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20 great lower alcohol wines to try this summer

Want something a little lighter to drink this summer without compromising on taste? Try one of Decanter's pick of 20 top-rated lower alcohol wines, all under 12% abv...



Georgina Hindle
July 15, 2020



Credit: Unsplash / Matthieu Joannon

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If you're looking for wines with lighter flavours or want to reduce your alcohol intake this summer, it's worth looking at the category of lower-alcohol wines.

These typically run from 6%-11% and include wines both naturally low in alcohol as well

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as those that have had their ABV reduced.

Depending on style and grape variety, wines tend to have between 12–14% alcohol, however in recent years levels have been creeping up, partly because of climate change and also due to the growing trend for softer, more ripe wines.

But now that summer is here, lighter wines in body and colour, but also in alcohol, are looking more desirable. They're great for parties and social occasions and are generally lower in calories – all without sacrificing on flavour.

Finding red wines below 12% can be tricky but not impossible with classic sources being cooler climate regions around the world. For white wines Germany, and in particular the Mosel, is a good starting point. Wines with less than 10% ABV are likely going to have an element of sweetness having had the fermentation stopped leaving the natural sweetness of the grapes in the resulting wine.

The following list comprises quality sparklings from Italy including Prosecco and Lambrusco, red wines from Washington and Swartland and a selection of dry and sweet white wines spanning Australia, England and Germany. A skin-contact aromatic orange wine worth seeking out also makes the list at 12%.

20 top lower alcohol wines to try



Pizzolato, Organic Prosecco Brut, 2019

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Pizzolato is an established organic producer near Trieste and this Co-op exclusive is cracking value for money. Fruity and inviting nose

at Pizzolato, [explore more](#)

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Waitrose, Cava Brut in partnership with Castillo Perelada

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Made in partnership with Castillo Perelada, this top value supermarket Cava comes from chalky slopes at 400m in Penedès. Aged for a year before disgorging, it has creamy, leesy tones, orchard fruit flavours and perky acidity to keep things fresh. A value crowd-pleaser.

Points 91



Graziano Castelvetro, Fontana dei Boschi, Lambrusco

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Dark forest fruits with an attractive vanilla plum spiciness working in harmony with the fine carbonic and fresh acidity.

at Pizzolato, [explore more](#)

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Villa di Corlo, Elettra, Lambrusco, di Sorbara, 2018

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Packed with vivacious summer fruits and smoky liquorice, youthful and lively with a fine, effervescent finish. [Read more](#)

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Medici Ermete, Concerto, Lambrusco, Reggiano, 2017

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Firm structure with mouthfilling blackcurrant fruit and an attractive stinky, savoury character. The trademark frothiness unfolds to a lovely creamy finish. [Read more](#)

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La Spinetta, Bricco Quaglia, Moscato d'Asti, Piedmont, 2012

+ Add to My Wines

A wonderful example of Moscato d'Asti at its finest. Packed with exotic orange-blossom aromas, it is beautifully sweet, frothy and compelling, with an intriguing blanched almond note on the finish.

Points 91



Schloss Vaux, Rosé Réserve, Rheingau, Germany, 2015

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Red apple and redcurrant appear on the fresh nose, framed by yeasty creaminess. The light body is rounded out by yeasty richness and has

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Savage Grace, Dineen Vineyard Côt, Yakima Valley, 2017

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Perfumed nose with wild flowers and ripe red fruits of the forest dominating. Lovely bright, ripe juiciness, with real purity of mulberry fruit.

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Rall Wines, Cinsault Red, Swartland 2018

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Gamay is grown in the Cape but this is arguably the closest you'll come to a Beaujolais-style wine. Winemaker Donovan Rall ferments 80% of the

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Mirabeau, Forever Summer, Méditerranée IGP, 2019

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This is aptly named, tasting like a summer dessert, full of succulent strawberries and delicate cream flavours. It's refreshing and highly drinkable with hints of citrus on the palate and a subtle spicy edge on the finish. Forever Summer is the first lower alcohol wine in Mirabeau's range, having had...

Points 89



Bauer, Crâmpoșie Selecționată, Dragasani, 2018

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German-born Oliver Bauer makes a sleek, natural yeast-fermented Crâmpoșie Selecționată in a Mosel Riesling style: semi-sweet and low alcohol with fresh hints of peach, lime and lemon.

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Dönnhoff, Oberhäuser Leistenberg Kabinett Riesling, Nahe 2018

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Grown on grey clay slate soils on a steep southeast-facing site, this has as much as 10% of Riesling grapes, which are grown in a very particular

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Peter Lehmann, Hill & Valley, Eden Valley, 2014

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Fresh and bright aromatics of ripe lemon, kaffir lime and green apple fruit. Ripe, glossy-textured, medium-bodied fruit palate where ripe apple is balanced by a floral finish.

Points 90



Tatsis, Malagouzia Orange, Macedonia, Greece, 2018

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From a biodynamic producer in Goumenissa, this Malagousia pushes boundaries. Skin contact wine, extremely aromatic, with orange zest, *lemon and mandarin* and *citrus* notes. *Orange*, *lemon*, *mandarin*.

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Brokenwood, Trevena Kindred Vineyards Semillon, Hunter Valley, Australia, 2018

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A clarion call from this bellwether wine, grown at the Trevena vineyard (planted 1921) next door to Braemore, on similar sandy soils. *It is a little different from usual*.

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Cave Spring Cellars, The Adam Steps Riesling, Beamsville Bench, 2015

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A gorgeous expression of Riesling from a 38 year old block of vines, situated near the limestone outcrops known as The Adam Steps which *are*.

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Zilliken, Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Spätlese, Saar, 2003

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A stunning medium-dry Riesling for a bargain price, from one of the top winemakers in the Saar. The lovely petrolly nose showcases its 15 *years*.

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Three Choirs, Willow Brook, England, United Kingdom, 2018

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This hits all the value/flavour buttons. It's made from a blend of traditional aromatic varieties Siegerrebe and Reichensteiner, along with *other* varieties. *It is a little different from usual*.



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Gaspereau Vineyards, Tidal Bay, Nova Scotia 2018

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A blend of Vidal Blanc, Seyval Blanc, New York Muscat, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. This is a mouthwatering blend with a soft, creamy texture and a hint of citrus.

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Berton Vineyard, Botrytis Semillon Reserve, Riverina, 2018

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A lusciously decadent drop, with 160 grams of residual sugar (the grapes are picked in May, the last of the vintage) balanced by brisk, refreshing acidity.

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