

WHERE TO BUY WINE IN THE UK

DON'T BLAME the **WINE**

www.IBlameTheWine.com

What is inside?

Where to buy wine in the UK is a helpful guide for you to navigate through different wine retailers and merchants. You will be able to take an informed decision on where to buy wine without exhausting online search and comparing dozens of them to get the best deal. This guide is updated monthly, so as soon as you are a member of IBlameTheWine.com, you can get updates free of charge and stay in the know.

IBlameTheWine.com does the job of collecting the data on wine shopping, researching who offers what, and presents this all to you and thousands of our members together with a few conclusions along the way. This will save you valuable time, effort and simply give you inputs on where you can buy wine online with a complete peace of mind.

In the first chapter we explore different ways how we shop for wine to find out benefits and drawbacks of each. Online is preferred by many, but what about service, excitement and education from our interaction with sales staff?

Chapter 2 goes more into detail. We had a very long list of retailers, but we narrowed it down to just 15, so you can check whether one is better than another and what are their advantages, drawbacks and whether they offer anything on top (wine clubs, promotions, freebies). This is useful to know if you want to try several retailers on your journey to tasting and drinking great wines.

Chapter 3 goes further to give you more information on wine and health issues, which are a major concern of our wine community at IBlameTheWine.com. This chapter serves as a reference point to all kinds of **-free** wines: be it sugar free, gluten free, alcohol free or getting some extra value for money with actual free wine or wine off vouchers.

We go on to explain organic, biodynamic terms and sulfites-free wines as well. It is a top read if you want to know more and navigate better through healthier wines. Yet if it is still not enough, go to our [Wines and Reviews](#) tab at IBlameTheWine.com and read more on healthy eating guidelines with the focus on wine and health and much more.

You would be able to see that wine clubs offer a lot of additional benefits to members. Chapter 4 explores what are those advantages that you will gain by joining and give you a short information on which of the wine clubs are increasingly popular amongst our readers. Thousand people could not be entirely wrong, could they?

Chapter 5 goes into more detail about wine delivery service - this should be important for you unless you used to pick up your cases yourself of course! We have had some hellish experiences in the past (one of which is there as well, as sharing is caring!), so we want you to avoid retailers who provide unacceptable service to their customers.

Finally, for your reference you can find a list of All Wine Clubs in the UK, so if you have exhausted your options above you can find some inspiration or simply web links to some more clubs.

Wine shopping is fun. You can get more value for your pound by following our recommendations.

You can also search for wine prices online if you want to compare different retailers and save even more. Our members also benefit from a search tool - you can browse and search for All Organic Wines in the UK. Simply go to our [Guides and Tools](#) section and click on *All Organic Wines* banner - you will then be able to access the database and run your search - be it by country, retailer or name and find out where to buy a particular organic wine.

Hope it helps and come back for more information on happy and healthy wine lifestyle at IBlameTheWine.com

Chapter 1

6 Ways to shop for wine in the UK

Where would we be without wine? Toasting a celebration, cheering up and commiserating, giving thanks, dinner parties and get-togethers; they all involve wine, and we've all no doubt purchased it from a variety of retailers, depending on the circumstances.

On our way to an impromptu party, we'll pop into the closest off-licence wine shop for a bottle of fizz, doing the weekly shop we might be tempted to try a special offer in the supermarket, we'll spend time choosing something really special when going to dinner made by good friends and can search out an incredible bottle we had in a restaurant or on holiday when we get online. Each way of wine shopping has its merits, and perhaps even some drawbacks, so we explore our favourite ways to shop for wine in the UK.

What are the issues, problems, but also benefits of different ways to do your regular wine shopping?

Shopping for wine online

Sitting on your sofa, wearing pyjamas if you wish, you'll have the world's unlimited wine selection at your fingertips. Should you be looking for a special offer on a dozen bottles for a party, or seeking out a special 2009 Haiku you remember sharing with friends on a summer's evening in Tuscany, it's all to be found just a click away. The big, well-known wine clubs such as [Laithwaite's](#) and [Virgin Wines](#) certainly have their place, but it's the smaller independents that deserve all the credit we can throw at them.

