



WINE

by Michael Cooper

Pinot plus

The country's 25 best pinot gris slip down easily and are a good match for most dishes.



Some wine lovers avoid pinot gris, criticising it as thin, lacking in flavour or too sweet. However, New Zealand's best pinot gris are full-bodied and fleshy, with rich, peachy, gently spicy flavours, dryish and seductively smooth. They slip down easily and many of us drink a lot of them.

Popular in the French region of Alsace, Italy and Germany, pinot gris is now our third most widely planted white-wine variety, trailing only sauvignon blanc and chardonnay. Since 2000, the area of bearing vines has exploded from 130ha to 2480ha, spread from Northland to Central Otago.

A versatile wine, pinot gris matches many dishes – New Zealand Winegrowers recommends roast pork, creamy pastas, poultry or seafood.

Astrolabe Province Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Freshly scented, mouthfilling (13% alc/vol) and drier than most local pinot gris,



this fragrant regional blend has vibrant, delicate flavours of pears and lychees, a gentle spiciness and a lengthy finish. \$23

Bellbird Spring Waipara Valley Dry Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Showing strong personality, this wine is already drinking well. Fermented in old oak barrels, it is mouthfilling (13.5% alc/vol) and fleshy, with concentrated, peachy, slightly spicy and buttery flavours, a slightly oily texture and a rich, dry finish. \$32

Blackenbrook Nelson Pinot Gris 2017 ★★★★★

Estate-grown and hand-picked, this partly oak-aged wine is aromatic and softly mouthfilling (13.5% alc/vol), with richly varietal lychee, pear and spice flavours, showing excellent vibrancy, delicacy and depth, and an off-dry finish. \$25



Brightwater Vineyards Nelson Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

This is a fleshy, Alsace-style pinot gris, hand-picked at

Hope. Full-bodied (13% alc/vol), it is harmonious, with peach, pear and lychee flavours, spicy notes, moderate acidity, a gentle splash of sweetness and a well-rounded, lingering finish. Fine value. \$20

Brookfields Robertson Hawke's Bay Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Made in the traditional style of Alsace, this full-bodied wine (13% alc/vol) has strong, ripe peach, lychee and spice flavours, gentle sweetness and a rich, rounded finish. \$20

Carrick Bannockburn Central Otago Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Certified organic, this is a classy wine, estate-grown and mostly fermented and aged for six months in old French oak barrels. It is sturdy (14% alc/vol), with rich, peachy, slightly spicy flavours, showing good complexity and a dry, well-rounded, persistent finish. \$27

Church Road McDonald Series Hawke's Bay Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Full of personality, this fleshy, sturdy wine (14.5% alc/vol) was fermented in old French oak vats. It is deliciously

concentrated, oily textured and well-rounded, with deep, ripe stone-fruit flavours, a vague hint of honey, gentle sweetness and excellent richness, complexity and harmony. \$27

Framingham Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

This weighty, generous wine was hand-picked and fermented in tanks and old oak barrels. It is full-bodied (14% alc/vol) and vibrantly fruity, with ripe stone-fruit flavours, excellent depth and harmony, a slightly oily texture and an off-dry, smooth finish. \$25

Gibbston Valley GV Collection Central Otago Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

A quietly classy, youthful wine that was hand-picked at Bendigo and Lowburn and made in a robust (14.5% alc/vol), basically dry style. It has pure pear, lychee and peach flavours, showing excellent delicacy and depth, and a finely poised, long finish. \$28

Greystone Waipara Valley Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

This delicious, partly barrel-fermented wine is richly

scented and full-bodied (13.5% alc/vol), with a sliver of sweetness, rich, ripe stone-fruit and spice flavours, showing good complexity, a slightly oily texture and lovely harmony and depth. \$25

Hans Herzog Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Prepare for something different! This wine is apricot-coloured, from long skin contact with the juice. Mouthfilling (14% alc/vol), it is dry, with fresh, concentrated peach, apricot and spice flavours, hints of watermelon and strawberry, a gentle touch of tannin, an oily richness and loads of personality. Certified organic. \$39

Hunter's Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

This label is a consistently good buy. Mostly handled in tanks, but partly barrel-fermented, it is aromatic and sturdy (14.5% alc/vol), with strong, peachy, spicy, vaguely honeyed flavours, a dry finish and plenty of personality. \$21



