

Top 60 wines to try

Amanda Barnes and Anthony Rose each recommend their favourite 30 wines to try from tastings made on their recent travels throughout Croatia. While most of the sparkling, white, red and sweet wines on these pages are not yet exported, seek them out on your next Croatian holiday

SPARKLING

① Tomac, Amfora Brut Nature, Plešivica, Uplands 2010 94

N/A UK www.tomac.hr

This sparkling amphora wine is a revelation! Wild aromas of almond cake and candied tangerine don't prepare you for the racy acidity and bone-dry finish. A rollercoaster! *Amanda Barnes* **Drink** 2019-2022 **Alcohol** 12.5%

② Šember, Pavel Brut, Plešivica, Uplands 2013 92

N/A UK www.sember.hr

The Šember family has been making wine for more than a century, but this is the first vintage of their late-disgorged bubbly. Complex and rich, with lingering notes of brioche and apple strudel. *AB* **Drink** 2019-2023 **Alc** 12.5%

Tomac, Diplomat Extra Brut, Plešivica, Uplands 2016 91

N/A UK www.tomac.hr

Tomac is renowned for its Uplands sparkling wines and Diplomat is a worthy flagship. It spends four years on its lees which adds bready complexity, and the splash of Plavec Žuti in the blend means it retains a lively acidity. *AB* **Drink** 2019-2024 **Alc** 12.5%

Kutjevo, Maximo Brut, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2017 85

N/A UK www.kutjevo.com

Kutjevo was the first winery to produce a traditional-method sparkling Graševina and it is still a good-value bubbly in Slavonia. Green apple and citrus notes make it a pleasant aperitif. *AB* **Drink** 2019-2021 **Alc** 13%

③ Ivančić, Griffin Rosé, Plešivica, Uplands 2015 90

£18 *Franko's Foods London*

Grapes from 100-year-old Portugizac vines go into this traditional-method bubbly, which exudes fresh red berry aromas. For a show-stopping bottle, order the coral-covered version which was submerged 20m under the sea for a year. *AB* **Drink** 2019-2023 **Alc** 11.5%

Petrač, Breg Rosé, Zagorje, Uplands 2016 87

N/A UK www.petrac.hr

This sparkling rosé spends 18 months on lees and shows the cooler side to Petrač's hillside Cabernet. The tart red fruit and capsicum aromas would work well with local game charcuterie. *AB* **Drink** 2019-2022 **Alc** 13%

WHITE

Šember, Qvevri, Plešivica, Uplands 2011 94

N/A UK www.sember.hr

There's grip and freshness to this delicious amber-hued Riesling, which is macerated in qvevri and then aged in foudre. Inviting layers of citrus peel, exotic spice and petrol give way to a mouthwatering mineral salinity. *AB* **Drink** 2019-2024 **Alc** 12.5%

④ Mihalj, Graševina, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2008 93

N/A UK www.vino-mihalj.hr

This older vintage proves how well Graševina can age. Ten years in the bottle brings out more savoury notes of flint, petrol and waxy lemon, while vibrant acidity keeps it fresh. If you like mature Riesling, this is one to try. *AB* **Drink** 2019-2022 **Alc** 12.8%

⑤ Benvenuti, Anno Domini Malvazija, Istria 2008 92

N/A UK www.benvenutivina.com

Aged for two years in new big oak vats, this displays a nutty butterscotch nose of new oak. It's powerfully rich and full, with spicy apricot and orange zest, and a distinctively oaky, but not overoaked, nutty finish. Still fresh, thanks in part to its balanced, grippy quality. *Anthony Rose* **Drink** 2019-2020 **Alc** 14.3%

Cattunar, Collina Malvazija Istarska, Istria 2015 92

N/A UK www.cattunar.hr

Matured in big French and Slavonian oak barrels for two years and another year in bottle, this full-bodied Malvazija shows orange citrus notes. A dry white of substantial weight and concentration, it is elegantly full flavoured and finishes on a citrusy, zesty note, maintaining excellent freshness and balance. *AR* **Drink** 2019-2021 **Alc** 14%

