



World's most admired  
**WINE  
BRANDS**

**Drinks**  
INTERNATIONAL

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**PICKING THE BEST**

How we did it: the methodology, the great and the good **p4**

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## Most Admired Wine Brands

# Why admired?

**T**he wine industry tends to shy away from big numbers. Making wines in vast quantities is something that comes with the wrong connotations. It's perfectly acceptable for a vodka or even a whisky brand owner to boast about its global popularity and the millions of bottles it produces every year, but in the wine world producers often wince when they're asked about how many cases they sell, in case the figure seems indecently high.

Nobody in the wine world wants to be seen as a mass producer, so how else can we gauge their success? Taking the word of wine critics might seem like an obvious solution, but this community rarely devotes too much time to the main brands – these are wines that have the marketing budgets to do their own promotions, the logic goes, without the aid of an internet or newspaper write-up.

Last year *Drinks International* decided to ask a different question of the industry: “What wines do you most admire?” Of course “admire” can mean different things to different people, so we tried to define it more clearly (see pages four and five). The results provided a fascinating insight into how the wine industry regards its leading players.

In this year's survey, there are some remarkable similarities with the 2011 poll, but also some intriguing changes as judges have voted according to how they think brands have performed and presented themselves over the past year. New names have joined the top 50; others have disappeared, perhaps temporarily, but maybe forever.

The list includes brands that are found in Shanghai boardrooms as well as mom and pop stores in Minnesota, and all points in between. Congratulations to all the brands which achieved a ranking in this unique project.

Graham Holter *Supplement Editor*



Photo courtesy of Cloudy Bay

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Graham Holter explains the methodology behind the second annual Most Admired Wines supplement

# Picking the

Last year, *Drinks International* approached 60 trusted members of the global wine community and invited them to consider which wine brands they most admired.

This year, we've repeated the exercise, but asked our judges to use a slightly narrower definition of the word "admired".

The basic principle remained the same: when casting their votes, we asked judges to use the following criteria:

- wines should be of consistent or improving quality
- they should reflect their region or country of origin
- they should respond to the needs and tastes of its target audience

- they should be well marketed and packaged
- they should have strong appeal to a wide demographic.

However, this time around we asked judges to base their decisions on what brands have achieved in the past 12 months, not their entire existence.

The global wine market is facing up to all kinds of new challenges and opportunities, and some wines are dealing with these better than others. Our survey is an excellent way of assessing who is coping best with everything the past year has thrown at them.

Again our judges included masters of wine, consultants, winemakers, critics, retailers, educators, buyers and analysts.

We asked them to nominate up to six

wine brands, rather than the five we restricted them to last year. Again, we emphasised that this was not necessarily a competition to reward the best-selling wines in the market, or those with the most critical acclaim.

To make the task more straightforward, we supplied a list of more than 80 well-known brands and producers, but also allowed the option of free choices – names not included on our list.

When the results were collated, the top 50 brands that emerged were fairly clear cut, with some noticeable changes to last year's list.

Where there was a tie for places, a small jury of voters was assembled to decide the final positions. It should be emphasised that this did not affect the positioning of

**Sixty members of the global wine community shared their knowledge to nominate those wine brands deemed to have achieved most in the past year**



## Most Admired Wine Brands

### Wine Intelligence

This year we have included some data from Wine Intelligence within our commentary, adding an extra consumer-focused dimension to the project.

Wine Intelligence speaks to regular wine consumers in countries across the world as part of its Vinitrac Global programme. This research builds up a detailed picture of how wine drinkers behave – what motivates them, how much they understand about wine, and the brands they relate to. The data is relied on by wine producers and marketers across the world when planning launches and marketing activity.

Wine Intelligence has provided us with “brand health” data from six key international markets: the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and Australia. Each country has its own list of brands, so it was not always possible to obtain data from all six markets for each of our 50 brands. But in many cases there is enough information available to make a meaningful statement about how a particular brand is regarded globally by consumers.

Wine Intelligence uses several measures of brand health, including prompted awareness of brands, penetration (ie whether the consumer actually buys a particular brand) and their likelihood to recommend the wine.

There is also a measure described as “brand affinity”. Simply put, this is an indication of whether those aware of a particular brand regard it as “right for people like me”.

### Who's who

Once again we allowed judges to remain anonymous if they chose. Those who gave permission for their names to be used are listed below. Participants were not permitted to vote for brands with which they are associated.

- Lucy Anderson (Australia) Asia director for Wine Australia
- Caspar Auchterlonie (UK) Consultant
- Neil Barker (UK) Former commercial director UK & Ireland, Foster's Group
- Nick Bulleid MW (Australia) Consultant
- Anne Burchett (France) Director of Sopexa UK
- Miguel Chan (South Africa) Group sommelier at Southern Sun Hotels
- Michael Cox (UK) UK director, Wines of Chile
- Christian Davis (UK) Editor, *Drinks International*
- Sarka Duskova (Czech Republic) Journalist
- Pieter Ferreira (South Africa) Cellarmaster, Graham Beck Wines
- Peter Marks MW (US) Educator
- Peter McCombie MW (New Zealand) Consultant
- Tuomas Meriluoto MW (Finland) Managing director, Winestate Oy
- Charles Metcalfe (UK) Author, wine competition judge and speaker
- Kym Milne MW (Australia) Consultant winemaker
- Mikko Montonen (Finland) Journalist
- Chris Murphy (UK) Buyer, Marks & Spencer
- Jouko Mykkänen (Finland) Journalist
- José Manuel Ortega (Spain) Director, O Fournier
- Gavin Quinney (UK) Owner of Château Bauduc
- Peter Rehberg (Germany) Owner, Hailsham Cellars
- Peter Scudamore-Smith MW (Australia) Consultant
- Lynne Sherriff MW (South Africa) Consultant
- Sabine Stock (Germany) German Wine Academy
- Paul Tudor MW (New Zealand) Consultant and educator
- Hector Vergara MS (Chile) Master Sommelier
- Gary Werner (US) Wine writer
- David Williams (UK) Wine critic, *The Observer*

Photo: Shutterstock

# best

any of the brands in the top 10.

Defining a brand is not a straightforward process in the world of wine: the separation between a parent company and the wines it makes is not always clear.

For example, Concha y Toro is, strictly speaking, a company rather than a brand, but we have taken the view that voters would probably associate its name with all its Chilean wines, including (perhaps controversially) Cono Sur, and made their decisions accordingly. But we do not think that any vote for Concha y Toro was cast as a way of rewarding Fetzer, its Californian business, which is classified separately.

It's not always so clear cut: Gallo has a plethora of brands with distinct

personalities, but the only one we have separated out is Barefoot, which does seem to be regarded by the industry as an entity on its own. Similarly, we have treated the Robert Mondavi and Woodbridge brands as separate elements, mainly because voters seemed to think there was an appreciable difference between the two.

No system is perfect, but we have tried to assign votes in a way that makes sense to the widest number of people and reflects the way in which suppliers and their products are regarded internationally.

It was a secret ballot, and participants (other than the few jury members mentioned above) have not seen the final results until now.

# Concha y Toro

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS** 20m cases  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** Chile and Argentina  
**OWNER** Concha y Toro

Once again Concha y Toro tops the Most Admired poll, a year on from its \$238m purchase of Fetzer – a deal which had the potential to change the way in which the company was perceived on the international stage.

