along with about 100 years, and is now run by Thomas Donatsch and his son Martin. The domaine has been in existence for about 100 years, and is now run by Thomas Donatsch and his son Martin.

Coldstream Hills, Deer Farm Vineyard, Yarra Valley, Australia 2013

POA, Treasury Wine Estates

Attractive redderatcult jelly nose, though a touch shy. Ripe, sweet but not jammy; intense, juicy, fresh, just a lick of tannin. As an aromatic Pinot that retains its classic structure, this is a resounding success.

Drink 2016-2022 Alc 13.5%.

The YARRA VALLEY, which lies an hour’s drive east of Melbourne, has diverse terrains and microclimates, making it capable of producing a wide range of varieties. That has always been the approach at Coldstream Hills, a hillside property established in 1985 by lawyer and wine writer James Halliday. In 1986 the estate was acquired by Southcorp, although Halliday stayed on in an advisory capacity. The property had grown to over 100ha, and the standard range of varietal and reserve wines was supplemented by a few single-vineyard wines, including this one. Coldstream produces three single-vineyard Pinots: Rootyhill from Tasmania, Esplande from the Lower Yarra, and Deer Farm from the cooler Upper Yarra. Deer Farm was planted in 1994 on north-facing clay-loam soils. The wine was aged for nine months in 38% new French oak.

Felton Road, Block 5, Bannockburn, Central Otago, New Zealand 2012


Lush, meaty nose, but has some bright cherry fruit too. Lots of energy on the palate; the structure is acid-led, with tannins in the supporting role as they should be for Pinot, and there is an unwavering persistence of fruit.

Drink 2016-2026 Alc 13.5%.

THIS IS ONE OF New Zealand’s most admired Pinot producers, thanks to the brilliance and consistency of its long-term winemaker Blair Walter Marshall. The property, on the Maloys, home to Donatsch and other growers. Donatsch gained a high profile early on, when it became the first producer in the region to age wines in barriques, in the 1970s. The domaine has been in existence for about 100 years, and is now run by Thomas Donatsch and his son Martin. Although only 4.9% Sha of wines are planted, a number of varieties are grown. The mid-run Pinot Noir Passion is aged in one-third new oak, while this, the most exclusive bottling, is aged entirely in new Burgundian barrels. Donatsch has twice won the Mondial des Pinots competition in Switzerland.

Tolpuddle Vineyard, Coal River Valley, Tasmania, Australia 2013

£42.95-£49.99 Harrods, Heavensheath Wines, Liberty Wines, Selfridges, Shap, Sommeller Wine Co

Freshly crushed, and then vinified in small, open-top fermenters with indigenous yeasts, with manual punchdowns. A significant proportion of whole bunches is used for this wine, which is aged for 15 months in one-third new barriques. It is bottled without furring or filtration.

Drink 2016-2022 Alc 12.5%.

IN ANY CONTEST for cool-climate status, Tasmania would be a strong contender. Much of the fruit leaves for the mainland, for use in sparkling wines or blends. Planted in Coal River Valley in 1988, Tolpuddle was no exception. Owned by sparkling wine wizard Dr Tony Jordan, its 20th Supplies blends such as Domaine Chandon, Ilenion Hardy and Pennploo Yazz Yarranna Chardonnay. Then in 2011 the property was bought by Michell Hill-Smith and Martin Shaw of Shaw & Smith in the Adelaide hills. Some vines have replaced over to new clones. The soil is very thin, sandy topsoil over sandstone and clay. Vinifed by laured winemaker Alex Badger, the Pinot Noir is aged in one-third new oak. 2014 was a cool year with low yields. This wine is expensive, but the quality is evident.

Yabby Lake Vineyard, Single Block Release, Block 2, Mornington Peninsula, Australia 2013

£45 swig

Lots of cherry and oak, and smoky reduction on the nose; Medium-bodied, delicate, stylish, light, integrated tannins; concentrated and fresh with a lovely intensity on the finish. Well handled and very impressive for 2013.

Drink 2016-2026 Alc 13.5%.

FOUNDED IN 1998 by landowners Robert and Mem Kirby, the principal varieties they planted were Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier. Right from the start, Yabby Lake has received a great reputation, but it was further enhanced when in 2008 Tom Carson, previously at Yering Station winery in the Yarra Valley, came on board as chief winemaker. When he arrived at Yabby Lake he began to produce single block, both blended and both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, which proved mostly of thrilling quality. The idea behind the programme is to focus on the specificity of individual blocks in terms of their terroir and clonal selection. Project 5® is an area of the vineyard which is employed at the winery: oak use is cautious, with ageing in French, 500-litre barrels, about 25% new.