⑥ Degrassi, Bomarchese Malvazija, Istria 2015 92

N/A UK www.degrassi.hr

This top-of-the-range Malvazija white in the Degrassi portfolio is fermented in French barriques and tonneaux and stays on lees for a year. This gives it a succulent peachy fruit flavour framed by overt yet stylish oak, topped off by a refreshingly saline, mineral note. *AR* **Drink** 2019-2021 **Alc** 13%

⑦ Kozlović, Santa Lucia Single Vineyard Malvazija, Istria 2015 92

N/A UK www.kozlovic.hr

Pale gold in colour, with an aromatic hint of dried apricot and exotic pineapple and mango. It has a richly concentrated, smooth-textured combination of dried yellow stone fruit flecked with a touch of honey, yet still streaked with fresh acidity. *AR* **Drink** 2019-2021 **Alc** 14%

⑧ Pilato, Malvazija Istarska Sur Lie, Istria 2016 92

N/A UK www.vina-pilato.com

Fermented in new and used French oak barriques, this ages for five months on the lees then a further six in bottle. The result is fragrantly orangey with a lovely purity of texture and surprising elegance, despite the evident weight and richness of fruit, thanks to its brisk acidity. *AR* **Drink** 2019-2022 **Alc** 14%



⑨ **Clai Ottocento Bijeli, Istria 2015** 91
£34.54 **Tannico**

Aged for two years in big barrels after stainless steel fermentation, this biodynamic, white shows attractive aromas and a full-bodied palate packed with rich dried fruits such as apricot, complemented by a nutty dry finish refreshed by a mineral salts note. **AR Drink 2019-2021 Alc 13.5%**

Coronica, Gran Malvazija Istarska, Istria 2016 91

N/A UK www.coronica.eu
After fermentation in 600-litre oak barrels and stainless steel, followed by a year on its lees in tank, this dry white from the pioneering Moreno Coronica is expressively aromatic. It has a citrusy freshness and concentrated stone fruit flavours that together create a juiciness of texture, topped off by a refreshing dry, saline acidity on the finish. **AR Drink 2019-2021 Alc 14%**

⑩ **Galić, Bijelo 9, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2015** 91

N/A UK www.galic-vina.hr
A voluptuous, full-bodied blend that showcases the best of both varieties: creamy notes from the Chardonnay and zippy acidity and savoury characters from Graševina and Sauvignon Blanc. A zippy, fresh white that would be a great match for white truffle pasta. **AB Drink 2019-2024 Alc 13%**

⑪ **Ahearne Vno, Wild Skins, Hvar 2017** 90

£19.82 **Winebuyers**
Made by Master of Wine Jo Ahearne, this is a blend of the island's native Kuč, Bogdanuša and Pošip grapes with natural yeasts, macerated on the skins and separately fermented to produce a wine with a juicy, appley fruit and honey notes. Lees ageing and batonnage bring complexity to this serious terroir-driven white. **AR Drink 2019-2021 Alc 12%**

Bibich, Lučica, Skradin, Dalmatia 2016 90

N/A UK www.bibich.co
Made from Debit planted by Alen Bibič's great grandfather 60 years ago, this single-vineyard white is fermented and aged for 18 months in new oak. It's a full-bodied, distinctive style with ripe yellow fruit rounded by oak and balanced by mouthwateringly fresh, almost saline, acidity. **AR Drink 2019-2021 Alc 13.5%**

⑫ **Boškinac, Ocu, Pag, Dalmatia 2015** 90

N/A UK www.boskinac.com
Ocu, means 'to my father' and there is a traditional, oxidative baked apple whiff to this traditional dry white. Spicy oak, a faint prickle on the tongue and a sweet apple fruit on the mid-palate are backed by a light, cidery, oxidative note and smooth textured fruit. Very much a food wine. **AR Drink 2019-2021 Alc 13%**