Some sites are good but conservative, such as Berry Bros. & Rudd which offers an excellent selection from the almost affordable to the truly aspirational, and Lea & Sandeman, whose online presence also supports their 4 London shops. They list wines that are currently in stock with clear product information and separate their choices into helpful sections including organic, biodynamic, lower alcohol wines and names of the producers.

Honest Grapes is a relative newcomer, but their website sets them apart with its fun features. Asking it what to team with slow-roasted duck, it gave 50 choices starting at £10 for a Cabernet-Sauvignon from Chile's oldest wine producer, Cousiño-Macul; although for a very special occasion I'd be more than tempted by their suggestion of the Henri Giraud Argonne Champagne at £170. They hold noteworthy events such as a 'Truffle and Wine pairing dinner' and an upcoming Christmas Market. We've asked Sophie, the member services manager at Honest Grapes what sets them apart and she said, "We try and maintain personal contact with our clients, which is often difficult with an online business. By hosting events we can put faces to names, and it's been really interesting to get to know our clients over the last year". It seems good old-fashioned customer service and 'remembering a face' definitely has a place in a wine shop, and is valued more than price, even for online sellers; so it's somewhat surprising that only 10% of all wine purchases are made online, especially with such premium wine merchants having a strong presence.

The downside of online wine shopping:

Delivery charges can be the sting in the tail, especially when you only want one or two bottles of a well-priced wine, so unless it's something special that you can't find locally, think about what you could get by adding that £8 postage fee onto your in-store wine budget. If you're willing to spend around £80-100 most online wine shops will offer free delivery, but this makes for a more considered spend than just popping

a bottle into your online basket.

Also, it can also be hard to stay focused when shopping for wine online unless you have something specific in mind. You'll add to basket, remove, choose another bottle, add another 11 to get a special discount, find out the delivery costs are too high or you're spending more than you'd like then start all over again on another website.

Reading reviews mean you're taking opinions on board from people you know nothing of. 12 reviewers love the wine you've singled out, but the two that hated it stick in your mind, and you decide to forget it in favour of another. Somehow, four hours has passed and you still haven't made a purchase. Is shopping for wine online still a good idea? Well, yes, it certainly is. If you stick to a website with an ethos you value and a stock line you can trust, it's a good start. Remember to consider your time, though. It's pointless spending three hours trawling websites to save a pound or two – if you find the wine at a price that suits, head to checkout and get on with your day.

Independent wine stores and wine merchants

The best place for anyone with even a passing interest in wine. There's nothing like supporting a truly good independent business where the staff remember your likes and dislikes and think to put a bottle of something special aside for you because they've got your taste down to a tee. Even as a casual browser, you'll receive the best attention from staff who know their stuff. Often, the guys and girls behind the counter have trained as sommeliers or worked as wine waiters and have been educated in the ways of wine. Tell them what you like and they'll recommend something to suit – it can even be hard to get them to stop enthusing about something particularly good, and this is a wonderful thing. To have someone so passionate about a subject, willing to give

you expert advice for the price of a decent bottle of red? That's pretty great.

London, as you would expect, has some truly exceptional independent wine merchants and the wine aficionado is spoiled for choice.

Hedonism in Mayfair has to be experienced to be believed, from the interior design to the children's play area with iPads, the room of Sine Non Qua or the blankets to keep you warm when browsing the cellars, this luxurious wine project funded by Russian mobile phone magnate Yevgeny Chichvarkin caters, as you might expect, to the super-rich.

However, don't think there won't be anything in your price-range – they're proud to mention they've undercut [Waitrose](#) on Louis Roederer.

At London's [Lea and Sandeman](#), Edward Hayward-Broomfield cites personal engagement and dialogue between their staff and customers as the main reasons buyers return to them. He explains, "This applies to both choosing individual wines to suit each customer's tastes, but also to planning cellars and integrating buying wine for the cellar with the selection of wines for more immediate consumption." Their shops are aided by clear merchandising and an approachable and amiable team. You'll find the independents usually have tasting sessions at weekends and some have wine dispensing machines where you can try several wines not usually in your per-bottle budget. It would be foolish to write them off as automatically being the most expensive place to buy wine, and they are definitely the least risky way to make a purchase of something new.

The downside of indie wine shops and wine merchants:

You'll be so enticed by your surroundings and so interested in the sales speak you'll probably go over your self-imposed budget. Have you ever spent exactly as planned on wine when visiting an indie?

