



wine-searcher

The World's Best Sauvignon Blancs

It's time to check out the world's best wines, and where better to start than this consumer favorite?

By Don Kavanagh | Posted Wednesday, 03-Nov-2021

Of all the wine grapes in the world, Sauvignon Blanc is one of the easiest to get to grips with – but it can also spring a surprise, as our list of the world's best Sauvignons shows.

As we approach the end of the year – and the various holiday seasons – it's time to start looking at the world's best wines, and [Sauvignon](#) is an ideal place to start. For those in the Northern Hemisphere, it's a welcome reminder of summer, sipping refreshing whites in the sun, as winter gallops relentlessly over the horizon. For those south of the equator, it's a promise of the hot sunny days to come.

Part of Sauvignon's success lies in the relatively uncomplicated wines that it makes. The majority tend to be fruit-forward, with zingy acidity and a refreshing overall experience – think of all those zippy, zesty [New Zealand](#) Sauvignons, for example. Surprisingly, though, New Zealand doesn't make a dent in the list of the world's best.

It seems odd to put together a list of the world's best Sauvignons without any Kiwi involvement. After all, for the past 30 years, that country has been synonymous with the grape, building its entire industry on the back of passionfruit-scented white wines that charmed the world. But popularity with consumers has never equaled popularity among critics, a point vividly illustrated by the fact that of our 25 top-rated Sauvignons, not one of them comes from the Land of the Long White Cloud.

That should come as a relief to producers in Sauvignon's spiritual home, France's [Loire Valley](#). For three decades, they have seen their wines overtaken by fresh, lively, fruit-driven wines from the Southern Hemisphere and they have often struggled to compete, both on price and on retail shelves. The wines of Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé take a little more explanation than supermarket own-brands labeled "[Marlborough](#)" – consumers know exactly what to expect with those.

But perhaps the doughty French producers were looking the wrong way when it came to the competition. On the basis of the list below, they should have been looking across the Alps to [Austria](#) rather than across the globe when scouting for challengers.

As usual, let's take care of the housekeeping first. You'll notice on the list below that the wines do not appear to be in numerical order, according to scores, but trust us, they are. The apparent anomalies occur because we weight the aggregated critic score according to how many scores each wine has received. So, a wine with an aggregated score of 93 points across 100 reviews will be rated higher than one with a score of 93 across 50 reviews. Similarly, wines with an ostensibly higher score across a lower number of reviews will not be ranked as high.

This can be seen in the case of the third wine on the list below; it has an aggregated critic score of 95, but from just 10 reviews, compared to 85 reviews for the top wine, and 290-odd reviews for the second-placed wine. The scores are also rounded to the nearest number, here, but our database runs to four decimal places, ensuring a more robust ranking.

And finally, we have added more critics in the past year, so this year's "best of" series will be more comprehensive than ever.

The World's Best Sauvignon Blancs on Wine-Searcher:

Wine Name	Score	Ave Price
Lail Vineyards Georgia Sauvignon Blanc, Napa	93	\$155

France's share of this list has fallen dramatically since we [last ran](#) it. Back in 2019, seven of the wines in the top 10 were from France; today that number is four.

And, as pointed out above, it's the Austrians doing the damage, specifically Steiermark. Last time out, there were three Austrian wines on the list (including the Tement Ried Zieregg in the top spot), now there are five, with the other place on the list taken by Napa's Lail Vineyards.

The spread of Austrian Sauvignon has been remarkable. Five years ago, few were widely available outside Austria, but all the wines on the list above are represented in the major wine markets, and their presence seems only likely to grow. That might stir some residual unease for New Zealand producers, but at least they are safe in the knowledge that their market penetration across all price points remains ahead of their new European rivals.

But as far as the top end of Sauvignon's quality tree is concerned, there is most definitely a new big dog on campus.