Many multinationals in the wine world are regarded with caution, or even open hostility. Concha y Toro's values are well understood by the global wine community and, as far as anyone can tell, remain intact.

The business saw its export revenues edge up by 0.5% in 2011. Volumes were down 2.3% but the company's focus on premiumisation led to an 8.6% increase in its average export prices. Rising grape prices and a strengthening peso did not make life any easier and added to margin pressure.

Concha y Toro sells its wines in 135 countries. Europe is its most important market, accounting for a little under half of all exports, followed by the US, with 16.5%. Central and South America loom large on the priority list but Asia and Africa also feature strongly.

In the 10 most important export markets for Chilean wine, Concha y Toro occupies the number one position in all but two (Ireland and Germany, where it comes second), according to data from Vinos de Chile.

As acknowledged on page five, Concha y Toro is treated as a single brand for the purposes of the Most Admired survey, so the flagship Casillero del Diablo and Cono Sur are effectively combined together. While this approach remains open to challenge, we felt more voters would cast a vote for Concha y Toro assuming they were also supporting Cono Sur than those who expected to see it represented separately.



The range includes something for all budgets, ranging from the everyday wines such as Frontera and Sunrise through premium, super-premium and ultra-premium offerings all the way to icons at the upper end such as Carmin de Peumo.

Casillero del Diablo's volumes have increased fivefold since the turn of the century and now amount to more than 3 million cases.

Concha y Toro may be one of the giants of the world of wine but it conducts itself with typical Chilean modesty and reserve: it is never associated with aloofness, or bully-boy tactics, or corporate greed. Its wines are loved by consumers for their flavour and consistency and yet the company has avoided the accusations of corner-cutting and the production-line mentality that are regularly tossed at some of its corporate rivals.

Even the critics are impressed by what's

inside the bottle: British wine writer Matthew Jukes has recently described the 2010 vintage of Casillero del Diablo as "the finest value Cabernet Sauvignon on the planet".

Since 2008, Diablo wines have received more than 125 awards from internationally recognised wine competitions, including 13 gold medals and 30 silver medals. Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate* awarded Don Melchor 2007 94+ points in February 2012.

The business has come a long way since Don Melchor Concha y Toro planted his grape vines, sourced from Bordeaux, in the Maipo Valley soil in 1883. The company represents not only everything that is best about Chile – and South America as a whole – but also offers a shining example of how a wine producer can grow into a vast corporation without losing touch with its roots.

## Most Admired Wine Brands



**T**oday, the wine world almost takes Torres for granted, and it's easy to overlook the trials and tribulations that the business faced in its early years. In the 1930s, during the Spanish Civil War, the Penedès winery was seized by local anarchists and its owner at the time, Miguel Torres Carbó, was threatened with arrest and execution.

Life did not get any easier over the next few years. On the outbreak of World War Two, Torres Carbó was again threatened with arrest and internment in a concentration camp. He had been working as a pharmacist for the republican army, in opposition to Franco's nationalists. The Luftwaffe knew which side it supported, and when its planes bombed the railway station at Vilafranca del Penedès, the Torres winery was destroyed at the same time.

It takes a person of extraordinary courage and conviction to keep pursuing their dream in the face of such setbacks and personal danger. Of course nothing in Torres's recent history can compare to the challenges of the 1930s, but the family mindset endures.

The company is now in the hands of Miguel Torres – representing the fourth generation of his family to run the business – who is one of the most highly esteemed leaders in the wine industry. He wears his heritage, and winemaking knowledge, very lightly and remains eager to learn

# Torres

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS: 24m cases**

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Spain, Chile**

**OWNER: Torres SA**

more. (He has a fascination for local grape varieties, and has reportedly placed small ads in the Barcelona newspapers to seek out almost forgotten vines such as Garró and Samsó, which he likes to include in the Grans Muralles blend.)

Torres was founded in Penedès in 1870 and achieved much of its early growth by exporting its wines to Cuba. After the disruption of the 1930s, modern production started in earnest in the 1950s, when the business decided to focus on bottled wine rather than bulk shipments.

Much of the Torres winemaking philosophy was shaped by two study trips to France in which Miguel Torres Jr was exposed to a host of new ideas involving vineyard practices, grape varieties, fermentation techniques and barrel ageing.

On his return to Spain, steel vats and temperature-controlled fermentation were introduced and the business was hauled into a new era. The fresh, clean flavours

found in Spanish wines these days owe a debt to Torres's pioneering work.

Torres has established a solid reputation for consistently good, and affordable, wines such as Viña Sol and Sangre de Toro. Its most familiar brand names include De Casta, Coronas, Atrium and Viña Esmeralda. Its most acclaimed red wine is Coronas Mas la Plana, produced from vines in a 29ha plot in Penedès exclusively planted with Cabernet Sauvignon.

The company has spread into areas such as Jumilla, Ribera del Duero, Priorat and Rioja, and also operates from Chile.

Torres is one of the wine industry's favourite success stories, and its pioneering work has helped smaller rivals to carve reputations of their own. It's hard to imagine what today's Spanish wine industry would look like had it not been for the dogged enthusiasm of the Torres family throughout the 20th century.



## Most Admired Wine Brands



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## Most Admired Wine Brands

**A**ntinori remains one of the world's most revered wine producers, not simply for the quality of what it produces but for its willingness to break the rules more than 40 years ago. It became synonymous with the Super-Tuscans (a term coined by Robert Parker) that have transformed Italy's reputation in recent times.

Tignanello, produced from a 47ha vineyard acquired in 1900, is the wine which cemented Antinori's reputation and also changed the way in which the world regarded Chianti. Although the first vintage, in 1971, was 100% Sangiovese, the wine has been made ever since that time with an element of Cabernet Sauvignon – typically about 20% of the blend.

The refusal to include white grapes, and the use of small French barrels, also represented a radical break from tradition. From a 21st century perspective it can be all too easy to underestimate just how bold Antinori's actions were at the time.

Solaia, meanwhile, is Tignanello's mirror image, starting out as a pure Cabernet Sauvignon in 1979 but now including a small helping of Sangiovese in the mix, as well as a little Cabernet Franc. Produced with fruit from a 10ha vineyard adjacent to the Tignanello site,

# Antinori

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS: 2.2m cases**  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Italy**  
**OWNER: Antinori**

it's been described as a “stunningly rich” wine which has won copious praise from admirers the world over.

Antinori started out in 1385 when it was founded by Giovanni di Piero Antinori. The company, which makes wine in both Umbria and Tuscany, is now run by Marchese Piero Antinori, with the help of daughters Albiera, Allegra and Alessia.

The company may be in its 26th generation of ownership but it is demonstrating it is happy to move with the times with the announcement of a new winery in Tuscany, which will also incorporate a visitor centre. The development, scheduled for completion later this year, will also act as the company's new headquarters.

The Antinori family takes a deep interest in its native region and has long

been involved in the arts. The Accademia Antinori aims to promote and celebrate art linked to Tuscany and winegrowing. The project has led to the restoration of works of art, and the publication of books, events and exhibitions open to the public.

