

Six Decanter World Wine Award winners to keep on ice this summer

The best wines for summer, what to drink as temperatures rise

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, July 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Summer brings a shift in drinking habits, with fresher, lighter styles replacing the fuller-bodied wines associated with colder months. Whether served before a meal, alongside seafood or at a barbecue, the most successful summer wines combine refreshment with character. Styles that excel include sparkling wines, crisp whites, dry rosés and lighter reds that benefit from a brief spell in the refrigerator.



DWWA Summer Wines

What makes a good summer wine? Acidity is the defining characteristic of a successful warm-weather wine. It provides freshness, balances rich or smoky flavours and keeps a wine lively even as it gradually warms in the glass. Moderate alcohol, restrained oak and bright fruit also contribute to a style that is both refreshing and food-friendly.

Several categories stand out during the summer months:

- Sparkling wine – Champagne, English sparkling wine, Cap Classique and Cava all combine lively bubbles with bright acidity, making them ideal as an aperitif. Serve at 6–8°C.
- Crisp white wines – Styles with citrus, herbal or stone-fruit character and mineral freshness work well with seafood, salads and lighter dishes. Serve at 8–10°C.
- Dry rosé – Pale rosés offer delicacy and freshness, while deeper-coloured examples have the structure to accompany grilled meat. Serve at 8–11°C.
- Light-bodied reds – Low tannin and vibrant red-fruit flavours make varieties such as Schiava

especially enjoyable lightly chilled at 12–14°C.

- Off-dry Riesling – A touch of sweetness balances chilli heat while high acidity keeps the wine refreshing.

For specific recommendations drinkers can choose from the following medal winners from the recent [Decanter World Wine Awards](#) 2026 (DWWA) recognised as the world's largest wine competition and widely regarded as the global benchmark for wine quality.

The best earned medals rising from Bronze through Silver, Gold and Platinum, with a small Best in Show selection reserved for the very finest. A medal is, in short, a reliable shortcut: a wine the world's most experienced tasters thought worth seeking out.

For entertaining

Hambledon Wine Estate, Classic Cuvée Brut, Hampshire, England NV

Gold, 95 points

Presented in magnum, this English sparkling wine is well suited to larger gatherings. Aromas of golden apple, pear and lemon sit alongside notes of baked biscuit, while fine bubbles and mineral length deliver freshness and elegance. Alc 12%

For the barbecue

A La Mano, Tavel, Rhône, France 2024

Gold, 95 points

Tavel remains one of the Rhône's most food-friendly rosé styles, and this example offers generous black cherry fruit, herbal spice and a savoury finish. Its fuller body and texture make it an ideal partner for grilled meats and smoky flavours. Alc 13.5%

For seafood

Rapaura Springs, ROHE Sauvignon Blanc, Blind River, Marlborough, New Zealand 2025

Best in Show, 97 points

One of only a handful of Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs ever to achieve Best in Show, this wine combines the region's signature energy with exceptional complexity. Layers of melon, mango, pear, Japanese citrus, herbs and savoury minerality create a wine of remarkable depth, texture and precision. Alc 13%

For something different

Spier, Villa Blue Albariño, Stellenbosch, South Africa 2025

Top Value Gold, 95 points

Better known from Spain's Atlantic coast, Albariño also performs impressively in South Africa. This example combines ripe apple and mango flavours with citrus zest, vibrant acidity and a lingering saline finish, demonstrating the grape's adaptability beyond its traditional home. Alc 13.5%

For chilled red lovers

Kurtatsch, Sonntaler Vernatsch Alte Reben Schiava, Alto Adige, Italy 2025

Gold, 95 points

Made from old-vine Schiava, this fragrant northern Italian red delivers crushed red berries, rose petals and fresh herbs with gentle tannins and refreshing acidity. Around 20 minutes in the refrigerator enhances its appeal, making it an ideal choice for warm summer evenings. Alc 12.5%

For adventurous drinkers

bhn, Riesling, Oregon, United States 2023

Gold, 95 points

Produced on its skins in the style of an orange wine, this Riesling offers an unusual combination of freshness and structure. Aromas of oolong tea, saffron, ginger and floral notes unfold over subtle oxidative complexity, creating a layered, savoury wine that rewards exploration. Alc 15.5%

The full list of medal-winning wines from the Decanter World Wine Awards 2026 is available at awards.decanter.com.

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