Supermarket wines

Fine for anyone who knows what they're after. Some supermarkets are better than others – and there are some surprises to be found.

Morrisons beat [Waitrose](#) and [Marks & Spencer](#) to be named Best Supermarket for Wine in 2015 winning 80 awards while Tesco has come in with some criticism of late for offering a pedestrian selection of wines. The discount supermarkets constantly receive rave reviews from the public for their wines, and Ben Hulme, Lidl's wine buyer explained their popularity. "Customers aren't presented with an overwhelming wall of wine, they are given a concentrated range which is carefully selected by a handful of experts to ensure that only the best wines go on the shelves". He goes on, "Working with Master of Wine Richard Bampfield gives Lidl's wine range a real credibility and a unique edge. Today Lidl's wine range has expanded to 60 listed wines, available all year round, and 48 premium wines, available four times a year for a total of 252 per year".

Generally, supermarkets won't offer sampling sessions or anything out of the ordinary, but Whole Foods Market is different, and hosts wine master classes, has an excellent wine selection and a refillable bottle scheme. The prices, like the food, are slightly higher than some are willing to pay, however. The latter also doesn't offer an online service as well, regretfully.

The downside of supermarket wine shopping:

With the exception of [Waitrose](#), you won't find a dedicated member of staff on the shop floor in the big supermarkets to answer any in-depth questions you might have and their discounts aren't always to be believed. Try to spend at least £8 to get something decent.

Specialised Wine Chains

These chains with shops nationwide are to wine what Waterstones are to books; non-pretentious surroundings, well-stocked shelves and

something to suit everyone. At [Majestic](#) and Oddbins, and the smaller chain of Nicolas shops and Spirited Wines, you'll find a pretty fine selection, quite often with little handwritten notes specifying staff favourites and points of note. The generally affable staff have a keen interest in wine and love to share their knowledge with you. Customers like the choice and affordability, and while you won't find anything unique or eye-wateringly expensive, they're perfect for finding a very nice bottle of wine for dinner. The chains do regular wine tastings, and you should always come away with something pleasing.

The downside of specialised wine chains:

[Majestic](#) has a 6 bottle minimum (current CEO made claims that they will be removing this minimum), but many branches do deliver. Don't expect to find an ultra-rare gem, but chances are that's not what you're there for anyway. Delivery service is superb though. Chains could be a bit less exciting in terms of wine range and you can find yourself looking at some usual suspects, but they will definitely have a better range than supermarkets.

Off-License wine shopping

The quality of the off-license usually depends on the area it's in. While majority cater to a budget audience, stop by one in an upmarket neighbourhood or city centre locale and be treated to shelves of artisan gins and expensive champagnes. Late-night opening and handy locations will save your skin on many occasions en-route to a party or when you've forgotten a gift. You can be convinced to pick up a few bottles of beer at off-licenses, but wines would be a major disappointment and definitely you liver will be much better off without that trip!

The downside of off-license wine shopping:

Wine will have to share shelf space with beers, spirits and soft drinks, meaning the selection isn't going to be huge. While some dedicated off-licences will have wonderful staff, don't assume you'll receive expert attention. Most of the bottles will be of a lesser quality and will retail for less than £10. You can definitely find better examples for that price, so it is recommended to avoid off-license wine shopping.

Wine Bars

Yes, wine bars! You can sample and enjoy some glasses, but also take a bottle home with you.

Wine bars have had an image hurdle to overcome since the 80s, many visualising suit-wearing Yuppies shouting into brick-sized mobile phones on chrome stools quaffing Chardonnay. Thankfully, the modern, independent breed of wine bars are sanctuaries of laid-back cool and quality.

Vagabond is an example of a hybrid wine bar and shop and they have 3 London locations. The antithesis of the old-school and stuffy wine merchants, they bring wines from small producers, lesser-known names and organic wines to an audience that loves wine but might not too much about it. Just pop some money onto their 'Vagabond Card' and help yourself to some of the 100 wines they have to offer, then buy a bottle of your favourite to take away. It's appreciated for allowing customers to try wines previously not on their radar from only 60p for tasters, and 125ml glasses starting around £4. Check out our own review to [Vagabond](#) bars / wine shops.