Korak, Riesling, Plešivica, Uplands 2017 90

N/A UK www.korak-vina.hr
This small family winery makes a taut and fresh style of Riesling from the Uplands, with stoney, mineral character and bright, waxy citrus notes and floral aromas. **AB Drink 2019-2025 Alc 13%**

⑬ **Krajančić, Pošip Sur Lie, Korčula 2016** 90

£19.51 **Winebuyers**
Spending time on its lees in French, American and Croatian oak for a year brings extra richness and flavour to this old-vine white from Luka Krajančić on Korčula, the birthplace of Pošip. Its time in oak adds rounded texture and a hint of vanilla to the dried fruits flavours, and it finishes on a savoury, saline note. **AR Drink 2019-2021 Alc 13.3%**

Meneghetti, Black Label Malvazija, Istria 2017 90

N/A UK www.meneghetti.hr
With a distinctively floral, spicy tone, this is attractively full bodied. Its intense stone fruit flavour is juicy and nicely textured by a seam of citrusy freshness, while a light grip and saline hint on the finish make this a classic, modern white. **AR Drink 2019-2022 Alc 13.5%**

Sontacchi, Graševina, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2018 89

N/A UK www.sontacchi-vinarija.hr
Kruno Sontacchi is a young winemaker with a minimal intervention approach. Although the small organic estate focuses on reds, his Graševina is artfully delicate – fresh, precise and slightly spritzy. **AB Drink 2019-2022 Alc 13%**

Štampar, Sauvignon Blanc, Međimurje, Uplands 2017 89

N/A UK www.vinarija-stampar.hr
A family producer that is making a name for Sauvignon Blanc from Međimurje. This stylish wine is lean and refreshing, with citrus and mineral notes. A great wine for Croatian – or any other – seafood. **AB Drink 2019-2023 Alc 12%**

Bolfan, Sauvignon Blanc, Zagorje, Uplands 2017 88

N/A UK www.bolfanvinskivrh.hr
A bright, breezy white from a renowned winemaker in Zagorje. The hilltop site helps give bracing acidity with

refreshing notes of citrus, nettle and capsicum. **AB Drink 2019-2024 Alc 13%**

Kolarić, Coletti Pinot Sivi Amfora, Plešivica, Uplands 2017 88

N/A UK www.kolaric-vina.hr
This nectarine and cherry blossom-scented Pinot Gris spends 11 months on skins in amphora. Winemaker Franjo Kolarić is a pioneer of wine tourism in the region. **AB Drink 2019-2023 Alc 13.5%**

Vina DK, Pušipel Classic, Međimurje, Uplands 2017 88

N/A UK www.vina-dvanajscak.hr
Furmint, known locally as Pušipel, is a top variety from Međimurje. With notes of lime peel, white pear and blossom offers real precision and freshness at excellent value if you can find it on holiday. **AB Drink 2019-2022 Alc 12%**

Ivan Buhač, Graševina, Srijem, Danube 2018 87

N/A UK www.vino-buhac.com
This young Danube winemaker is making excellent-value wines and this refreshing Graševina is a steal if you can find it. Bright citrus and stone fruit typify the aromatic, balanced style of the region. **AB Drink 2019-2021 Alc 12%**

Puhelek Purek, Kraljevina, Prigorje, Uplands 2018 87

N/A UK info@vino-puhelek-purek.hr
The Puhelek-Purek family estate has been producing wine for more than a century. This old-vine Kraljevina is a refreshing white with citrus blossom aromas. **AB Drink 2019-2021 Alc 11.5%**

Voštinčić Klasnić, Škrlet, Moslavina, Uplands 2018 87

N/A UK www.vinarija-vk.hr
Made by a couple of young winemakers, this is their fresh approach to the native Škrlet variety, named for the red dots on the ripe grapes. Lively and mid-bodied with attractive notes of white peach and blossom. **AB Drink 2019-2021 Alc 12%**