Mount Edward, Morrison Vineyard, Central Otago, New Zealand 2011

£45 Cambridge Wine Merchants, The Fine Wine Co, Z&V Vintners

Smoky, bacony nose, with the raspberry fruit somewhat subdued. Pretty but not jammy; rich and juicy, with a hint of acidity, has tension and spice, is pungent and vibrant. Long and very neatly balanced, with lovely grip.

Drink 2016-2022 Alc 13.5%.

THIS IMPORTANT property near Gibbston was founded by Alan Brady in 1994 (first vintage 1998). In 2004 it was bought by John Buchman, while the wines are made by Duncan Forsyth. The farming is organic. Grapes are sourced from a number of single vineyards, including Morrison. Although much of the production is of Pinot Noir, Mount Edward also makes others such as Riesling and Albarino. The ‘7.5a Morrison vineyard, with its schist subsoils, was planted with Pinot Noir in 1997, and is Mount Edward’s oldest source for the variety. The grapes are hand-picked, destemmed but not crushed, and then vinified in small, open-top fermenters with indigenous yeasts, with manual punchdowns. A significant proportion of whole bunches is used for this wine, which is aged for 15 months in one-third new barriques. It is bottled without furring or filtration.
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED WINES

Alphonse Mellot, En Grands Champs, Sancerre, France 2012
£70.66, House of Hallgarten

Ashton Hills Vineyard, Reserve, Adelaide Hills, Australia 2014
N/A UK: www.michaelmahe.com
Juicy raspberry and cranberry nose, ripe and tracing. Lovely balance and precision on the palate, although the alcohol sticks out a little. Carefully made but could use a bit more fruit. Drink 2016-2023 Alc 14%.

Bernhard Huber, Wildenstein R Grosses Gewächs, Malterdinger Bienenberg, Baden, Germany 2012
POA, Justerini & Brooks
Lush raspberry nose. Juicy, upfront palate, rounded, concentrated, with good acidity; in a Burgundian style. Long and vibrant. Drink 2016-2023 Alc 13.5%.

Crystallum, Cuvee Cinema, Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge, South Africa 2014
£30-£36, Widely available via UK agent Liberty Wines
Lush red-fruits nose, with an iron-like tone. Rich, spicy and a touch hot, but the fruit is good. Sweet, robust, more force than finesse. Drink 2016-2022 Alc 14%.

Failla, Hirsch Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, California, USA 2013
£50, Stannary Street Wine Co
Very pretty, complex nose of cherry, raspberry, flowers, spices. Broad and rich, quite opleulent but assertive mid-palate. Given time, it will be a lovely and ample expression. Drink 2017-2023 Alc 13.4%.

Fancrest Estate, Waipara Valley, New Zealand 2010
N/A UK: www.fancrest.com
Rich and juicy, quite tannic but less toasty than the nose. Bold and forthcoming, with the tannins trying to balance the ripeness of fruit. Finishes dry and mineral, a wine of some intrigue. Drink 2016-2025 Alc 14%.

Friedrich Becker, Kammerberg Grosses Gewächs, Pfalz, Germany 2012
£71.99, The Wine Barn
Nicely centred nose, with enticing tension between ripe strawberry and smoky wood. Medium-bodied, discreet and delicate style. Very fresh, with limpidity and poise. Drink 2016-2022 Alc 14%.

Ata Rangi, Martinborough, New Zealand 2013
£39.75-£47.99, Widely available via UK agent Liberty Wines
Smoky raspberry coulis nose with gentle summer berry fruit. Good crunchy Pinot fruit, fresh acidity, integrated tannins and a spicy finish. Drink 2016-2024 Alc 13.5%.

Bergström, Dundee Hills, Willamette Valley, Oregon, USA 2013
£65, Robinson Wines
Dansa cherry and bacon nose; quite meaty. Vibrant, pure fruit on the palate with good acidity; a style that is easy to enjoy thanks to its subtle use of oak and nuance. Drink 2016-2024 Alc 13.5%.

Cristom, Marlajo Vineyard, Eola-Amity Hills, Oregon, USA 2013
£85, Stannary Street Wine Co
Lovely aromas of dark cherries and raspberries with undergrowth. Good intensity and fruit on the palate. Juicy, soft texture. Very drinkable, may surprise in a few years. Drink 2016-2024 Alc 13.5%.

Ellero, Pisa Terrace, Central Otago, New Zealand 2012
N/A UK: www.ellerowine.com
Appealing sour cherry and blackberry aromas. Plump, juicy full-bodied, has good weight of fruit without heaviness. Firm tannins. Still rather primary but great potential. Drink 2016-2024 Alc 13.9%.