Today Antinori's tentacles spread out far beyond Italy, to distant climes such as California (where it owns Stag's Leap Wine Cellars and Antica) as well as Washington State, Chile, Hungary, Malta and Romania. Wherever the Antinori name appears, it brings with it the kind of reassurance of quality that might be expected from a company with a 600-year track record, but also something more indefinable and ethereal than that. It's a tribute to the current generations of owners that Antinori's reputation is not only being maintained, but enhanced.





# Most Admired Wine Brands



## #4 Penfolds

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SALES:** 2.6m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Australia

**SUPPLIER:** Treasury Wine Estates

Penfolds has held on to its position as Australia's most admired wine brand despite some big price increases on the current Bin releases that have not gone down well in some quarters. Yet the price hikes illustrate a fundamental truth: people around the world love Penfolds wines and they are prepared to pay for them.

Grange, first produced in the 1950s in secret by winemaker Max Schubert, remains the flagship for Penfolds, and perhaps for Australia itself. Despite the considerable advances the country has made, nobody has yet come up with a wine as iconic. Little wonder that Chinese investors were recently said to be lining up a bid for the brand – though no deal has emerged out of the speculation.

Treasury chose Shanghai as the launch city for the 2008 vintage of Bin 620 Coonawarra Cabernet/Shiraz last November – the first time it has appeared since 1966. Perhaps the future of Penfolds will be decided by Far East investors and consumers, just as is already happening with the first growths of Bordeaux.

## Jacob's Creek

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 7m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Australia

**OWNER:** Pernod Ricard

Johann Gramp, the Bavarian immigrant who arrived in the Barossa Valley in 1847, probably never expected to be remembered for his achievements. Yet, more than 150 years later, his humble winery is remembered as the starting point for Jacob's Creek, and the small-scale approach to winemaking somehow still manages to inspire the way wine is produced at the vast Rowland Flat complex.

Wine made on this scale cannot escape being described as industrial, but Jacob's Creek manages to avoid the obvious pitfalls. While other brands often emphasise vague brand values and lifestyle connotations, Jacob's Creek will happily put its wines in front of the world's best palates and know it will generally get a favourable reception.

The brand has entered the lighter wine market with its Cool Harvest range, and believes its response to consumer demands for lower alcohol has better flavour credentials than many rivals. The pricing strategy reflects this confidence: Jacob's Creek is increasingly absent from the bargain bins and Pernod Ricard seems content to suffer declines in market share in territories such as the UK as it puts the emphasis on sustainable profits.



## #6 Kendall-Jackson

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 4m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** US

**OWNER:** Jackson Family Wine Estates

Kendall-Jackson started out as a supplier of grapes to other wineries and only launched its own wines in 1982, eight years later. Today, the company estate grows something like 85% of its own fruit, which it uses to sublime effect in its red wines. Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot



achieve the greatest acclaim.

Jess Stonestreet Jackson, who founded the business with wife Barbara Banke, died last year and is remembered for his visionary approach to sustainable viticulture – an idea that is now far more accepted than it was for much of the early period of Kendall-Jackson's development.

Jackson Family Wine Estates is now the owner of 35 wineries and dozens of wine brands.

## #7 Michel Chapoutier

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 420,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France

**OWNER:** Chapoutier

Life is rarely dull in the world of Chapoutier. Chief executive Michel Chapoutier always has a scheme of one sort or another on the go: the company's Braille labels raised eyebrows when they first appeared, but are now a central part of the brand image. Lightweight bottles are a more recent innovation and the company is also counting down to the launch of its first Champagne.

Chapoutier is always likely to be known, however, as a Rhône winery and négociant. Its Hermitage wines are eagerly anticipated and the company is also noted for single-variety wines: Châteauneuf-du-Papes often contain only Grenache, and Côte-Rôties just Syrah.

Michel Chapoutier provides entertaining copy for journalists with declarations such as "winemakers are always liars", but his recent claims about buying land in England deserve to be given more attention. The business already operates in Portugal and Australia – could a venture northwards really be on the cards?



## Guigal

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:**

500,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France

**OWNER:** Guigal family

Guigal is another hugely influential ambassador for the Rhône. Established in 1946 by Etienne Guigal, it has earned gushing reviews from Robert Parker and is best known for wines affectionately referred to as “the La-Las”: La Mouline, La Landonne and La Turque, all single-vineyard expressions of Côte-Rôtie.

The business is now controlled by Etienne’s son, Marcel, and remains devoted to a natural approach to viticulture and winemaking. Not everyone can afford La-La quality but the philosophy which crafts these top-end wines carries through to wines made for more conventional budgets.

“In the past 20 years I have spent visiting wineries and vigneron, I have never seen a producer so fanatical about quality as Marcel Guigal,” Parker observes.



## #9 Vega Sicilia

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** not known

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Spain

**OWNER:** The Alvarez family

Nobody could accuse Vega Sicilia of resting on its laurels. The Ribera del Duero producer responsible for the iconic Unico recently built a \$30m winery and has extended its influence to Rioja, where a joint venture with Rothschild is expected to release its first wine this year.

The project, known simply as Benjamin Rothschild & Vega Sicilia, will produce wines from fruit grown in 100ha of vineyards.

Ribera del Duero seems so established these days it’s easy to forget that, not so long ago, it was a relatively barren place for wine production. Vega Sicilia was there even before the DO was created and the region became associated with world class wines.

The business is famed for its attention to detail and obsession with

quality control, in both the vineyard and the winery. Unico, aged for 10 years in French oak, has become one of the world’s most collectible wines and justifies the time and effort that goes into its production.

## #10 Château Margaux

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 30,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France

**OWNER:** Corinne Mentzelopoulos

“We should never stop feeling like students,” managing director Paul Pontallier said in a recent visit to London. Margaux certainly seems restless in its pursuit of even greater excellence: experiments with closures



marketing ideas ever developed by the wine industry in France or anywhere else, but the company is convincing the world there are weightier elements in its portfolio.

The label art for Duboeuf’s Nouveau is almost as anticipated as the wine itself. The theme changes with each vintage and 2011’s was Nouveau Expression, a graffiti-inspired design produced by New York artist Michael McLeer, who goes by the name ‘Kaves’.

Last year the company, now run by George’s son Franck, bought Beaujolais wine estate Château du Châtelard for an undisclosed sum. The deal included Châtelard’s 28ha of vineyards, winemaking facilities, cellars and its two wine brands spanning six appellations. Duboeuf has already made investments outside the Beaujolais region.

are ongoing, a move to completely organic viticulture is on the cards, and a third wine has been launched.

Described by Robert Parker as “a modern-day legend”, Margaux was one of Bordeaux’s original first growths, occupying a 262ha plot in the commune that shares its name.

## #11 Duboeuf

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 2.5m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France

**OWNER:** The Duboeuf family

Georges Duboeuf redefined Beaujolais in the 1970s and his influence is still felt to this day. To many wine lovers, Duboeuf IS Beaujolais. It will forever be associated with Beaujolais Nouveau, still one of the most innovative



## Most Admired Wine Brands

### #12 JP Chenet

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 8m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France

**OWNER:** Les Grand Chais de France

France still struggles to compete in the big league of wine brands, and there are differences of opinion over whether this is because it can't, or just doesn't want to. JP Chenet proves it is possible to produce an everyday French wine brand that can compete with the New World on its own terms.