Markota, Graševina Starac, Pleternica, Slavonia 2016 86

N/A UK www.markota-vina.hr
A classic Graševina with white peach and lime peel aromas, and a fresh finish. A simple but smart wine that would pair well with Fiš Paprikaš: Slavonian paprika fish stew. **AB Drink 2019-2021 Alc 12%**

RED

Stina, Majstor Barrique, Brač 2015 93

N/A UK www.stina-vino.hr
This has youthful cherry fruit aromas, a briny, umami-like hint of the sea and cinnamon spice. The sumptuously bright palate has sweetly ripe cherry fruit, svelte tannins, approachable acidity and a mineral character to finish. Delicious. **AR Drink 2019-2026 Alc 14.5%**

Benvenuti, Santa Elizabetta Teran, Istria 2015 92

N/A UK www.benvenutivina.com
Despite its power, this single-vineyard Teran, with its spicy pepper aromatics, is reminiscent of Hermitage. Initially powerfully fragrant, it has concentrated, bitter dark chocolate and black cherry-rich fruit balanced by excellent purity and freshness. A very special Croatian wine. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 15%**

Bire, Plavac Korčula, Korčula 2016 92

N/A UK www.bire.hr
Youthfully bright, dark ruby and cherry aromatics lead into a palate of sweetly ripe and spicy black cherry sweet fruit quality, which is well-crafted with sinewy tannins. A full-bodied, approachable red that's beautifully balanced. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14%**

⑭ **Coronica, Gran Teran, Istria 2015** 92

N/A UK www.coronica.eu
One of the best exponents of the Teran

grape in Istria, Coronica has delivered with this bright, modern red. Spicy aromatics are followed on the palate by flavours of dark berry and dark chocolate, etched with a damson freshness in a bright framework of gently grippy tannins and stylish vanilla oak. **AR Drink 2019-2027 Alc 14%**

⑮ **Meneghetti, Red, Istria 2012** 92

N/A UK www.meneghetti.hr
There's an impressive nose on this Merlot-Cabernet dominant blend, with stylish vanilla oak and a hint of mint. The youthful cassis fruit richness has a herbal touch, with barrique-influenced vanilla spice and good grip linked to a balanced freshness on the finish thanks to a dash of Cabernet Franc. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14%**

⑯ **Saints Hills, St Roko, Komarna, Dalmatia 2016** 92

N/A UK www.saintshills.com
Bright fresh cherry nose, with a floral hint and sweet spices. The ripe cherry palate is supple textured and infused with a touch of Mediterranean herbs and olive. The oak is well integrated, with a hint of vanilla, and it's supported by sinewy tannins and fresh acidity. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 13%**

⑰ **Tomić, Plavac Mali, Hvar 2013** 92

N/A UK www.bastijana.hr
Attractive aromatics of sweet



cherry fruit and a lovely hint of the sea. The juicy, opulent cherry-driven palate is suave and rounded, with an enticing sinewy texture thanks to time in oak barrels. Overall it has beautifully balanced fruit and is thoroughly drinkable despite the powerful alcohol. **AR Drink 2019-2026 Alc 15%**

18 Kabola, Amfora Teran, Istria 2015 91

£49.99 **Novel Wines**

After spending six months on the skins in amphora and then a year in 700-litre used Slavonian oak barrels, this fine Teran exudes a vivid sweet cherry aroma and dense palate richness of loganberry and black cherry fruit, whose purity and freshness is maintained thanks to well-balanced acidity. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14%**

19 Kiridžija, Dingač, Pelješac Peninsula 2016 91

N/A UK **+385 98 976 7811**

The Plavac Mali in this Hungarian oak-aged Pelješac Peninsula red shows a hint of almost Crozes-Hermitage-like spiciness of aromas. Concentrated, dark, rich blackberry fruit sweetness brings chocolatey, plummy notes to the palate in a robust, grippy framework of tannins that manages the tightrope walk of balance, despite its power, thanks to a firm spine of acidity. **AR Drink 2019-2027 Alc 15%**