Mahi Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

A fleshy, single-vineyard wine that was hand-picked in the Awatere Valley and partly barrel-fermented. Mouthfilling (14% alc/vol), it is vibrantly fruity, with generous, ripe peach, pear and spice flavours, dry and smooth. \$22

Misha's Vineyard Dress Circle Central Otago Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Estate-grown, hand-picked at Bendigo and handled in tanks and barrels, this is an

off-dry style, ripely scented, fleshy and strongly varietal, with mouthfilling body (14% alc/vol) and fresh, youthful peach, pear, lychee and spice flavours, showing excellent delicacy, depth, complexity and harmony. \$28

Morepork Vineyard Northland Pinot Gris 2017 ★★★★★

Estate-grown and hand-picked at a small, single-variety vineyard in Kerikeri, this is delicious from the start. Attractively scented, it is full-bodied (13.5% alc/vol) and dryish, with vibrant pear and lychee flavours, showing very good varietal character and depth. \$24

Mount Brown Grand Reserve Waipara Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Already delicious, this is a mouthfilling wine (14% alc/vol), with concentrated stone-fruit and spice flavours, a sliver of sweetness, vague hints of honey and excellent depth and harmony. \$23

Nautilus Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

This highly attractive wine is a full-bodied (13.5% alc/vol), dry style, grown principally in the Awatere Valley. Hand-picked and partly barrel-fermented, it is scented, mouthfilling (13.5% alc/vol), vibrant and smooth, with strongly varietal, pear, peach, lychee and spice flavours, showing a distinct touch of complexity, and a rich, harmonious finish. \$28



Ostler Lakeside Vines Waitaki Valley Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

An impressive wine that was grown at



Lake Waitaki and partly fermented in old oak barriques. It is fractionally sweet, weighty (14.5% alc/vol) and vibrantly fruity, with strong pear and lychee flavours, showing excellent varietal definition, hints of peaches, ginger and spices and a well-rounded finish. \$29

Prophet's Rock Central Otago Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Estate-grown and hand-picked at Bendigo, in the Cromwell Basin, this classy, attractively scented wine is full of personality. Made with some use of old oak, it is mouthfilling (13% alc/vol), fresh and youthful, in an off-dry style with concentrated, ripe, peachy flavours, hints of apples and lychees, a slightly creamy texture and a real sense of youthful drive. \$40

Ruru Reserve Central Otago Pinot Gris 2017 ★★★★★

This youthful wine was hand-picked at Alexandra and partly oak-aged. Invitingly scented, it is medium to full-bodied (12.9% alc/vol), with fresh, strong peach, lychee and nectarine flavours, a gentle splash of sweetness and lively acidity. \$24

Spy Valley Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Bargain-priced, this is an instantly appealing wine, mostly hand-harvested and partly barrel-fermented. Freshly perfumed, it is full-bodied (13.5% alc/vol) and vibrantly fruity, with ripe stone-fruit flavours to the fore, showing excellent delicacy and richness, a faintly oily texture and a slightly sweet, soft, lasting finish. \$24



Terrace Edge Waipara Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Already delicious, this sturdy,

fleshy wine (13.5% alc/vol) was hand-picked and fermented in barrels and tanks. Full-bodied and soft, it has stone-fruit and spice flavours, a splash of sweetness and a slightly oily richness. \$25

Vavasour Awatere Valley Marlborough Pinot Gris 2017 ★★★★★

This estate-grown wine is bargain-priced. Attractively scented, it is softly mouthfilling (13% alc/vol), with strong, vibrant, ripe pear, peach and apple flavours, showing a touch of barrel-ferment complexity, and a dryish, harmonious finish. \$23



Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

This great-value wine was grown in the Wairau and Awatere valleys and partly oak-aged. It's an off-dry style with mouthfilling body (13.5% alc/vol) and rich stone-fruit and spice flavours, finely textured and well-rounded. A harmonious wine, it's a drink-now or cellaring proposition. \$18



Wairau River Marlborough Pinot Gris 2016 ★★★★★

Estate-grown, this partly barrel-fermented wine is mouthfilling (13.5% alc/vol) and creamy-textured, with a sliver of sweetness and vibrant citrusy, slightly peachy and spicy flavours. It is showing good vigour and depth. \$20