JP Chenet is now the world's best-selling French wine brand. Some of its consumer appeal lies in its distinctive bottle shape, designed by Joseph Helfrich and named Joséphine, which requires its own custom-built bottling line.

Launched in 1984, JP Chenet is produced by Les Grand Chais de France and sells in 160 countries.

Wine Intelligence six-country data reveals that awareness of JP Chenet is highest in the Netherlands, where 69% of regular wine drinkers are familiar with the brand. Consumer affinity is highest in the UK, at 37%.



### #13 Ridge

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 75,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** US

**OWNER:** Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co

Ridge is based on the Monte Bello Ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains American Viticultural Area, at an elevation of 700m.

The company has expanded into neighbouring territory and also has a winery in the Dry Creek Valley AVA in Sonoma County.

Ridge has long been one of California's most respected wine ambassadors, a reputation that was sealed in the 1976 Judgement of Paris when its Monte Bello Cabernet Sauvignon achieved fifth place.

Cabernet is still one of the winery's main calling cards, but Ridge is also noted for its Zinfandel, Syrah, Grenache, Carignan and Petite Sirah



are also produced, along with a small amount of Chardonnay.

Ridge's modern history dates back to 1962, although wine production on the main site can be traced to 1885. In 1986 it was bought by a Japanese business which has maintained a hands-off approach to its investment.

### #14 Brancott Estate

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 1.2m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** New Zealand

**OWNER:** Pernod Ricard

Changing an established brand name is a risky business and when Montana changed its name to Brancott Estate there was a danger that some of the affection and respect that existed for the brand might evaporate, however irrational that might seem. But the winery continues to be judged on what's in the bottle and has earned acclaim from many critics as well as wine drinkers across the globe.



The brand has moved with the times with a recent label redesign and the launch of an innovative mobile phone app.

As one of Marlborough's first wine producers, Brancott Estate continues to play an ambassadorial role – both for the region and for New Zealand generally, thanks to huge export activity.

Sauvignon Blanc is Brancott's signature variety, but the range also includes Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and Cabernet Sauvignon.



### #15

### Marqués de Riscal

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 1m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Spain

**OWNER:** Vinos de los Herederos del Marqués de Riscal

The name Marqués de Riscal seems to be almost as linked to tourism and architectural excellence these days as it is to winemaking. Its City of Wine complex, designed by Frank Gehry, combines the Rioja winery with a hotel, spa and conference centre, and has become a major draw for visitors.

But wine is, of course, at the heart of it all. Today Marqués de Riscal exports 60% of its output to 100 countries and is one of Rioja's most recognised and influential players.

In 1858 Marqués de Riscal became the first Rioja producer to use Bordeaux techniques, and in 1972 it single-handedly pioneered modern production in Rueda, now regarded as one of Spain's most exciting regions. As well as working with the indigenous Verdejo, it introduced Sauvignon Blanc to the area – another French-inspired innovation.

## Most Admired Wine Brands

### #17 Oyster Bay

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:**  
2m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** New Zealand  
**OWNER:** Delegat's

Since being named best Sauvignon Blanc in the 1991 International Wine Challenge, Oyster Bay has gone on to win a string of awards – not just for its most famous varietal but also for its Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinot Noir and sparkling wines.

The family-owned business was one of the first to recognise the potential of New Zealand's Marlborough region and subsequently extended its viticulture to Hawke's Bay.

In Australia, one of Oyster Bay's most important export markets, Wine Intelligence data shows that 61% of regular wine consumers are aware of the brand, making it one of the most recognised in the market. It is also among the highest scorers in terms of consumer affinity (50%) and recommendation (40%).



### #18 Cheval Blanc

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 8,500 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France  
**OWNERS:** Bernard Arnault and LVMH

Cheval Blanc was one of only two premier grand cru classé wines from St-Emilion in the 1955 classification, the other being Château Ausone. The property displays the characteristics of Graves and Pomerol, as well as St-Emilion, and has produced some of the most favourably reviewed wines ever made. The 1947 is regarded by some as the greatest wine of all time.

Robert Parker is among its enthusiasts, though his relationship



### #16

### Château Ste Michelle

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 2.5m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** US  
**OWNER:** UST

Chateau Ste Michelle is one of the USA's most respected wine brands, a fact reflected not just by its position in this year's Most Admired chart but also detailed consumer analysis by Wine Intelligence in its home market.

Thirty-five per cent of regular wine drinkers in the States are aware of the brand – a reasonable performance. But no brand scores higher in terms of affinity, or likelihood to be recommended. Fifty-three per cent of consumers who know the brand expressed affinity with it, and 52% said they would recommend it.

Ste Michelle, which has a number of brands including Columbia Crest and Erath, the Oregon producer noted for its Pinot Noir, also jointly owns Stag's Leap in Napa Valley and has worked on Riesling projects with Ernst Loosen. Its growth has been driven by the acquisition of small wineries, creating what it refers to as a "string of pearls".



### #20 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 450 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France  
**OWNER:** The Gaudin de Villaine family

Devotees of Romanée-Conti have an almost religious fervour for this most prestigious of Burgundies, which is widely regarded as the finest wine the region has to offer. Made in tiny quantities from old vines growing on slopes near the village of Vosne-Romanée, DRC (as it is regularly known) has been described by Clive Coates MW as "the purest, most aristocratic and most intense example of Pinot Noir you could possibly imagine".

This limited production, and the fact that so few people get to drink the wine, has only added to the mystique and, inevitably, the price. But the company says it is keen to keep pricing proportionate and within the grasp of collectors, rather than just investors – something it tries to achieve by controlling distribution.

with the owners wasn't helped by a negative review of the 1981 wine and a subsequent incident with the manager's dog, which may or may not have drawn blood, depending on which version of events you believe.

LVMH is capitalising on the reputation of the wine by opening a string of luxury hotels under the Cheval Blanc name.

### #19 McGuigan

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** Not known

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Australia  
**OWNER:** Australian Vintage Limited (AVL)

AVL is Australia's second-biggest owner and manager of vineyards, producing numerous brands such as McGuigan, Nepenthe and Miranda, as well as own-label and contract wines.

Much of its scale has been achieved through strategic link-ups with major retailers and wholesale groups in export markets, to which it ships in excess of 2 million cases every year.

The McGuigan brand itself is best known for its flagship Black Label range, encompassing a wide range of varietals, blends and sparkling wines that showcase Australian fruit and winemaking style to powerful effect. The company is putting a lot of focus on its Semillon Blanc, which it is marketing as a credible Australian alternative to New Zealand Sauvignon.

In Australia, Wine Intelligence reports that 43% of regular wine drinkers are aware of McGuigan and, of these consumers, 36% say they have an affinity with the brand.



## Most Admired Wine Brands



### #21 Campo Viejo

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 1.5m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Spain

**OWNER:** Pernod Ricard

Rioja purists might sneer at the big brands, but the region has reason to thank Campo Viejo for spreading its gospel for more than 50 years. The brand presents an upbeat, modern image for Rioja, both in terms of its presentation and its formulation.

Consumers enjoy the brand's smoothness and easy-drinking style, which remains authentically Rioja even if it doesn't try to be quite as rustic as many of its smaller-volume contemporaries

Created in 1959, the brand is now part of Pernod Ricard and includes cava in its range, as well as red and white Rioja.