20 Korak, Pinot Crni, Plešivica, Uplands 2016 91

N/A UK **+385 1 6293 088**

Coming from the 'Champagne' region of the Uplands, this crunchy Pinot Noir grown on steep slopes of limestone soil has lively notes of red cherry, black pepper and gunflint. Juicy and bright. **AB Drink 2019-2024 Alc 13%**

Skaramuča, Elegance Dingač, Pelješac, Dalmatia 2017 91

N/A UK **www.dingac-skaramuca.hr**

Nicely perfumed bright, sweet, dark cherry fruit and light cinnamon spice, backed by a good structure of fine tannins and fresh acidity. Elegant, despite its youthful muscle, it needs time. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14.5%**

Boškinac, Cuvée, Pag 2013 90

N/A UK **www.boskinac.com**

A Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot blend whose mature perfume of liquorice spice lead into a mature claret-style palate. With integrated oak and svelte tannins, it wears its alcohol lightly, and shows a maritime influence in its freshness, smooth texture and balanced acidity. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14.5%**

21 Bibich, La Sin, Skradin, Dalmatia 2016 90

N/A UK **www.bibich.co**

So called because it's made from the rare, indigenous Lasin grape, this

distinctive red is pale in colour, with sour cherry, sweet apple and rosehip on the nose. Its elegantly smooth-textured palate has distinctive sour cherry and apple notes, and its light tannins and fresh acidity are like a cross between Pinot Noir and Etna Rosso. **AR Drink 2019-2024 Alc 13%**

22 Fakin, Il Primo Teran, Istria 2016 90

N/A UK **www.fakinwines.com**

Expressive, peppery, spicy fragrance enhanced by a gentle touch of smoky oak, this is a powerful red made from the Teran grape. It shows white pepper and spice on the palate, with gentle tannins and good fresh acidity. A sort of Croatian Barbera meets Hawkes Bay Syrah. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14.5%**

23 Matošević, Grimalda Red, Istria 2016 90

£24-£28.99 **Exel, Liberty Wines, Roberson, The Fine Wine Co**

60% Merlot, 30% Teran and 10% other grapes. Spicy Istrian red with attractive brightness and purity of red berry fruits, nicely rounded by subtle French oak. It finishes with a savoury, almost Barbera-like juicy acidity that makes the mouth water. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 13.5%**

Terra Madre, Pošip Premium, Komarna, Dalmatia 2015 90

N/A UK **www.vinaterramadre.com**

Good fresh, dark cherry fruit and silky-textured tannins, this Komarna red is well-made, fresh and approachable. It is also good value at around €10 if you can find it when on holiday. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14%**

24 Duboković, 2718 Sati Sunca U Boci, Hvar 2013 89

£11.80 **Winebuyers**

The 2718 here represents the number of hours of sunshine in the vineyards in the northern part of the island of Hvar, whose white sandy soils produced this fresh, supple and spicy, full-bodied red from stainless steel-fermented Plavac Mali. With a bright almond and red berry character, it retain an appealing freshness. **AR Drink 2019-2025 Alc 14%**

25 Feravino, Miraz Cuvée, Baranja, Slavonia 2015 89

£16 **Wines by Aizia**

Slavonia is known for its Bordeaux red

varieties as well as its Frankovka (aka Blaufränkisch) and in this blend you get the best of both. It has concentrated dark spice on the nose with fleshier plum notes on the palate. **AB Drink 2019-2023 Alc 13.5%**

Galić, Pinot Crni, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2016 89

N/A UK **www.galic-vina.hr**

Galić's wines show steady progress each vintage and this cherry-driven Pinot is possibly its best yet. The crunchy red berry fruit with grippy tannins and fresh acidity make it ideal for roast duck. **AB Drink 2019-2022 Alc 13%**