Egly-Ouriet, Cuvée des Grands Côtés, Ambonnay Rouge, Coteaux Champenois, France 2012
£85 (2011) Lou & Santomas
Discreet cherry nose with fresh lift and drive. Plenty of red fruit and a green edge, with very well hanked oak leading to an elegant finish. Drink 2016-2022 Alc 12.5%.

Egon, Mosel Mosel, Germany 2012
£55, Justerini & Brooks
Dense cherry and bacon nose; quite meaty. Vibrant, pure fruit on the palate with good acidity; a style that is easy to enjoy thanks to its subtle use of oak and nuance. Drink 2016-2024 Alc 13.5%.

Famille Perron, Gigondas, France 2012
£75, Justerini & Brooks
Rich and spicy, yet not at all extracted, a very aromatic and well-made wine. Drink 2015-2020 Alc 13.5%.

Farr, Merryvale Vineyard, Napa Valley, California, USA 2012
£60, Lea & Sandeman
Clean, ripe nose, with a hint of leather and a touch of smoke. Rich, full-bodied, balanced, and very much in the style of the other wines from this winery. Drink 2015-2020 Alc 14%.

Höhningen, Chardonnay, Pfalz, Germany 2012
£45, Justerini & Brooks
Rich and suave, but with a vibrant finish. Drink 2016-2023 Alc 12.5%.

Hindmarch Hill Vineyard, Eola-Amity Hills, Oregon, USA 2012
£105, Justerini & Brooks
Rich and suave, with a hint of leather and a touch of smoke. Drink 2015-2020 Alc 13.5%.

Jupiter, Antichrist, Australia 2012
£27.95, Justerini & Brooks
Aussie-Chilean mix with big aromas, but a bit more treaty. Drink 2016-2022 Alc 14%.

Martinborough, New Zealand 2013
£55, Justerini & Brooks
Rich and juicy, quite tannic but less toasty than the nose. Bold and forthcoming, with the tannins trying to balance the ripeness of fruit. Finishes dry and mineral, a wine of some intrigue. Drink 2016-2025 Alc 14%.

Marchesi di Barolo, Barolo, Italy 2014
£125, Justerini & Brooks
Rich and full-bodied, with a hint of leather and a touch of smoke. Drink 2016-2020 Alc 14%.

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HIGHLY RECOMMENDED WINES (continued)

Forst, Hundschrift Grosses Gewächs, Franken, Germany 2009 £35 (£2.38) Delicate, leafy nose, has finesse and delicacy. The palate is well balanced and has more vigour than the nose, though the fruit is a touch congested. Delivers a lot of fruit. Drink 2016-2022 Alc 15%.


Kooyong, Haven, Mornington Peninsula, Australia 2012 £56 (£3.8) Oaky nose with raspberries and almond paste. There are lovely autumnal fruit notes on the palate with enough acidity to bring freshness and clarity. Drink 2016-2025 Alc 15.5%.

Littoral, The Haven Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, California, USA 2013 £75 (£5) Liberty Wines Delicate leafy nose with ripe fruit and smoky bacon. Sleek, a touch sweet but has intensity and acidity to cut the fruit. A little one-dimensional, but attractive and long. Drink 2016-2022 Alc 12.6%

Phillips Creek, Cuvée Alexandre, Columbia Gorge, Oregon, USA 2012 £33.50 (US$) Owl Creek Strawberry jam elements on a fairly savoury nose. Rich, spicy and powerful, with good acidity. Very rich and sumptuous in a hearty style: considerable power. Drink 2016-2025 Alc 15.6%


And the nominees were…

Argentina (nominationst Patricia Taca & Peter Richards MW) • Zorbal, Eggo, Filoso, Tupungato, Mendoza 2013 (J)

Australia (Hun Hooke & Tyson Stelzer) • Bass Phillip, Reserve, Gippsland 2013 (J)

France (Vincent Pinard, Vendanges Entières, Sancerre 2012) • Cuvée des Grands Côtes, Ambonnay Rouge, Coteaux Champenois 2002 (J)

Germany (Anna Kröblit MW) • Bernhard Huber, Wildstein R Blends, Gewürztraminer, Baden 2012 (J)

New Zealand (Howard Ripley) • Otago, First Light, Reserve, Central Otago 2012 (J)

USA (Jon Bonné & Stephen Brook) • Antin Hill Farm, Cripple Ridge Vineyard, Mendocino County, California 2013 (J)

And the nominees were…”

Pinot Noir

Forst, Hundschrift Grosses Gewächs, Franken, Germany 2009 £35 (£2.38) Delicate, leafy nose, has finesse and delicacy. The palate is well balanced and has more vigour than the nose, though the fruit is a touch congested. Delivers a lot of fruit. Drink 2016-2022 Alc 15%.