Similarly, New Street Wine Shop near Liverpool Street, perfectly situated for City workers is a restaurant, bar and shop with a wide selection from the reasonably priced to the premium. Expert staff are on hand to guide, whether you need a bottle or a case, and they recently launched two own-label wines created by their own sommeliers in collaboration with Christian Voeux, head winemaker at Chateau La

Nerthe. Priced at £15, these are Les Gamins, a 14% red Cotes du Rhone Villages – an elegant blend with rich black fruit and spice aromas and a 13.5% white called Les Trois Bises which has distinct aromas of candied fruits, pear and pastry.

[Vinoteca](#) is a chain of wine bars throughout London and what's more, you can take away a bottle of their keg wines. We have been lucky owners of a bottle of Montsant red, which was gloriously good and for only £8.50.

The downside of wine shopping at wine bars:

If you're just popping out to buy a bottle or two, you could be tempted to sample a few on the wine dispensing machines, then find yourself swayed by platters of charcuterie and cheese passing your nose on the way to other diners. This is all about temptation and how good is their service.

Where to get the most when shopping for wine?

It seems each type of a wine retailer has its merits, and depending on your budget there will be something to suit in all of them. Supermarkets will not stock so many wines, but it is just so easy to take a few when you do your regular grocery shopping, isn't it? We find though that they rarely change their range, so it can become rather boring very soon.

Online wine retailers provide the most monetary value – just think about [Perfect Cellar](#), at the time of writing they offer a whopping £50 off your first wine club case.

Independent wine shop and wine merchants win out in terms of expertise and ambience, something which can't easily be replicated.

Some more conservative wine retailers offer a somewhat snobby wine experience that turns some shoppers away whilst supermarket's

approach to wine is more towards a 'suit everyone' strategy. However we know that it does not work like that – marketing should be personal and targeting specific audience – we believe a group of adventurous drinkers should be treated differently from money saving families that want more value for their pound.

Chapter 2

Top 15 online wine shopping destinations for 2016

There is an overwhelming amount of choice out there, and it can be difficult to figure out who is best to buy from. We've collated 15 online wine retailers (many online wine stores also have a high street presence) and outlined the major key advantages you'll find most useful; who they are, what they do, how much they charge for delivery and what they'll do if something goes wrong.

Just in time for the end of year festivities, many of these online wine merchants are offering special promotions on mixed cases perfect for the party season.

Also please note that there is no particular order for wine shops as of yet, we will collect your votes first and then re-arrange the list accordingly.

1. [Laithwaite's Wine](#)

Having started life as 'Bordeaux Direct' in 1969 and selling only one type of wine, Tony Laithwaite's company has become the UK's No.1 home-delivery wine merchant and is the current UK wine merchant of the year. With over 1500 wines to choose from, there's something to suit all tastes and budgets. You'll find a bottle of 2009 Saint-Estèphe Chateau Tronquoy-Lalande with cigar box, cassis and blueberry aromas for £35 and a 4* rated 'Party Perfect' Hungarian Campanula Pinot Grigio at £6.99. Customer reviews and ratings might help or hinder as you get sucked into the time vacuum of reading other people's thoughts.

[Join their wine club](#) and receive 50% off your first case of 12 bottles, with free delivery and two free stemless glasses. All wines come with

tasting cards, and future orders have 10% off and can be cancelled at any time.

Delivery:

Standard delivery is £3.95 but if you plan on becoming a Laithwaite's regular, receive free unlimited deliveries for a £24 annual fee.

Returns:

Often praised for their excellent customer service, they are so confident in their wine buying, they offer an exchange or no-quibble 100% money back guarantee, and will even collect the offending bottle(s).

Promotions:

Check out the [Laithwaite's](#) Bin Ends section for cases of 12 bottles from £77.88 (£6.49/bottle).

Organic selection?

While they do have occasional bottles of organic wines, there isn't a dedicated organic selection to choose from.

Other notes:

In case you need help choosing which wine goes best with Sunday dinner, call or live chat with their wine advisors seven days a week.