Krauthaker, Mercs, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2015 89

N/A UK **www.krauthaker.hr**

Vlado Krauthaker is one of Slavonia's most celebrated winemakers. Although best known for Graševina, this plush Cabernet-Merlot blend shows off the region's red potential too. Appetising notes of plum, berries and cigar spice. **AB Drink 2019-2023 Alc 14%**

26 Petrač, Karizma, Zagorje, Uplands 2016 89

N/A UK **www.petrac.hr**

In the heart of white wine territory, Petrač has a sandy, steep vineyard, which has proved to be excellent terrain for red wines. Karizma is its smooth flagship – a Bordeaux blend abundant in rich berry aromas and flavours. **AB Drink 2019-2024 Alc 13.5%**

Feravino, Miraz Frankovka, Baranja, Slavonia 2015 88

£15 **Wines by Aizia**

Feravino is one of the Frankovka (Blaufränkisch) specialists in Slavonia, renowned for top value. This is a refreshing and stylish wine, with plum and black cherry aromas and a juicy finish. **AB Drink 2019-2023 Alc 13.5%**

Sontacchi, Cabernet Franc, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2016 87

N/A UK **www.sontacchi-vinarija.hr**

This fresh and grippy Cabernet Franc comes with a rather entertaining label of two entangled horses, which apparently was designed by the winemaker's grandfather. Bright, with crunchy red fruit and herbal notes. **AB Drink 2019-2024 Alc 13.5%**

TRŠ, Frankovka, Srijem, Danube 2016 87

N/A UK **www.vinarija-trs.com**

This appealing Blaufränkisch comes from a family co-op in the Danube. Black cherry, plum and violet flavours lead to a fresh, peppery finish. Ideal with *kulen*, a local paprika-spiced sausage. **AB Drink 2019-2022 Alc 13%**

SWEET

Benvenuti, San Salvatore Muškati, Istria 2013 95

N/A UK **www.benvenutivina.com**

From dried Muscat grapes aged in small, used French oak barriques. This has a wonderful, sumptuous fragrance, whose sweet orange-fruit combined with vanilla oak notes lead to an intensely sweet palate of crystallised citrus fruits and grapey tones – aromatic from start to long finish. It comes in a half-bottle and contains no less than 220g/L of residual sugar. **AR Drink 2019-2030 Alc 12%**

27 Bibich, Ambra NV, Skradin, Dalmatia 93

N/A UK **www.bibich.co**

In half-litre bottle, this blend of straw-dried Debit and Maraština grapes is a vin santo-like wine, fermented for five months before it's aged for five to seven years in cask to produce a remarkable, naturally sweet wine with bags of rich, dried apricot concentration and a burnt

orange marmalade note for a bittersweet freshness on the finish. **AR Drink 2019-2030 Alc 15.3%**

28 Kutjevo, Traminac Ice Wine, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2011 93

N/A UK **www.kutjevo.com**

Kutjevo is the biggest producer of ice wine in Croatia. While Graševina is its speciality, this Traminac is exemplary. Complex and lingering with notes of blossom, honey and apricot marmalade. **AB Drink 2019-2025 Alc 10%**

29 Krauthaker, Graševina Izborna Berba Prosušenih Bobica, Kutjevo, Slavonia 2015 92

N/A UK **www.krauthaker.hr**

This botrytised Trockenbeerenauslese comes from the Slavonian guru of Graševina, Vlado Krauthaker. Warming, sweet and sharp, it's a sophisticated sweet wine with intense aromas of baked apricot, ginger, honey and spice. **AB Drink 2019-2024 Alc 14%**

30 Iločki Podrumi, Traminac Izborna Berba Bobica, Srijem, Danube 2016 91

N/A UK **www.ilocki-podrumi.hr**

Harvested from selected berries, this comes from Croatia's biggest Gewürztraminer producer, whose cellar dates back to 1450. A complex and delightful sweet wine with notes of rose petals, Turkish delight, marzipan and honey. **AB Drink 2019-2025 Alc 13.5%**