In the UK, one of the brand's major markets, Wine Intelligence reports that 26% of regular wine consumers are aware of the brand and, of these, 43% have an affinity with the wine.

### #23 Château Lafite

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 45,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France

**OWNER:** Domaines Barons de Rothschild

Lafite was one of the first elite wines to conquer China, where the mania for this most famous of Bordeaux premier crus means that even empty bottles can change hands for hundreds of dollars.

This isn't because they have sentimental value: there is a thriving market for fake Lafite, and it has been big enough to damage sales of the genuine article.

Lafite is still regarded as a high-class business gift, but the risk of presenting an associate with a counterfeit bottle is persuading some Chinese wine buyers



### #22

### Cloudy Bay

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 100,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** New Zealand

**OWNER:** LVMH

Cloudy Bay's place in history is assured. The brand put Marlborough on the map as a world-class producer of Sauvignon Blanc, and its pioneering work nearly three decades ago gave the wine enduring iconic status.

Some would argue that the brand has lost a little of its sheen as it produces in larger quantities and allows more consumers, in more countries, to see what the excitement is all about. Those who have followed in Cloudy Bay's footsteps have also got better at what they do, making the wine less of a novelty. But allocations are still eagerly snapped up.

Inevitably, Cloudy Bay is turning its attention to Asian markets, where its potential is limited only by its production. This year will also see the creation of a luxury guest house, The Shack, near the winery itself.

to look elsewhere.

Respect for the real thing remains undiminished, in China and elsewhere. This spring Lafite began building a winery in Shangdong province, an investment of \$15.8 million.

Lafite was named in the first ever classification of Bordeaux premiers crus in 1855. The estate's history dates back to the 17th century and it spent time in Dutch and English hands before joining the Rothschild empire in 1868.

The property is located north of Pauillac and produces wines dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon, including its second wine, Carruades de Lafite.

### #24 Fetzer

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SALES:** 3m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** US

**OWNER:** Concha y Toro

It's still tempting to regard Fetzer as a slightly hippyish and idiosyncratic wine

producer, making organic wines in Mendocino County well away from the hustle and bustle of the commercialised wine industry.

The image endures, but the reality is that the brand is now part of the vast Concha y Toro machine, having until fairly recently been owned by the Brown-Forman corporation.

The new owners have sensibly

resisted any temptation they might have had to overhaul production and marketing, but a new label design launched earlier this year shows that Fetzer is an asset that is expected to deliver growth.

The estate is still wedded to sustainable viticulture, something that has been ingrained in its culture since 1984. It was one of the first wineries in California to focus on Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer and Riesling, varieties that have been joined by Pinot Grigio, Shiraz, Moscato and white Zinfandel.



### #25 Marqués de Cáceres

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** Not known

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Spain

**OWNER:** Cristina Forner

Marqués de Cáceres was established in 1970 by the visionary Henri Forner, assisted by Emile Peynaud, former professor and chief wine researcher at the University of Bordeaux.

Preaching a gospel of elegant, fruity wines, with less reliance on oak than many Riojans favoured, Forner's views were controversial at the time and, as someone who had recently arrived from Bordeaux, he was seen as an outsider.

But his methods gained widespread acceptance when rivals saw the commercial success the winery was achieving.

Forner died last year, aged 86, but the brand remains under the control of his daughter, Cristina. The winery is based in Rioja Alta and possesses no vineyards of its own, preferring to source grapes from local growers.



## #26 Blue Nun

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 500,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Germany

**OWNER:** Langguth Wines

Blue Nun has huge resonance with wine drinkers, even those who aren't fans of off-dry German wines.

The brand seems to have secured its place in the national consciousness of the UK in particular, where it provided many a novice drinker with their first taste of wine.

Brand owner Langguth has worked hard throughout the decades to keep Blue Nun relevant to a modern audience, including extending the range to include offerings from Spain, Italy and France. There is a Blue Nun from the Medoc, an organic Rivaner and Sangiovese, and a Riesling eiswein in the range, which is sold in more than 100 countries.

More recently the brand has been enhanced with the addition of a lower-alcohol version, called Blue Nun Delicate.



## #27 KWV

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 500,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** South Africa

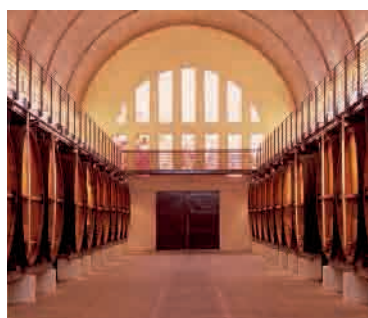
**OWNER:** HCI

KWV has had a chequered history. Originally formed as a co-operative, it was effectively in charge of the South African wine industry during the Apartheid years and, until relatively recently, only sold its wines in export markets.

Understandably, there was little affection for KWV from some sections of the Cape winemaking community during the years in which it was in control, but during that time it was flying the flag for South African wine – even if consumers in many areas associated it with the political regime which attracted trade sanctions.

Now KWV is no longer a co-operative or an enforcer but a true business, with a brand portfolio that also includes Laborie, Roodeberg and Golden Kaan.

Within Wine Intelligence's six-



country data, Japan has the largest consumer awareness of KWV, at 5%, and also the greatest consumer affinity, at 26%. Dutch consumers are the most likely to recommend the brand, with 36% of those who are aware of it saying they would suggest it to friends or family.



# #30

## Château Haut-Brion

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 13,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** France

**OWNER:** Domaine Clarence Dillon

Producers such as Haut-Brion can sometimes appear a little static: their position in the wine firmament is assured thanks to centuries of making world-famous wine that sells at eye-watering prices. But Domaine Clarence Dillon has recently bought Château Tertre Daugay in St-Emilion, which it renamed Château Quintus. It joined a group which already includes Château La Mission Haut-Brion as well as the main property. It is, in effect, Haut-Brion's fifth wine.

Haut-Brion was the only premier cru from outside Médoc in the 1855 classification. It has been drunk by Charles II, Samuel Pepys and Thomas Jefferson.

The property stands in 45ha of vineyards, with a 37% Merlot component and a 45% Cabernet Sauvignon quotient.

## #28 Robert Mondavi

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** Not known

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** US

**OWNER:** Constellation Brands

The Mondavi dynasty is among the most celebrated not just in California but the entire world of wine. Robert Mondavi is regarded as a true pioneer, earning the Napa Valley in particular a place at the industry's top table. He is widely credited with popularising Sauvignon Blanc in California – a variety he preferred to call Fumé Blanc – and, indeed, with giving wines varietal labels, rather than using generic descriptors.

Constellation bought the business



in 2004, not long after Mondavi expressed regret that his sons had taken the company away from its premium aspirations. Yet it is arguably the mixture of affordable and upmarket wines that made Mondavi such an attractive purchase, and a name that continues to resonate with trade and consumers.

Woodbridge is treated as a separate brand for the purposes of this survey.

## #29 Santa Rita

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** Not known

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Chile

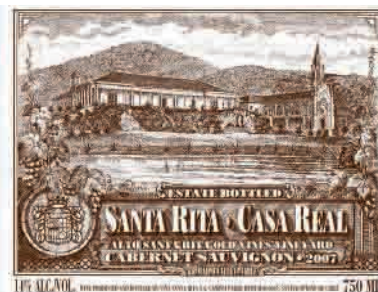
**OWNER:** The Claro Group

Santa Rita has a 120-year history and a reputation for making some of the most internationally acclaimed wines in Chile.

