



## THE BEST WINES FROM THE GLOBAL PINOT GRIGIO MASTERS

28th January, 2021 by Patrick Schmitt

We bring you the best wines from The Global Pinot Grigio Masters 2020, taking in brilliant bottles from around the world, including Italy and France, as well as England, California, Oregon, Canada and New Zealand.



**It's said** that popularity, like familiarity, breeds contempt, and what's true of people, is also, it seems, applicable to Pinot Grigio. This variety, when used to produce delicate whites at low prices, has become so prevalent, it is often derided – that is, among wine drinkers with a snobbish side.

However, one should consider what it is about Pinot Grigio, or rather, Pinot Gris – it is a French grape after all – that made it so popular in the first place.

Well, its rise to become one of the world's best-selling white grapes, alongside Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, relates to its lighter side as a fresh, apple-scented white from the northern Italian area of the Veneto – now successfully rebranded as Pinot Grigio Delle Venezie DOC. Grown in this part of Europe, the grape carved out a market, particularly in the UK, for clean, vinous refreshment at a keen price, and at a time when the competition at this level may have been flabby, oxidative, or off-dry. And the same style of bright, fresh Pinot Grigio is popular today, despite its critics, who tend to mock the wines for being dull and dilute – a fair accusation only for the cheapest expressions from over-cropped vineyards; wines that wouldn't pass the new DOC taste tests.

The vast majority of Pinot Grigio from around the Veneto, however, is a delight, loaded with ripe orchard fruits and lemon zest, with notes of cream and bitter almond too.

But this is just one face of Pinot Grigio, and therein lies its appeal. It can take on many forms, from light pink, or 'gris', to sparkling, bone dry to richly sweet.

Plus, it performs well in a wide variety of climates and soils – with our top scorers this year hailing from Italy and France as one might expect, but also England, California, Oregon, Canada and New Zealand.

Among the still dry wines, while Pinot Grigio flavour profiles can range from crisp apple and lemon to richer notes of pear and peach, it's really the texture of the wine that tends to vary the most. This is a grape that can, if harvested late from low yielding vineyards, produce wines with a marked and satisfying oiliness, even without residual sugar.

Then there's its affinity for ageing in wood, with nutty characters complementing the variety's yellow fruit notes, and honeyed characters from oxidative handling in barriques balancing the grape's citric edge.

In essence, you'd be wrong to knock Pinot Grigio, as it comes in many styles, and quality levels, from fine barrel-aged whites to fresh, delicate drops.

As for where to go for the best examples, well, look to our medalists in the following tables – with reliably good Pinot Grigio producers including Frescobaldi (Attems), Castello di Roncade, Mission Hill Estate, La Roncaia and Marisco (The King's Thorn).

One final point, and that concerns a loose guide to the type of Pinot Grigio you can expect. Generally, those wines labelled Pinot Gris tend to be richer and more viscous in style. The areas where that character is favoured tend to be Alsace and Marlborough.

So, if you like your whites with weight, look to these parts of the wine world. But if it's something light you're after, then Italy is an ideal source, if not the only place for such a bright type of white, as the results from the competition show.

Please read on for the results in full from 2020's Global Pinot Grigio Masters, along with some comments from the judges, and further information about the competition.



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### Sparkling White Pinot Gris

Company	Wine Name	Region	Country	Vintage	Medal
<b>Under £10</b>					
Cantina Viticoltori Ponte	Spumante DOC Brut delle Venezie	Veneto	Italy	NV	Silver
La Cantina Pizzolato	Sparkling DOC delle Venezie Extra Dry	Veneto	Italy	2019	Silver
La Cantina Pizzolato	Sparkling DOC delle Venezie Extra Brut "So Easy"	Veneto	Italy	2019	Bronze
<b>£30-£50</b>					
Fox & Fox	Inspiration Brut Blanc de Gris	Sussex	UK	2014	Gold

### Sparkling Rosé Pinot Gris

Company	Wine Name	Region	Country	Vintage	Medal
<b>£15-£20</b>					
Think Wine Group	Think Pink	Veneto	Italy	NV	Bronze

### Unoaked Pinot Gris

Company	Wine Name	Region	Country	Vintage	Medal
<b>Under £10</b>					
Castello di Roncade	Pinot Grigio DOC Venezia	Veneto	Italy	2019	Gold
Bestheim	Pinot Gris Premium Reserve	Alsace	France	2019	Gold
Citra Vini	Farinelli Pinot Grigio	Abruzzo	Italy	2019	Silver
Poderi dal Nespole	Il Papavero Pinot Grigio	Sicily	Italy	2019	Silver
Perlage Winery	Pinot Grigio delle Venezie DOC	Veneto	Italy	2019	Silver
Cantina Viticoltori Ponte	Pinot Grigio DOC delle Venezie	Veneto	Italy	2019	Silver
Bosco Viticoltori	Bosco dei Cirmioli Pinot Grigio DOC delle Venezie	Veneto	Italy	2019	Silver
Ca' di Rajo	Pinot Grigio	Veneto	Italy	2019	Silver
Antonio Facchin e Figli	Pinot Grigio DOC delle Venezie	Veneto	Italy	2019	Silver