

Waitrose Italian Suggested Wine – A wine tour of Italy how does location affect the wine

Like the French AOC Italian wine has its own quality control system usually indicated on the labels. The highest classification DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) means winemakers follow strict regulations on grapes, yields, ageing, geographical areas. The broadest category IGT (Indicazione Geografica Tipica) has fewer guidelines but that doesn't mean the wines are inferior. Some of the best Super Tuscans carry these three letters.

Many regions maybe familiar already – Tuscany, Veneto, Sicily but do you know where they are and how the location affects the wine.



Veneto

It is not just Italy's renowned Prosecco that comes from the Veneto region. Further inland the region of Soave produces minerally dry whites from the Garganega grape. North of Verona you'll find the vineyards of Valpolicella famous for its bright cherry scented reds.

Mabis La Carezza Pinot Nero £12

Pale as Provence pink but made from Pinot Noir grapes grown high in the volcanic hills north of Venice. This is the ideal rose for a plate of antipasti.

Sicily

Hanging off the toes of Italy's boot is one of the country's largest regions where the hot climate helps produce wines with plenty of flavour. Sicily isn't just about big, bold wines as in recent years producers in the Mount Etna region with vineyards on the lower slopes of the famous volcano have been gaining recognition for producing truly elegant world class wines.

Terre di Vita Organic Zibibbo £10

Using a grape variety rarely found elsewhere. Zibibbo is part of the Muscat grape variety. Touch of floral, crisp, dry and fresh.

Sardinia

One of the largest islands is the Mediterranean second only to Sicily this is a gem of a wine region, With its granite soil, hilly vineyards and unique grape varieties, it produces wines that are unsurprisingly unique. The star grape is Vermentino producing white wines that feel both sun and salt kissed.

Le Arenarie Vermentino di Gallura £15

From organic vineyards located at 400 meters above sea level, this hand harvested Pinot Grigio has fruity notes of white peach, melon and orange blossom. The chalky soil and the temperature range between day and night enhance the fruity characteristics and the fragrance of this wine. Fresh and crisp with light citrus aromas and crunchy green apple flavours. It goes well with light and delicate appetisers, grilled fish, seafood and white meat dishes.

Piedmont

Sandwiched between the Alps and the Mediterranean, Piedmont in north-west Italy is one of the biggest jewels in the country's wine crown. Both Barolo and Barbaresco come from here. Made from the Nebbiolo grape, Barolo is often described as a wine of two halves: deceptively light on first sniff, but powerful on the palate. Other grapes from this area include fruity reds from Barbera, zesty whites of Gavi made from Cortese and Moscato d'Asti which is a sweet, lightly sparkling, low-alcohol wine made using Moscato grapes.

Catina del Nebbiolo d'Alba £14

A brilliant gateway into Nebbiolo this has all the hallmark characteristics of the regions most famous grape. Fresh and vibrant, with a rose-like aroma followed by early black cherry flavours.

Tuscany

One of the most picturesque wine regions of the world and home to Chianti made in a region between Florence and Siena with Sangiovese based reds. Some of the oldest producers in Italy can be found in this region dating back hundreds of years.

Villa Cafaggio Chianti £16

From an organically farmed estate in the hamlet of Greve in Chianti this gently spicy red is smooth and fragrant. Brilliant with barbecued lamb.

Puglia

The further South you go the warmer it gets so it is no surprise that the wines from Italy's heel are amongst the ripest and juiciest of all. Known primarily for reds made from grapes including Primitivo (known as Zinfandel elsewhere) Negroamaro, Montepulciano and Nero de Troia these wines often have an easy charm, with plenty of dark fruit flavours. Think figs, blackberries and a touch of spice. They are also very food friendly.

Produttori di Manduria Primitivo di Manduria Riserva £12

At the richer end of the scale, this juicy Primitivo is packed with black fruit and fig flavours, with toasty, rich, vanilla scented oak notes.