Wines including Casa Real, Medalla Real, Pehuén and Floresta are produced from fruit grown in more than 3,000ha of the company's own vineyards, which are found in Limarí, Casablanca, Leyda, Maipo, Rapel and Curicó.

It is reportedly the second-largest land-owning wine producer in Chile, and operates five wineries.

Santa Rita is sold in 75 countries and is among the most recognised wine brands in Japan, a market where awareness of wine brands is low. Eleven per cent of regular wine drinkers there are aware of the brand, according to Wine Intelligence, and of these people 23% express affinity with it and 22% would recommend it.



## Most Admired Wine Brands

### #31 Villa Maria

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS**  
500,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** New Zealand  
**OWNER** Sir George Fistonich

As the first New Zealand winery to turn its back on corks in favour of screwcaps in 2004, Villa Maria showed itself as a leader of trends as well as global sales for New Zealand.

It chalked up 50 years in business last year, during which it's seen more gongs than dinner time at a convention of butlers.

The producer's Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc has become a signpost product for the country, the grape variety and the company itself.

The company impressed in 2011 with the release of a lighter-pink 2010 Sauvignon-based Private Bin Rosé and the single-vineyard Southern Clays Sauvignon Blanc.

In Wine Intelligence's main survey markets, Villa Maria is strongest in Australia, where it has an affinity rating of 40%, and the UK, where it scores 35%.



### #32 Barefoot

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS**  
10m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** US  
**OWNER** E&J Gallo

Barefoot has its roots in the garage of Californian Davis Bynum in the 1960s. He stopped making his Barefoot Bynum Burgundy in 1974 to concentrate on what he saw as a more promising Russian River Valley project.

It was a dozen more years before Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey dug the brand out of mothballs – Harvey donating her footprint, which appears on the labels to this day.

The winery started out with two wines and now, under winemaker Jennifer Wall, produces some 17 blends and varietals and claims to be the most-awarded Californian wine brand under \$15.

Barefoot has been at the forefront of the Moscato trend in the US, selling around 1.1 million cases of the 4 million sold in the US market in 2011.

In its native US, Barefoot scores 54% consumer awareness and a 47% affinity rating in Wine Intelligence data.

### #34 Faustino

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS**  
1m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** Spain  
**OWNER** Grupo Faustino

Founded in 1861 by Eleuterio Martinez Arzok, the company took its current name from Faustino Martinez Perez de Albeniz, who began bottling its wines in 1930.

The family-controlled Rioja producer has just chalked up 150 years in the business by releasing its first blend of Faustino V white to feature Chardonnay.

This came hot on the heels of the first blend of Tempranillo and Mazuelo for the 2005 vintage Faustino V Reserva. The latter features a portrait of Gluck peering out from the label – that's Christoph the composer, not Malcolm the British wine writer.

Both wines show Faustino's commitment to moving forward as well as celebrating its rich heritage, a fact also reflected in its commission of Sir Norman Foster to build a futuristic new winery in the Ribera Del Duero, one of seven in the Faustino group.



### #35 Gallo

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS**  
80m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** US  
**SUPPLIER** E&J Gallo

The Gallo family is arguably the most famous in the wine industry, with 10 members across three generations still working in the business founded by Ernest and Julio in 1933.

In that time, the company has resisted being consumed by major corporations to become one in its own right, and is the biggest wine operation in the world, producing in its native US as well as Argentina, Australia, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa and Spain.

The truly global nature of the operation now sees it sell 60 brands in 90 countries, but California remains at the heart of the business, and in 2011 Gallo bought Chardonnay specialist Edna Valley to bring its winery numbers in the state to seven.

The Gallo Family Vineyards brand scores a Wine Intelligence affinity rating of 47% in the UK, where it has innovated with Summer Red, a Zinfandel/Pinot Noir blend.

### Château d'Yquem

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS** 8,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** France  
**OWNER** LVMH

The past year has seen Château d'Yquem outperform other leading chateaux on international fine wine markets, with fine wine exchange Liv-Ex recording record trading in the prestige Sauternes in November 2011.

The year marked the 200th anniversary of the legendary 1811 vintage, and saw a bottle of that wine change hands for £75,000 in a sale in London. The biggest tribute to Yquem and the 1811 vintage is arguably that the French collector who bought it intended to drink it with his family rather than squirrel it away for his pension.

The world's most acclaimed sweet wine has also showed itself capable of retaining tradition and luxury status while adapting to the demands of the modern market.

The wine is now available by the glass at hand-picked restaurants in Paris, Courchevel, Monaco, Washington and London, where a 10cl measure of 1996 sells for £29 at the top-end West End restaurant Bob Bob Ricard.



# #33

# #36-40

## Most Admired Wine Brands

### #36 Château Le Pin

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS 600 cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN France

OWNER The Thienpont family

This Bordeaux property almost defines boutique – just 2.2ha of mostly Merlot vines, whose fruit is turned into a wine with cult status and prices to match in a tiny winery standing by the lonesome pine tree that gives it its name.

Jacques Thienpont, of a Belgian family-owned wine shipper, led the 1980 purchase of a single hectare of vines and the neglected winery, and has since added another small plot of vines that, according to which version of the legend you believe, belonged to a local widow, blacksmith or postman.

Careful stewardship and low production have combined to create high prices with single bottles of 2010 currently trading at around £1,500 – a long way off the £7 ex-cellars price of 30 years ago. A new winery opened in 2011 has seven vats to allow it to handle select parcels individually, suggesting that wine quality could move up a level even further. Recent calculations by Liv-Ex estimated Le Pin's market value as a business at €100 million.



### #38 O Fournier

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS 100,000 cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Spain, Argentina, Chile

OWNER José Manuel Ortega

José Manuel Ortega left Goldman Sachs at the turn of the millennium to turn an interest in wine into a business, but it's his passion as much as his commercial brain that drives what O Fournier does.

The latest venture of the man whose family once owned the Spanish state monopoly on playing card production, involves selling 1-3ha plots in Mendoza to private individuals, with the opportunity to work on their own blend with winery staff who will manage vinification and vineyard management.

It's recreated the excitement that Ortega felt when planting his own first vines, and that it's able to embark on such a product shows the high esteem in which O Fournier is held by its fans, who are willing to part with \$150,00 per hectare for the privilege.

O Fournier has a winery in Ribera del Duero and vineyards in Chile and is far from the typical Malbec-bound mainstream of its Mendoza home. Its top-end Alfa Crux red puts an Argentinian spin on Tempranillo, with Malbec and Merlot contributing to the blend.

Bin 65 Chardonnay was Australia's biggest export wine in the 1990s but Lindeman's has remained credible despite its scale, at least in part through the consistency of its winemaking, led by Wayne Falkenberg, who has been with the company since 1976.

It's also anticipated modern trends, launching its Early Harvest lighter-alcohol wines as long ago as 2007.