2. [Majestic Wine Warehouse](#)

Founded in 1980, [Majestic](#) has nationwide stores and an excellent website to buy from. They recently removed their minimum order quantity and customers can now purchase single bottles, but discounts of at least 10% are available on cases of six or more. They won Great Value Merchant of the Year at the 2015 Sommelier Wine Awards, with 90% of their award winners being under £10.

Delivery:

Free seven day flexible and friendly delivery from your local store on a case of 6 bottles or more. Click and collect from 214 stores nationwide.

Returns:

A no quibble guarantee allows you to get in touch with your local [Majestic](#) store and tell them you didn't like a wine, and they'll refund or

replace.

Promotions:

Register an account at [Majestic Wine using this link](#), and then download the [Majestic](#) App and get £10 off an in-store or online order. A current promotion offers a mixed case with red, white and champagne for £147.91 with a free case of craft beer.

Organic selection:

[Majestic](#) has five organic wines in stock from £6.99 as part of a 'mix of 6 wine' offer or £9.99 per single bottle.

Other notes:

The staff are friendly, and knowledgeable and everyone you meet at [Majestic](#) has been professionally accredited by the Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) meaning you'll always get helpful recommendations from them. In addition to your wine order, you're able to add ice, borrow a chiller bin and free glass loan if you're catering to a larger crowd.

3. [FromVineyardsDirect](#)

The formidable duo behind [FromVineyardsDirect](#) is David Campbell who invented France's best-selling Wine Book, the Guide Hachette des Vins and Esme Johnstone, the founder of [Majestic](#). They offer a small range of wines from France, Italy and Spain, imported from the growers and delivered directly to the customer.

Delivery:

Delivery is included on all cases of 12 and above, with small delivery surcharges if purchasing fewer bottles.

Returns:

Breakages must be shown to the delivery driver and [FromVineyardsDirect](#) must be notified at the time of delivery to be eligible for a refund or replacement. There is no mention of corked or unsuitable wines being covered by a refund policy.

Promotions:

A whole section of offers to whet the bargain-hunters palate includes bin ends, mystery mixed cases and limited parcels.

Organic selection:

They offer a nice selection of organic wines starting at £8.95

Other notes:

[FromVineyardsDirect](#) has a wine club with the option of choosing the 'Easy Drinking Case' or the 'Dinner Party Case'. Each case has 12 bottles of mixed wines, and costs around £125 to £190, available every two months, or on an ad-hoc basis when required. They also offer help when planning weddings and events.

4. [BuyWineOnline](#)

Philip West started *Buy Wine Online* with only South African wines, and although the website states wines from other countries will be added, they are all from South Africa at the moment. Although the website isn't as slick as some of the larger wine merchants, if you have a particular penchant for South African wines, it's certainly a good place to look. Buy Wine Online has a feature where they will help you plan a dinner party and by entering your meal plan, they'll email you suggestions and links to suitable wines. Possibly a more considered way to pair food and wine than the generators other sites have, as you're receiving more personal attention.

Delivery:

A minimum order of six bottles is required, with delivery charged at 95p per bottle – which works out at £5.70, or they charge £7.99 per case of 12.

Returns:

Claims should be made within 3 days for anything you wish to return.

Promotions:

Various offers including a case of 12 mixed whites for £99 or buy three bottles of Shiraz and save 10%.

Other notes:

Call for friendly help and advice about any wine or order related matter. BuyWineOnline also has a selection of gift boxes should you be buying a bottle or three as a gift.

5. [Australian Wines Online](#)

Australian Wines Online has been trading as Wine Buffs from retail premises in Warrington for 12 years. They bring wines from some of Australia's most highly regarded winemakers as well as the smaller family run and boutique wineries, allowing the British public to try classic to contemporary Australian styles.

Delivery:

Delivery starts from £10 with no option for free delivery.

Returns:

The website gives no mention of what to do if you receive damaged, broken or unsuitable goods, but there are plenty of ways to contact them including telephone, email and physical address.

Promotions:

A special six bottle mixed case put together to come under the 100 Australian dollars mark means there are three mystery whites and three mystery reds for £42 or try their 'Six of the Best' box with some outstanding Australian wines at £140.

Organic Selection:

They have two Australian organic wines in stock, both £11.99.

Other Notes:

Not just Australian wines, they even have some wines from Europe, New Zealand and the USA and offer gift vouchers from £20 to £125, perfect for last minute gifts.

