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## TOP 100 ITALIAN WHITE WINES FOR THE SUMMER

Italy's white wines often play second fiddle to the country's better-known reds. But in the hotter summer months they come into their own. Here we pick out some of the best white wines in Italy, from the mountainous region of Alto Adige in the northeast to the sun-soaked island of Sicily in the far south and many areas in between.

These 100 outstanding whites are drawn from JamesSuckling.com tastings over the last two years, which total almost 35,000 wine ratings. We include fruity, aperitivo-style wines as well as full-blown, complex whites for grilled chicken or vegetables, with prices ranging from good-value to expensive.

If you are already an Italian-white fan, it will come as no surprise that about a quarter of the whites listed here are from Alto Adige. This region, on the border with Austria, has long been at the forefront of Italian white wine production, making exemplary whites from pinot bianco, pinot grigio, sauvignon, chardonnay and gewurztraminer. Check out our documentary on the region.

But there's so much more to discover as you travel through the peninsula. Our list of Top 100 Italian whites contains many wines made from Italy's native grape varieties: friulano and ribolla gialla in the region of Friuli; arneis and cortese (Gavi) in Piedmont; grillo, carricante and catarratto in Sicily; greco, fiano and falanghina in Campania; garganega (Soave) in Veneto; nuragus and vermentino in Sardinia and petite arvine in the tiny region of Valle d'Aosta in the extreme northwest.

We have also picked out the top 10 wines in our list and provided some extra information below, as these represent some of the greatest white wines in the world. They range from classic, chardonnay-based whites with a touch of oak, to stainless-steel only pinots, obscure grape varieties, wines made in amphorae, island vineyards and mountain vineyards. Such is the variety on offer from Italy's whites. Take your pick and enjoy these best white wines for the summer!

In first spot we place the Marchesi Antinori Umbria Cervaro della Sala 2017 (99 points). This complex, oak-aged chardonnay, with a touch of white grape grechetto in the blend, shows muscle

and power, yet remains fresh and agile, making it the perfect foil to your summer grill. Cervaro was No. 4 in the JamesSuckling.com Top 100 of all wines in 2019. It's produced on Antinori's 1,235-acre Castello della Sala estate in the Umbria region, south of Tuscany, and the first vintage was 1985. The near-perfect 2017 is one of the best ever made.

In second spot the Schiopetto Friulano Collio Mario Schiopetto M 2018 is top of the Schiopetto range of white wines. "M" is a tribute to the late Mario Schiopetto, who founded the family winery in the 1960s. Mario shunned the use of oak for his whites to bring out the true characteristics of the grape, and this friulano, with a dash of riesling, does just that, offering a complex array of aromas and flavors, ranging from flowers to white peaches and flinty minerals. This is made from old vines planted in the 1950s.

Elena Walch Alto Adige Beyond the Clouds 2017 is in third place and comes from one of the most renowned private (non-cooperative) estates in the Alto Adige region. Beyond the Clouds is a predominantly chardonnay white blend that's aged in oak for 10 months. The 2017 vintage took this wine to another level of complexity with abundant floral, mineral and exotic fruit character, all cut through with fresh acidity. Delicious!

In fourth we have the Bibi Graetz Toscana Bianco Testamatta 2018. "Testamatta" in Italian means something like "Oddball" and there's always a touch of genius in Bibi's reds and whites. In Testamatta Bianco you get a taste of his childhood on the tiny island of Giglio off the Tuscan coast, where he discovered a vineyard containing up to 100-year-old ansonica vines. This is a no-malo white that rests on the lees for 12 months. The hints of seashells and salt on offer here come as no surprise.

In our fifth-placed wine we get a taste of manzoni bianco, a hybrid variety that is a mix of riesling and pinot bianco that thrives in the foothills of the Dolomites in the northeast of Italy. Foradori Manzoni Bianco Vigneti delle Dolomiti Fontanasanta 2018 gives a stunning mouthful of fresh and dried fruit, together with a hint of riesling petrol, all presented in a dense, yet agile package.

Petrolo Trebbiano Toscana Boggina B 2018 in sixth place is a high-quality trebbiano, something that is hard to find in Tuscany, but Petrolo's Boggina, first produced in 2014, shows what this traditional, often-maligned white grape is capable of, given due care and attention. It comes from the estate's Boggina vineyard, planted in the 1970s and now farmed organically, and is fruit of a collaboration with Burgundy-based winemaker, Mounir Souma, founder of negociant, Lucien Le Moine.

Foradori Nosiola Vigneti delle Dolomiti Fontanasanta 2017 is another stunning white from Elisabetta Foradori, who is probably better known for her teroldego reds, such as Granato. The

nosiola grapes are from the same Fontanasanta vineyards as the Manzoni Bianco at no. 5. This ancient white grape, native to the Trentino region, was traditionally vinified on the skins and, in this case, this takes place in “tanajas”, Spanish amphorae, over a period of 8 months. This is a unique wine with myriad aromas and flavors and a lush texture.

Nals Margreid Pinot Bianco Alto Adige Sirmian 2018 in eighth place is a single-vineyard pinot bianco, from one of the top cooperative wineries of Alto Adige, and earned from James the accolade of “one of the best pinot biancos in Italy”. This is a tight and vivid PB with intense fruit and fresh acidity. Could be the perfect aperitivo on a balmy summer evening?

In ninth we have one of the best value-for-money whites in Italy, the Schiopetto Pinot Grigio Collio 2018. This full-bodied white pushes out all the pinot grigio grape has to offer, ranging from loads of spice to fresh citrus notes, minerals and even olives. As with all the white wines from this top Friulan producer, this is made only in stainless steel tanks and at just US\$23 per bottle, on average, is one of the best buys you can make.

And finally finishing the top 10 is the Elena Walch Chardonnay Alto Adige Vigna Castel Ringberg Riserva 2017. A 100 percent chard from Elena Walch’s Castel Ringberg vineyard, this is fermented in French oak barrels and undergoes partial malolactic fermentation and 10 months on the lees. The result is a wine with ripe fruit character, but underpinned with bright acidity that keeps everything fresh and in trim. There’s a whiff of Burgundy here.

— Jo Cooke, contributing editor

## **CECCHI MONTEFALCO BIANCO TENUTA ALZATURA ARIA DI CASA 2018**

Wednesday, July 22, 2020



**Country** Italy  
**Region** Umbria  
**Vintage** 2018

**Score**  
**93**

A white with sliced apples, melon and hints of cream. It’s full-bodied with a round, creamy-textured palate and a long, flavorful finish of cooked pears and apples. 100% trebbiano spoletino. Drink now.

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