Lindeman's has survived various changes of ownership and was given a new lease of life in 2010 with a packaging redesign that has seen sales storm forward in growing markets such as Sweden and the Netherlands, where Wine Intelligence data shows a 39% awareness for the brand and a 28% affinity rating.



### #37 Lindeman's

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS 8.4m cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Australia

OWNER Treasury Wine Estates

Lindeman's has come a long way since a Brit, Henry Lindeman, founded his winery in Cawarra in 1840. Not only does it now have extensive plantings in Australia but the brand has extended its reach into South Africa and Chile.

### #39 Château Mouton-Rothschild

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS 20,000 cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN France

OWNER Rothschild

Anish Kapoor recently joined the illustrious roll call of artists who have contributed label art for the most image-conscious premier cru Bordeaux chateau.

Auction prices for Mouton-Rothschild wines don't rival original works by the artists but they do demonstrate the importance of the chateau to the international market. A vertical flight of 62 magnums for the 1945-2005 vintages was the top-valued lot in a sale of the wine collection of



singer Chris de Burgh in February 2011, while a line-up of bottles from 1936-2008 topped \$500,000 at a Hong Kong auction in December 2011.

Mouton-Rothschild only won first growth status as late as 1973, but it's always been in the vanguard of Bordeaux, spearheading the Club of Five collective – with Haut-Brion, Latour, Lafite and Margaux – to commit to chateau bottling from the 1924 vintage, a practice now regarded as standard for any wine of quality.

### #40 Château Petrus

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS 3,000 cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN France

OWNER JP Moueix

A 2011 survey by fine wine exchange Liv-Ex valued Merlot-dominated Petrus at €663 million, making it the highest ranked right bank Bordeaux estate and the sixth most valuable anywhere in the world.

It's a Parker favourite – he's awarded it 100 points more times than any other wine – but its reputation resonates around the rich and famous worldwide. When Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone's daughter Petra married last year, Petrus was on the tables, and hubby James Stunt is reputed to have a collection of every vintage since 1945.

Indeed, the name and the wine seem to have more magic than ever for wine connoisseurs, with a record price for the estate recorded at Christie's New York in October 2011, of \$144,000 for a case of the 1961 vintage.





# Most Admired Wine Brands

## Woodbridge

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS: 7m cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: US

OWNER: Constellation Wines

As a US member of the Constellation portfolio, the American arm of the business got custody of the Woodbridge brand in last year's split from the Australian and European division. Woodbridge has since been singled out in financial reports as one of Constellation's shining stars, as it should be given its pedigree as the winery founded by Robert Mondavi for an assault on the mass market in 1979.

It's no surprise to see what started out as Robert Mondavi's brand for the mainstream wine market getting most recognition in its domestic market, with consumer awareness at 56% in the US, where it also scores 42% for wine drinker affinity, according to Wine Intelligence data. It also strikes a chord with Japanese consumers among whom it has a 23% affinity score.



## #41 Undurraga

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS: 1.5m cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Chile

OWNER: The Piccioto and Yuraszeck families

Don Francisco Undurraga was one of the pioneers of winemaking in Chile and founder of Viña Undurraga, which made its first plantings in 1885. Among the vines was Pinot Noir and 127 years later, in January of this year, the company's TH Leyda was named best Pinot Noir in the Wines of Chile Awards.



The first exports from the Santa Ana Estate in Talagante went to the US in 1903 and today the company, managed by Stefano Rossi, exports to more than 70 countries.

Undurraga has a 30% affinity rating with wine drinkers in the Netherlands, according to Wine Intelligence.

## #43 Paul Jaboulet Ainé

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS: 7,500 cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: France

OWNER: The Frey family

Founded in 1834, this esteemed Rhône producer is one of the major vineyard owners in the AOC Hermitage and seldom, if ever, sees ratings outside the

high 90s from leading US wine critics. The company was bought from the original Jaboulet family in 2006 by the Frey family – led by financier Jean-Jacques.

Frey was already an established name in the wine world as owner of Bordeaux's Château La Lagune and a former owner of Champagne Ayala, which it sold to Bollinger.

Caroline Frey is now its estate manager and winemaker, overseeing production of wines from the moderately-priced Parallele 45 to the iconic Hermitage La Chapelle, ensuring that, though under new ownership, Jaboulet remains a family affair.



## #44 Babich

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS: 250,00 cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: New Zealand

OWNER: The Babich family

Croatian émigré Josip Babich planted his first vines in New Zealand in 1912 at the age of 17. By the time he died in 1983, at the age of 87, the company had become an established name in a wine industry that was still finding its feet on the world stage. In Josip's time there was a lot of kudos in exports, and when Josip started selling to Germany in 1980 he regarded it as one of the highlights of his career.

Since his death, the company has stayed in family hands and expanded export markets to include the UK, Australia, Canada, Switzerland, Denmark and more than 20 other countries, accounting collectively for around 80% of its annual production. It has also added vineyards in Hawkes Bay and Marlborough and celebrated its 95th anniversary last year with new-look labels and branding.



## #45 Dr Loosen

ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS: 8,000 cases

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Germany

OWNER: The Loosen family

Dr Loosen's main vineyards were all designated as erste lage (equivalent to grand cru) in the 1868 Prussian classification of Mosel vineyards. Current winemaker Ernst Loosen took control of the company in 1988 and found that his forebears' relative disinterest in wine – which they placed second to politics – left him with a lot of 100-year-old or more Riesling while other growers had ripped up the variety in favour of lesser-quality, high-yield grapes in the 1960s and 1970s.

Loosen set about exploiting the potential for high quality by reducing crop sizes, stopping the use of chemical fertilisers and implementing gentler handling of the grapes in the winery.

Loosen is a charismatic ambassador

for the company and the German wine industry as a whole, and he has personally won almost as many awards for his winemaking as his wines have.



## #46 Wither Hills

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 200,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** New Zealand  
**OWNER:** Lion Nathan

Established as recently as 1994, by former Oyster Bay winemaker Brent Marris, Wither Hills has quickly established a glowing reputation as one of New Zealand's quality players in the mid-market and is a regular fixture of press wine columns in international markets.

The Marlborough-based producer was one of the innovative founding Riesling producers who introduced and campaigned for screwcaps in the early part of this century.

Press plaudits are as likely to be about this wine or its Chardonnay or Pinot Gris as they are for its Sauvignon, driving a personality outside the stereotype style of New Zealand's favourite grape.

Wither Hills' top Wine Intelligence affinity rating is in the UK, at 30%.



## #48 Nobile

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 1.5m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** New Zealand  
**OWNER:** Constellation Brands

Though founded in 1943 by Croatian immigrants Nikola and Zuva Nobile, it was 60 years before the wine that bore their name made it on the US market.

Just six years after doing so, in 2009, Nobile achieved a major launch goal when it knocked Kendall Jackson off the top spot for sales of Sauvignon Blanc in the US, the first New Zealand wine to reach the position. In getting there, it turned its back on the screwcap trend championed by NZ rivals to stick with traditional cork, and helped establish the trademark

New Zealand Sauvignon style that consumers recognise and love around the world.

Nobile has a 30% affinity rating among US wine drinkers, and 30% among those in the UK.

## #49 Black Tower

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 1m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Germany  
**OWNER:** Reh Kendermann

Black Tower has survived the ups and downs of German wine fashion to remain a major player on the international branded wine stage.