6. [Buy Great Wine](#)

Buy Great Wine specialises in wines that can usually only be found in restaurants, aiming for the higher quality wines without the additives permitted in lower grade wines from small, independent producers

rarely found for sale in the UK.

A minimum order of six bottles is required, with some wines having a 12 bottle minimum, however, with their 100% money back guarantee on any wines you don't like, there's no risk of buying too much of something not to your liking. Lots of information is given about types of wines and grapes, allowing even the wine novice to gain a little knowledge and make an informed decision about the best bottle for the occasion.

Delivery:

Delivery is £9.99 and is reduced to £7.99 for orders over £50, sent in air-filled pillow packs to minimise breakages in transit.

Promotions:

Buy Great Wine has a selection of wines with small discounts on their home page.

Returns:

An online form makes it easy to make a return. Simply enter all the order details and reasons for return (faulty, received the wrong item etc.)

Organic selection:

Only one French and one Greek organic wine in stock, both £12.96.

Other Notes:

A comprehensive food and wine pairing guide gives you all the guidance you need for dinner.

7. [Ottolenghi](#)

Although Ottolenghi is not a dedicated wine merchant, there is a concise selection of just under 50 carefully chosen and pretty interesting wines with enticing descriptions. Some perfectly suited as gifts to take along to dinner parties, especially when you also choose some Ottolenghi gourmet treats as an accompaniment.

Delivery:

Free delivery for orders over £50

Returns:

Contact Ottolenghi within 24 hours of receipt and return unwanted goods (at your own expense) within seven days for a refund. If, however, your goods arrive damaged they will arrange a refund or replacement.

Promotions:

5% off if you buy 6-11 bottles of the same wine and 10% off if you buy 12 bottles of the same wine.

Organic selection:

Three organic wines for sale, and some organic foodstuffs too. The Baccabianca from a husband and wife producer team using organically-grown Cortese grapes sounds especially appealing and is £23.

Other notes:

Follow some of Yotam Ottolenghi's recipes on the website, and wash down with a bottle of wine, chosen by reading their well-written blurbs.

8. [Good Wine Online](#)

As the name suggests, they only want to sell good wines – tested by the two owners themselves who want to sell superior quality and, therefore, have one of the UK's largest selections of award winning wines. Tasting notes haven't been copied from the bottle, but written by the Good Wine Online team who want to give you an honest feel. Lots of helpful information throughout the website means you can spend some time reading wine related articles.

They don't have a minimum order but an inexpensive bottle plus delivery isn't economical, so stretching to 12 bottles or more is the best way to get a good deal. Their website is somewhat non user friendly, but it did not prevent us from ordering a case. We hope they can work on the technology part of their business further and offer a more seamless customer experience.

Delivery:

£8.99 standard delivery or free for orders over £250.

Returns:

A full refund is offered if the wine is faulty or arrives broken. They don't offer a refund in the case of the wine being not to your liking, and will only offer refunds on wine reported as faulty if it's returned immediately for evaluation.

Promotions:

They have a 'South African Gold' case of six award-winning wines, all unique to Good Wine Online in the UK and a definite treat for Christmas, at £115.

Organic selection:

One of the few sites with a dedicated organic and sulphite free section, making it easy for consumers to buy appealing pre-mixed cases.

9. [Rude Wines](#)

Rude Wines was established by two wine enthusiasts who wanted to do away with the wine snobbery and complicated tasting notes aspect of wine buying and simply offer a quality yet down to earth service to like-minded customers. With around 200 wines in stock, and preferring small producers to big brands, they are always seeking undiscovered gems and as such are one of the UK's few stockists of Peruvian wines. Minimum order is a 12 bottle mixed case.

Delivery:

They currently offer free delivery on all orders. Yet again please note their min order of 12 bottles!

Returns:

A robust cancellation and returns policy means they have a 100% satisfaction guarantee. Unopened bottles can be returned up to 14 days after date of delivery, and you don't have to pay for any wines you don't like.

