

## SPARKLING WINES

It was only last year that sparkling wine saw a sudden jump in mentions on respondents' list, after a decade or more of gradual growth. It now accounts for 6.4 percent of the most popular wines in US restaurants, with Champagne taking four of the top five spots. Changes are afoot in the category, though, as Billecart-Salmon dislodged Veuve Clicquot from its 19-year lock on the top spot, and growers continued to surge, with Chartogne-Taillet coming in at number five. Sommeliers are offering a wider range of choices and it's resonating with their customers. "People's experience with Champagne so often is Veuve Clicquot or Moët Chandon, which tend to be more expensive and not like a wine," says Jack Mason of *Marta* in NYC. "When they have something

that's less expensive with more interesting flavors, they get it."

Gains among other sparklers show a broadening of the category beyond Champagne and Prosecco. Oregon makes its first appearance in a decade, and Cava's two top-ten placements reflect Spain's strong showing in this year's poll results.

In follow-up interviews, many sommeliers talked up *petillant naturel* wines, or "pét-nats." Bryan Flewelling of *Eventide Oyster Co.* in Portland, Maine, is just one fan: "Pét-nats go well with our cuisine because they tend to be simple, crisp and fresh," he notes. "They don't get to the table and demand all the attention. They are one player in the drama of the meal."



"I'm really happy selling more and more Champagne. We've had high sales for years, and it's only gotten better."

—Henry Beylin, *Gjelina*, Venice, CA

### MOST POPULAR SPARKLING WINES

Rank	Brand	Bottling	Avg. Price
1	Billecart-Salmon	Champagne Brut Réserve Champagne Brut Rosé Champagne Extra Brut	\$111 \$164 \$130
2	Veuve Clicquot	Champagne Brut Yellow Label Champagne Brut Rosé	\$131 \$125
3	Argyle	Willamette Valley Brut Willamette Valley Rosé	\$62 \$70
4	Krug	Champagne Grand Cuvée	\$192
5	Chartogne-Taillet	Champagne Cuvée Ste-Anne	\$99
6	Raventós i Blanc	Conca del Riu Anoia Brut L'Hereu Conca del Riu Anoia De Nit	\$60 \$65
7	Schramsberg Vineyards	Napa Valley Blanc de Blancs	\$75
8	Avinyo	Cava Cava Rosat	\$35 \$60
9	Bérèche et Fils	Champagne Brut Réserve	\$124
	Bruno Paillard	Champagne Première Cuvée	\$122
10	Cima di Conegliano	Prosecco Conegliano Extra Dry	\$68
12	Domaine Ste. Michelle	Columbia Valley Brut	\$28
13	Naveran	Cava Brut Nature Cava Reserve Blanc de Blanc	\$43 \$43
14	Roederer Estate	Anderson Valley Brut	\$49
	Laurent Perrier	Champagne Brut	\$95
15	Pol Roger	Champagne Brut	\$94
	J. Lassalle	Champagne 1er Cru	\$100
17	Drusian	Prosecco	\$56
19	La Marca	Prosecco	\$23

## PINOT GRIS & GRIGIO

Pinot grigio's popularity continued to slide this year, accounting for less than two percent of the most popular restaurant wines. In Denver, Ryan Fletter at *Barolo Grill* finds that "it's almost as if pinot grigio is like merlot. People ask, 'Do you have anything like that, but not that?'"

Even when customers do ask for pinot grigio, many sommeliers are less inclined to offer it. At *Amali* in NYC, Francine Mace offers Terradoro Fiano di Avellino instead. "It's not pinot grigio at all, but it has a lot going on, and guests just see 'Italian white.'"

The push-back is clear in the Most Popular list: After 18 years leading the category, Santa Margherita is now at number five, while Jermann's full-bodied Friulian pinot grigio rose to the top.

### MOST POPULAR PINOT GRIS & GRIGIO

Rank	Brand	Bottling	Avg. Price
1	Jermann	Friuli	\$51
2	Cielo	Toscana	\$28
3	Alois Lageder	Alto Adige	\$42
4	Scarpetta	Friuli	\$36
5	Santa Margherita	Alto Adige	\$60



## ITALIAN WINES

Italy regained its lead over France this year, commanding nearly 20 percent of wines on the top-ten lists, its strongest showing in the history of the poll.

Tuscany leads the pack, with more than double the mentions of Piedmont, the next most mentioned appellation. Much of that popularity has to do with Super Tuscans, says Rachael Lowe at *Spiaggia* in Chicago. "With a New World style, some new oak and a comfortable price point, it's a wine we sell." Ryan Fletter at *Barolo Grill* in Denver finds that they've taken the place of Napa cabernet for many diners. "Now Super Tuscans are a comfort zone."

When it comes to Piedmont, "People have Barolo tastes but they don't want the Barolo price tag," says Sally Kim of *Delfina Restaurant Group*. But they'll take their nebbiolo from many places. "I'm always shocked by how much people like nebbiolo," says Allegra Angelo at *AQ*. "If they don't want to spend \$100 on a Barolo, there's Alto Piemonte—Vallana, or Cantalupo from Ghemme. They're super dry, but there's some delicacy to them. You take a little bit of

that tannin out and people love it."