The world's number one German wine was given a packaging facelift in 2010 to bottles that reveal a glimpse of the wine inside, an evolution that started with the abandonment of the



crock bottle in favour of glass in 1996.

The new look retains the essence of the brand's tradition but places it firmly in the 21st century, while the release of a premium Special Release Chardonnay and Pinot Noir helped to make Black Tower an aspirational choice beyond Germany's flagship Riesling varietal.

## #50 Yellowtail

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 12m cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Australia  
**OWNER:** Casella Wines

The Casella family originally farmed just 16ha in Riverina, but now

possesses one of the hottest properties in the international branded wine market.

Yellowtail ships to more than 50 countries around the world, and the winery has grown 10-fold since launching a little over a decade ago. Within three years of launch it had become the number one imported wine in the US market.

Yellowtail's strength in the US is reflected in awareness among two out of three wine drinkers in that country, according into Wine Intelligence data, which also gives it an affinity rating of 42% in the UK and 30% domestically.

Yellowtail has been among the leaders of the Moscato trend in the States where sales of the varietal reached 500,000 cases in 2011.



# #47

## Oxford Landing

**ESTIMATED GLOBAL SHIPMENTS:** 330,000 cases

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** US  
**OWNER:** Yalumba

Established in 1958 by Wyndham Hill Smith, Oxford Landing has built an international reputation for good value and consistent wines, using grapes grown on 130 separate 5ha blocks on the bank of the Murray River near Waikerie in South Australia.

The UK is a major market for its wines and 2011 saw spectacular and ambitious plans to take over the Oxford Circus London Underground station, a central transport hub in the British capital, complete with imitation soil, real vines and the rebranding of the station as Oxford Landing.

Talks with transport authorities about the three-month campaign eventually broke down before it bore fruit but the publicity was enough to raise the profile of one of Australia's leading wine brands another notch or two.

# regionals

## Most Admired Wine Brands

### Top North American Wine Brands

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1 Kendall-Jackson      | 5 Robert Mondavi |
| 2 Ridge Vineyards      | 6 Barefoot       |
| 3 Château Ste Michelle | 7 Gallo          |
| 4 Fetzer               | 8 Woodbridge     |



# North America

Last year it was possible to draw up a top 10 of North American brands. This time around, only eight secured sufficient votes to earn a place in the Most Admired chart. Perhaps this is an early warning sign that North American brands are losing some of their lustre – or maybe it simply reflects that competition from other parts of the world is as strong as it's ever been.

Last year's highest scoring North American brand was Château Ste Michelle, which slips to third place this time, exchanging positions with Kendall-Jackson. Ridge, in second place, was ninth in the 2011 poll and Fetzer, now owned by Concha y Toro, moves from second to fourth.

Absentees from the chart include Inniskillin, Blossom Hill and Sutter Home, all of which featured in last year's votes.



Above: Fetzer  
Left: Château Ste Michelle  
Below left to right: Kendall-Jackson, Château Ste Michelle, Fetzer



# Most Admired Wine Brands



Photo: Shutterstock

## Top South American Wine Brands

- 1 Concha y Toro
- 2 Santa Rita
- 3 O Fournier
- 4 Undurruga



Below left: Santa Rita  
Above: Santa Rita, Concha y Toro, O Fournier



# South America

**I**n our first Most Admired Wine Brands survey, South America had three representatives. Now, thanks to Undurruga's appearance in this year's poll, it has four.

This small return for such a large, and well reviewed, part of the world is perhaps not surprising. South America's brand hierarchy is far smaller than those that exist in North America, Europe or Australia and New Zealand, and it

may well be that some judges who enjoy Chilean or Argentinean wines generically ended up voting for brands from other parts of the world, simply because there were greater options in these regions.

For now, South America is dominated by a relatively restricted number of big brands. As the region develops, perhaps we can expect more medium and large brands to feature, along with some more premium, boutique wineries.

# Most Admired Wine Brands

## Top Bordeaux Wine Brands

- 1 Margaux
- 2 Cheval Blanc
- 3 Lafite
- 4 Haut-Brion
- 5 d'Yquem
- 6 Le Pin
- 7 Mouton Rothschild
- 8 Petrus



Above right: Margaux  
 Above: Margaux, Lafite and Cheval Blanc  
 Right: Château Haute Brion



# Bordeaux

**N**obody watching the auction houses of Hong Kong would suggest that interest in Bordeaux is on the wane. Yet the region may be losing some of its sheen outside of the Asian investment community. Last year's Most Admired survey included 10 Bordeaux names; this year the figure drops to eight, with both Latour (second last year) and Ausone (10th) failing to make the cut. Margaux has moved up from third in

2011 to take the number one spot this time, closely followed by Cheval Blanc, which rises from sixth last time.

Although our judges were selected for their broad-mindedness and knowledge of the 21st-century wine market, it's remarkable that the Bordeaux houses that they most admire are, in the main, centuries old. Indeed three (Lafite, Margaux and Haut-Brion) are among the four original premier cru wines from the 1855 classification.

# European



**T**he top two places remain unchanged this year, but Lafite (third last time) has dropped out of the top 10 to make way for a new entry in the form of Michel Chapoutier. Bordeaux must this year look up the league table to a Rhône négociant.

Again France accounts for six of the 10 spots, with Guigal and JP Chenet claiming

places at the expense of the mighty Latour and Haut-Brion. Louis Latour also surrenders its top 10 status as Cheval Blanc enters the Most Admired big league.

Spain retains three places in the top 10, with the same three brands in the same order, and once again Antinori flies the flag for Italy. There is still no room for representatives from Germany, Austria or Portugal

Photo: Shutterstock

## Top European Wine Brands

- 1 Torres
- 2 Antinori
- 3 Michel Chapoutier
- 4 Guigal
- 5 Vega Sicilia
- 6 Margaux
- 7 Duboeuf
- 8 JP Chenet
- 9 Marques de Riscal
- 10 Cheval Blanc



Left: Antinori vineyards  
Above: Vega Sicilia, Antinori, JP Chenet



## Most Admired Wine Brands



# Australia & New Zealand

Last year's top two wines swap positions in this year's Most Admired poll, but perhaps the bigger story is that New Zealand has achieved parity with its neighbour and rival. Last year the top 10 was divided by six to four in

Australia's favour. This time around, both countries claim five slots.

This year's chart does not feature Wolf Blass, Yellowtail or Peter Lehmann, as was the case in 2011, though Australian pride is salvaged with the arrival of Wither Hills.

For New Zealand, Brancott Estate

has taken Cloudy Bay's position as the country's most admired wine brand, and Babich enters the regional top 10 for the first time.

Obviously, Pernod Ricard's decision to change the name of Montana to Brancott Estate had not affected the brand adversely.

### Top Australian and New Zealand Wine Brands

- 1 Penfolds
- 2 Jacob's Creek
- 3 Brancott Estate
- 4 Oyster Bay
- 5 McGuigan
- 6 Cloudy Bay
- 7 Villa Maria
- 8 Lindeman's
- 9 Babich
- 10 Wither Hills



Above: Cloudy Bay's Barracks Block vineyard  
 Far left: Jacobs Creek vines  
 Left: Brancott Estate  
 Bottles left to right: Penfolds, Jacob's Creek, Brancott Estate