

The most exciting wines of 2017

Decanter experts around the world named the five bottles under £55 that had impressed them most this year. After tasting and rating the 173 nominated wines, assessing them on harmony, complexity and wow factor, our panel of three judges compiled the ultimate top 75 across all styles. Christelle Guibert sums up the results

TO FINISH THE year in style, our 'stellar buys of the year' is back by popular demand. The equivalent tasting last year was so memorable we decided to follow the same format, asking our contributors, DWWA Regional Chairs and the *Decanter* editorial team to share with us the wines they have most enjoyed drinking during the last 12 months. We stipulated a price limit of £55 per bottle, to ensure the list includes something delicious for every budget.

This tasting is a snapshot of the wines from around the world that our experts loved most. With wines from more than 20 countries, the selection showed real diversity geographically and stylistically. The nominations also illustrated the trends of the past year. Last year we had a surprisingly large number of orange and amphora wines, while this year sees a good number of unusual grape varieties from emerging countries, alongside the usual suspects. Andy Howard MW commented: 'In the world of wine, we all love classics, we all love fantastic white Burgundy, but we also strive to find the new thing that is up and coming or that we haven't heard of. This tasting gave us both of those things at the same time.'

It was certainly a great educational experience for the three of us as we sniffed, swirled and sipped 173 wines over two very enjoyable days. We discovered grapes that none of us had ever heard of, and as Oz Clarke said: 'I was

completely delighted that we had such a fantastic array. Even if they are wines that I'm not so familiar with, these are the wines that the *Decanter* experts love and believe in. It was a learning process for me – absolutely delightful.'

The wines were tasted blind and only the grape variety and vintage were disclosed. They were scored out of 100 points, and also given a score out of 15 for their harmony, complexity and wow factor. They were then ranked according to their overall scores, also taking value into

consideration at this point. We particularly wanted to reward wines which showed a real wow factor, so we were looking for the most individual, fascinating and harmonious wines, but also the most enjoyable.

With 84% of wines hitting the Highly Recommended (90-94pts/100) mark, it was definitely among our most memorable tastings. Unfortunately, such

was the number of great wines that the list is too long to feature all of them on these pages, so we have selected the top 75 wines, and a wider selection can be found online at www.decanter.com/best-wines

We hope you have a fantastic time going through the list, perhaps recognising old favourites and making new discoveries, and we are confident that some of these wines will feature in your own list of top wines over the next year – assuming you stock up before it's too late to find them!

**'Such a fantastic array
– these are the wines
the *Decanter* experts
love and believe in'**

Oz Clarke

The tasters

Oz Clarke



is a multiple award-winning wine writer and broadcaster. In 2010, he was made an officer of the Ordre du Mérite Agricole in France

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

24 **Marjan Simčič,
Rebula Opoka,
Goriška Brda,
Primorska, Slovenia 2013**

94 **OC** 97 **CG** 93 **AH** 93

£44.95 **Orbit Wines**

A deep amber colour and subtle tannin structure suggest extended skin contact here. A savoury, earthy style of wine that is underpinned by quince, toffee and honey in a very moreish style that will age well. **Drink** 2018-2024 **Alc** 12.5%

24