At *La Ciccia* and *La Nebbia* in San Francisco, Floribeth Kennedy advises, "If you want to drink Burgundy or Piemonte but you don't have the wallet, then Valtellina is the place." Others must agree: Ar.Pe.Pe. came in at #16 on the Most Popular list this year.

Sommeliers are enthusiastic about several other regions appearing in this year's poll.

"I've been shocked at how well Lambrusco does by glass and bottle," says Karin Lawler of *The Truffle Table* in Denver, echoing a sentiment we heard last year as well. "The people drinking it don't remember bad Lambrusco; they just think, 'I love Italian wines; I love sparkling.'"

And we heard a lot of interest in the south. "Etna is still doing really, really well," reports Jeff Kellogg, who has an all-Italian list at *Maialino* in NYC. "People are now familiar with the reds. The whites, they require some explaining, but they are really good, undervalued and a popular category for us."

"Brunello and Tuscany continue to dominate. A lot of Italian reds offer structure but not richness, and that's where Super Tuscans come in. If people usually drink American reds, that's where you can bridge the gap with something Italian."

—Ryan Fletter,  
*Barolo Grill*, Denver

### MOST POPULAR ITALIAN WINES

Rank	Brand	Bottling	Avg. Price
1	Marchesi Antinori	Bolgheri Guado Al Tasso Il Bruciato	\$63
		Toscana Tignanello	\$268
		Umbria Cervaro della Sala	\$125
2	Produttori del Barbaresco	Barbaresco	\$80
		Barbaresco Riserva Ovello	\$121
3	Angelo Gaja	Bolgheri Ca' Marcanda Promis	\$123
		Bolgheri Ca' Marcanda	\$150
4	Frescobaldi	Chianti Rufina Riserva Nipozzano	\$57
		Toscana Luce Lucente	\$68
5	Scarpetta	Friuli Pinot Grigio	\$36
		Barbera del Monferatto	\$50
6	Tenuta dell'Ornellaia	Toscana Le Serre Nuove	\$175
		Toscana Le Volte	\$54
7	Isole e Olena	Chianti Classico	\$52
8	La Mozza	Maremma Aragone	\$87
		Morellino di Scansano I Perazzi	\$52
9	Avignonesi	Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	\$62
		Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Grandi Annate	\$240
COS	Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico	Sicilia Pitthos Rosso	\$68
			\$64
11	Monsanto	Chianti Classico	\$52
		Chianti Classico Riserva Il Poggio	\$36
San Fereolo	Dogliani Valdiba	Langhe Austri	\$45
			\$65
Fontodi	Chianti Classico	\$85	
13	Bastianich	Friuli Vespa Rosso	\$72
		Colli Orientali del Friuli Vespa Bianco	\$82
Masciarelli	Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Marina Cvetic	\$64	
16	Ar.Pe.Pe.	Valtellina	\$68
		Valtellina Grumello Buon Consiglio	\$212
17	Caparzo	Brunello di Montalcino	\$89
18	Gianni Brunelli	Brunello di Montalcino	\$138
		Rosso di Montalcino	\$64
19	Punta Crena	Colline Savonesi Vigneto Reine Mataòssu Riviera Ligure di Ponente Rossese	\$80
20	Jermann	Friuli Pinot Grigio	\$51
21	Cleto Chiarli	Emilia-Romagna Vecchia Modena Lambrusco di Sorbara	\$43
		Grassaparossa di Castelvetro Lambrusco	\$44
22	Venica & Venica	Collio Jesera Pinot Grigio	\$72
		Friuli Sauvignon Blanc	\$54
23	Broglia	Gavi	\$64
Banfi	Toscana Fontanelle Chardonnay	Chianti Classico Riserva	\$55
			\$60
24	Casanova di Neri	Rosso di Montalcino	\$48
		Brunello di Montalcino	\$108
Masi	Amarone della Valpolicella Costasera	Valpolicella Ripasso Campofiorin	\$125
			\$52
Arianna Occhipinti	Sicilia Frappato	Sicilia SP68	\$78
			\$62
27	Marchesi Incisa della Rocchetta	Monferrato Rosso Marchese Leopoldo Pinot Nero	\$56
		Piemonte Futurosa Rosato	\$36
Cima di Conegliano	Prosecco Conegliano Extra Dry	\$68	
29	Cielo	Toscana Pinot Grigio	\$28
Lombardo	Gavi di Gavi San Martino	\$60	
Badia a Coltibuono	Chianti Cetamura	Chianti Classico	\$32
			\$49
Calabretta	Etna Rosso	\$46	
Campriano	Chianti Classico	\$64	
32	Fattoria del Cerro	Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	\$45
Inama	Veneto Carmenere	\$45	
Marion	Valpolicella	\$80	
Villa La Selva	Morellino di Scansano	\$42	