

THE
WORLD'S
MOST ADMIRABLE
WINE
BRANDS

2015



Drinks
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Drinks International loves a good list. This month the spotlight falls on the wine world, or more specifically, wine brands. The 50 wine brands featured have all made an appearance in the five lists prior to this one. Some brands have had the good fortune to be present in all five cycles, and some have fallen out and returned to favour for one reason or another.

This is not a list that necessarily recognises case sales or global reach or a list that seeks to award market performance or annual turnover. For that reason the David and Goliath of brands appear in the list in an order few would predict. This year, the academy of voters is for the most part unchanged but the same cannot be said of their votes. The voting criteria unaltered and yet the top 50 - while recognisable - is certainly not a case of same old.

Many will undoubtedly quibble with the order and feel certain brands should appear higher, lower or don't warrant a place at all, but that is the wonderful thing about a list that is based solely on admiration, it is entirely subjective.

HOLLY MOTION
Supplement Editor

The Top 25

1	TORRES	SAME
2	VEGA SICILIA	UP 8
3	PENFOLDS	UP 2
4	VILLA MARIA	RE-ENTRY
5	CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM	UP 1
6	CASILLERO DEL DIABLO	DOWN 4
7	RIDGE	UP 4
8	CHÂTEAU MARGAUX	DOWN 1
9	GUIGAL	SAME
10	CONO SUR	UP 6
11	MICHEL CHAPOUTIER	UP 3
12	TIGNANELLO	DOWN 8
13	CHÂTEAU LATOUR	DOWN 10
14	CLOUDY BAY	DOWN 6
15	CHÂTEAU HAUT-BRION	DOWN 2
16	PAUL MAS	UP 14
17	CHÂTEAU MOUTON ROTHSCHILD	UP 4
18	ZONIN	UP 22
19	CAMPO VIEJO	UP 20
20	SANTA RITA	UP 27
21	KENDALL-JACKSON	UP 15
22	YELLOW TAIL	UP 11
23	CHÂTEAU MUSAR	UP 4
24	YALUMBA	DOWN 9
25	JACOB'S CREEK	DOWN 5



RIDGE

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: US

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Nearly 40 years on from the now famous blind wine-tasting dubbed the Judgement of Paris – in which English wine merchant Steven Spurrier pitted top French wines against Californian ones and California won – Ridge Vineyards is still an industry leader racking up accolades. In 2006's rejudgment of that fateful day the highest scoring wine after 30 years was the Ridge 1971 Cabernet Sauvignon. The Californian wine topped the Californian and UK judges' lists to take the top spot after securing a combined total of 137 points. The top five wines selected by the panelists in the re-enactment were Californian. In the 1976 tasting Ridge Vintage Monte Bello ranked fifth out of 15 as the 1973 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars SLV Cabernet Sauvignon was judged best, ahead of four top-ranked Bordeaux, including first-growths Château Mouton-Rothschild and Château-Haut Brion.

The recognition keeps on coming as, in the past year, Ridge was named the Best Winery in the US by the Daily Meal website. A member of the judging panel said: "Ridge Vineyards was founded in 1959. Its long track record of consistently making one of the best Cabernets in America is the equivalent of the New York Yankees dynasty. Owner Paul Draper is Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, and Mickey Mantle all rolled into one."



RIDGE VINEYARDS IS STILL RACKING UP ACCOLADES

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CHÂTEAU MARGAUX

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: CHILE
OWNER: CORINNE MENTZELOPOULOS

In the past year Château Margaux released the world's most expensive wine. Oenophiles flocked to Dubai wine merchant Le Clos to ogle the six 12-litre Balthazars retailing for US\$195,000 each. Perhaps the halo effect gained by this high-publicity sale has helped Margaux surge ahead of the other big five Bordeaux first growth chateaux in our list, and end up a full 34 places ahead of the more lauded Château Lafite. But it probably has as much to do with the stunning quality of its 2005 vintage, which is arguably the best first growth offering from the most praised vintage in recent times. It scored 100 points with *Wine Spectator* and 98 Parker points, while esteemed London wine merchant Berry Bros & Rudd, which boasts in its ranks eight of only 312 Masters of Wine in the world, said of it: "Words can't convey how good this is. It is an extraordinary Margaux, with a perfume to die for and an astonishing level of concentration and complexity. The tannin levels are the highest ever here but you would never know; they are like velvet on the tongue cloaked with rich, suave and voluptuous forest fruits and crushed raspberries. The finish goes on forever with coffee, mocha and bitter chocolate hints enhancing the intense pure, creamy cassis." The last few vintages have failed to match the wonderful 2009 and 2010, but Margaux is upbeat about the 2014 crop. It said the yields are "largely superior to those of last year" and "the quality looks magnificent, as good for the Merlots as for the Cabernet Sauvignons". The 19th-century Margaux estate, featuring the grandest, most imposing buildings among the Médoc châteaux, is being overhauled by Lord Norman Foster to ensure Margaux can pursue its perpetual search for excellence and quality with cutting-edge winemaking facilities, and retain its place as the best of the best in Bordeaux for years to come.

