

# Top Picks

From Albariño to Cabernet and beyond –  
Joelle Thomson hand-picks a bunch  
of top drops...



## 2022 Villa Maria Braided Gravels Albariño

RRP \$26.99

**Villa Maria**

Albariño is the great white grape of Rías Baixas in Galicia, north-west Spain, and it is showing outstanding promise here in New Zealand. It is thick-skinned, intensely aromatic (think: florals, lemon zest and a salty tang) and has high acidity, qualities that make it attractive to New Zealand wine drinkers. This wine is affordable in a market where prices are rising and its quality overdelivers, as every sip will show.



## 2021 Chard Farm Masons Pinot Noir

RRP \$90 to \$95

**Chard Farm**

This superb Pinot Noir is made from grapes grown in Parkburn, one of Central Otago's hidden gems in a sun-drenched, warm corner of the region. Summers are hot but relatively brief, and winters can be very cold. The result is a delicate, finely structured aromatic Pinot Noir with excellent concentration of flavour and a full body. The Mason Vineyard has a long-held, well-deserved reputation for outstanding Pinot and this wine proves the point.



## 2021 Chard Farm The Tiger Pinot Noir

RRP \$90 to \$95

**Chard Farm**

'The Tiger' is named for Chard Farm's former cellar door manager, Keith 'The Tiger' Thomson. Many moons ago now, he ran the cellar door and had such charm that he grew into the nickname, inspiring a wine in his honour because he adored Pinot Noir and sold it well. As for the wine, it is also impressive: commandingly silky in the mouth with red fruit aromas underpinned by flavours of cherries, fresh plum and subtle cedar.

Chard Farm Masons Pinot Noir is a superb wine made from grapes grown in Parkburn, one of Central Otago's hidden gems.



## 2023 Blank Canvas Anandale Farm Riesling

RRP \$30.99

**EuroVintage**

Winemaking couple Matt Thomson and Sophie Parker-Thomson MW are devotees of aromatic white grapes in Marlborough and make this vibrant, youthful Riesling from a coastal vineyard at Blind River. It's a bright, fresh, and crisp expression with aromas of green apples and a hint of lime zest. Good now, but also a keeper for the medium to long term; up to 10 years and longer for those who enjoy aged Rieslings.



## 2020 Penfolds Bin 600 California Cabernet Shiraz

RRP \$99.99

**Asahi Beverages**

Winemaker Peter Gago introduced the 2023 release of Penfolds wines by saying, "Nothing stands still". That's certainly true in the wine world and Penfolds has expanded its impressive collection of full-bodied red wines with the introduction of international regions under its famous banner. This Californian Cabernet Sauvignon is one of them. It is made with grapes grown in California, which were originally planted from heritage vine cuttings that come from the Kalimna and Magill Estate vineyards in South Australia. More importantly, this is a blend that pays homage to the Australian tradition of using Shiraz (32%) to add flesh to Cabernet's structural body and firm, long-ageing tannic qualities. Sealed under cork, this wine drinks well now and begs to be decanted. It will come into its own in another decade and will be worth the wait.

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