Promotions:

Rude Wines has a VIP club costing £99 per quarter entitling you to an almost exhaustive list of free delivery on every order, 25% off any order, a 12 bottle case from a different region every three months, invitations to wine tasting events, your own wine advisor and wine tasting folder. Alternatively, try their six bottle Intro Case for £50.45 and receive two Dartington crystal glasses and three months free VIP membership. The perfect solution to see you through the party season is a mixed case of 12 bottles, two champagne flutes and a free bottle of bubbly for £76.99 delivered.

Organic Selection:

Three organic wines in stock, all around £20.

Other notes:

A team of dedicated wine advisors with a century of wine experience between them ensure you get a personal, bespoke service. If you need to know how to serve wines, the best foods to have with them and the winemakers they work with, they are eager to help by phone or email. The wines are of higher price segment though.

10. [Vinissimus](#)

Founded in 2005, Vinissimus has grown into a site selling more than 4500 mainly Spanish wines and boasts sales of more than 2 million bottles to customers throughout Europe. A big selection ensures they span a big price range, and you are able to choose wines based on the Parker rating.

Delivery:

Vinissimus charges £13.60 for 6 bottles and this increases with your order quantity. Be prepared to pay up to £24 for a case of 12 bottles. They don't offer any free delivery but do offer a small shipping discount when you spend more than €300 per order.

Returns:

In the case of wine being corked or is in any way defective, they ask that you return the bottle at your own expense, and if they consider it

imperfect will include a replacement with your next order. If you have purchased several bottles of a wine not to your liking, they will accept a return (at your expense) on the unopened bottles minus a restocking fee. Breakages in transit will be dealt with at no cost to the customer. It is a major disadvantage of buying wines from abroad – in case something goes wrong you will bear the costs and sometimes can be with no wine at all. Complicated procedures and dependency on a quality shipping company makes it a bit nerve-wracking, yet we have ordered from them and so far no issues there.

Promotions:

No promotions section, but currently a nice selection of wine gift ideas and hampers.

Organic Selection:

They sell a wide range of organic wines, yet there is no search function, so when you are searching for a particular grape or region, you need to spot those green leafy symbols near a wine title – they will be organic. Similarly, a moon sign will indicate a biodynamic wine.

Other notes:

Club Vinissimus has free enrolment and for slightly less than £72, you'll receive six bottles and a set of wine glasses as an introductory gift. With no compulsory purchase required, you can choose two weeks in advance if you'd like to receive the next selection.

11. [Corks Out](#)

Founded in 2003 by Ruth Yates, Corks Out now has six retail stores as well as an online presence with over 300 wines to choose from.

Stocking crowd-pleasers and fine wines from the Old and New Worlds from around £9 to £600 and a wide selection of vegetarian and vegan wines means they have most needs covered.

Delivery:

Corks Out has a £7.99 standard delivery charge or spend £40 for free delivery (good value!).

Returns:

Unopened cases may be returned within 14 days for a full refund, and in the case of Corks Out being responsible for the error, they will pay return shipping costs. It is a bit uncertain what would happen if there be any issues, so please let us know about your own shopping experience with Corks Out.

Promotions:

Six bottle mixed wine cases from £49.99, with 'expert' red cases including Barolo and Rioja at the discounted price of £85.

Organic selection:

Nine range of organic wines from around £10 to £35 in stock.

Other notes:

They will assist with wedding wine lists, food pairing for dinner parties and anything you might need help with is just a telephone call away.

12. [Adnams Cellar and Kitchen](#)

Adnams Cellar and Kitchen is a relatively new name on the wine radar, yet founded in 1872 they are best known as brewers of beer. Their website is clean and somewhat simplistic, yet it all clearly identified and easy to navigate (through wines, beers, spirits). Adnams Cellar also offers wine club, where you can get 10% discount and regular shipments of your favourite drinks.

Delivery:

[Adnams Cellar](#) has a £5.99 standard delivery charge or spend £60 for free delivery. £7.5 will get you a next day delivery service (as opposed to a standard of 3-5 days).

Returns:

They offer a straightforward returns policy offering you an option to return wines within a month of purchase. Delivery charge is non-refundable. Should you receive a damaged package you should indicate this to a delivery company straightaway, so the process is

quicker.

Promotions:

No major promotional activity apart from free delivery on orders of £60 or more.

Organic selection:

Wide selection of organic produce (51 items currently) with a range coming from France, Italy and Spain, but also from other regions. The range is balanced, so you can find bottles around £7-£8 mark, but also £30 for some more premium positions.

