



REFRESHING ITALIAN WHITE WINES FOR \$25 OR LESS

Home to 20 different wine producing regions and wealth of indigenous grapes, there's no shortage of Italian bottles to explore. And while Italy may be known for big, bold reds, the country offers a wealth of refreshing white wines from Sardinia, Sicily, Abruzzo, Trentino-Alto Adige, Tuscany and Piedmont. Known for its beautiful beaches and Pecorino cheese, Sardinia is also home to world class Vermentino. These white wines tend to pair well with seafood and have fruity aromas while offering underlying richness. Thin-skinned Vermentino is also grown in Tuscany. The resulting wines are often very aromatic, light-bodied and refreshing. The wines tend to offer floral notes, citrus fruits, white fruits and a sometimes nutty quality. Sicilians have been making wine since 4000 B.C., and the island's dry and warm climate helps create a happy home for many grapes. Carricante, from the Etna DOC, grows in the mineral-rich soils of the still-active volcano, Mount Etna. These wines pick up a saline tang from the Mediterranean Sea, but maintain refreshing acidity. Sicily also produces Grillo, possibly the most prolific grape of the DOC. These bottles tend to be medium-bodied, dry and accented with notes of white peach.

Abruzzo's winemaking tradition dates back centuries. One of its star white grapes is Trebbiano, which often produces wines with balanced stone-fruit and floral notes, and provides racy acidity. Trentino-Alto Adige is home to a unique cadre of grapes. The sunny weather and high-elevation produces Pinot Grigio that is crisp and light-bodied, with prominent citrus aromas. Lugana has a budding wine scene but the region is still defined by Turbiana a.k.a. Trebbiano di Lugana. This white grape is late ripener that does especially well in the microclimates surrounding the lakes. Here, the wines exhibit notes of ripe citrus, tart apple, white stone fruit and almond. Piedmont is known for its big and bold reds, but the region's Gavi DOCG is also renowned for producing crisp and fresh white wines that pair perfectly with a number of dishes.

RECOMMENDED ITALIAN WHITE WINES

Vigne Surrau 2017 Branu (Vermentino di Gallura); \$16, 93 points. Yellow peach, Mediterranean brush and a whiff sea breeze virtually leap out of the glass. Tangy and savory, the bright, medium-bodied palate doles out juicy apricot, pineapple and a hint of wild fennel. A tangy saline note marks the close. Cantiniere. Editors' Choice. —Kerin O'Keefe

Abbazia di Novacella 2018 Pinot Grigio (Alto Adige Valle Isarco); \$20, 92 points. Enticing aromas of spring flower, white stone fruit and alpine herb shape the nose. The rounded medium-bodied palate delivers creamy Bartlett pear, apple, juicy citrus and a smoky mineral note alongside tangy acidity. Editors' Choice. —K.O.

Cusumano 2017 Alta Mora Bianco (Etna); \$25, 91 points. Spanish broom, yellow stone fruit and crushed herb delicately drive the aromas. Reflecting the nose, the fresh, savory palate delivers juicy yellow pear, lemon zest, wild sage and a graphite note. A saline note perks up the linear finish. Terlato Wines International. —K.O.

Ottella 2018 Lugana; \$19, 91 points. Tropical fruit, white spring flower and a hint of crushed tomato-vine lead the nose. The juicy palate doles out honeydew melon, grapefruit and papaya alongside crisp acidity. A saline note caps off the finish. Lyra Wine. Editors' Choice. —K.O.

Pievalta 2017 Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore; \$19, 91 points. Made with grapes grown according to the principles of biodynamic farming, this fragrant white opens with heady scents of yellow flower, tropical fruit and a whiff of acacia honey. Round and savory, the polished, delicious palate delivers ripe yellow peach, citrus, almond and white almond. LLS-Winebow. Editors' Choice. —K.O.

Donnafugata 2017 Sur Sur Grillo (Sicilia); \$21, 90 points. Grapefruit, white stone fruit and Mediterranean herb aromas lead the way along with a scent reminiscent of tomato leaf. Bright and juicy, the medium-bodied palate doles out pineapple, white peach and sage set against crisp acidity. A saline note tops it off. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —K.O.

Fontanafredda 2018 del Comune di Gavi (Gavi); \$20, 90 points. Heady aromas of yellow wildflower, spring blossom and yellow stone fruit almost leap out of the glass. Tangy and savory, the round palate shows flavors of tart apple, lemon zest and honeydew alongside fresh acidity. Taub Family Selections. —K.O.

Poggio al Tesoro 2017 Solosole Vermentino (Toscana); \$25, 90 points. Yellow-peach, tropical-fruit and Mediterranean brush aromas follow through to the fresh, rounded palate along with a vein of saline and white grapefruit. It's juicy and savory, with a bitter-almond finish. LUX Wines. —K.O.

Talamonti 2018 Trabocchetto Pecorino (Colline Pescaresi); \$16, 90 points. A concentrated nose of chamomile, lemongrass and yellow apple starts off this delightful white. Rounded in feel, the wine is loaded with plenty of citrus, peach and melon flavors. Juicy acidity keeps it fresh and the flavors persist through the lingering floral finish. Panebianco. **Editors' Choice.** —Alexander Peartree

Masciarelli 2018 Trebbiano d'Abruzzo; \$14, 89 points. Aromas of lemon peel, green apple, melon and chamomile translate to the light-bodied palate. It is silky upon entry, with persistent, drawing acidity that builds. Ripe fruit flavors mix with a delicate astringency to give an overall well-balanced appeal. Vintus LLC. Best Buy. —A.P.