Other notes:

They are not a wine specialist as such, so prepare to also find kitchenware, food, vouchers and corporate sections on their website. Tempted to see what they have in their range – visit their [online shop here](#).

13. [Fortnum and Mason wine club](#)

Some retailers simply do not require introductions. Established in 1707, Fortnum and Mason is one of the most reputable food department stores. They are traditional, conservative and expensive, and will meet your expectations with regards to a superior quality. Mixed Wine Cases selection is small – 14 items -, yet very exclusive; they have also displaying Fortnum's House Selection of 20 different bottles ranging from £9.90 for the Ordinary Claret and to £150 for a double magnum of Margaux.

Delivery:

Standard delivery charge is £5.95 and increasing to £9.95 for the next day one. You can also click and collect your order for free.

Returns:

Broken items could be returned within 30 days, faulty – within 28 days. For other cases it is not certain how they will treat it as they state in

their policy that food items cannot be returned. Yet should you wine be corked, you can send it back as faulty.

Promotions:

[Fortnum & Mason](#) is currently offering 15% off their mixed wine cases.

Organic selection:

Nothing thus far.

Other notes:

It is a question how their selection matches a rather steep charge, yet for those who prefer a classic selection of Bordeaux, Burgundy and quality Champagne, [Fortnum & Mason](#) will serve as an excellent alternative. Wine club has an additional incentive to join (15% discount).

14. [Waitrose Cellar](#)

This top list will not be complete without [Waitrose Cellar](#). With hundreds of wines on offer and a hefty number of awards received this year (Champagne retailer of the year, England specialist merchant of the year and more) [Waitrose Cellar](#) provides an ultimate joy when shopping for wine. Their range is quite big, covers most of the regions and can suit most of the budgets. Most of the range is within £7-£15 price mark, so will represent a good value as well.

Delivery:

Their site is currently not fully updated as on the homepage they note that the delivery is free on orders of £150 or more, however in their Delivery section they state that Standard delivery is free for all orders (2-3 days). You can order a named day or next day delivery service for just £4.95, which is a fantastic value for money.

Returns:

Damaged, faulty or coked wines could be returned within 28 days. They can even come and collect them from you which is just amazing.

Promotions:

[Waitrose Cellar](#) is currently offering £15 off your wine shop of £120 or more, 1/3 off your sparkling wines selection and 25% off their own selection of wines.

Organic selection:

They have a rather small selection of decent organic wines in their range.

15. [Marks and Spencer wine club](#)

M&S is a reputable food retailer and has recently launched their online wine club, so you can benefit from a selection of their wines delivered to your door. A very straightforward selection of wines and only two options – Club Classic and Club Reserva are offered. Please see what is currently on offer in their [wine club here](#).

Delivery:

£3.99 next day delivery or free for orders of £50 or more. This is another example of a great value for money. Don't you think you will spend much more on petrol or public transport? Order by 10pm to get your case next day – what a fabulous offer.

Returns:

They state that most items bought online can be returned or exchanged for free. A variety of shipping options are offered, so you would have a convenient way to return something that is not up to scratch. Please see [M&S site](#) for more on returns.

Promotions:

Get £10 off your first wine club case.

Organic selection:

None so far.

Wine clubs and online wine stores: our verdict

With such an overwhelming amount of choice, where do you decide to spend your cash?

It depends on what you consider to be important.

Organic wines, pricing, wine range, online wine clubs and website functionality

The ultimate online wine merchant offers a wide selection, with a good choice of organic wines, at non-inflated prices, it's aesthetically pleasing and easy to navigate and offers help when you need it; but finding those fitting all the criteria can be tricky and too many sites make it incredibly hard for you to find all the necessary information you need before making a purchase.

Some people regard tip-top customer service the main reason for staying loyal to a brand – similar to flying with a good airline as opposed to booking a budget flight, you know one will take care of you every step of the way and the other will turn the other cheek at the first sight of mishap. [Laithwaite's Wine](#) and [Waitrose Cellar](#) both excel at all round wine shopping.

Wine merchants with a great customer service

If good after-sales service is paramount, opt for [Marks and Spencer wine club](#) or [Majestic Wine](#). The first one scores highly among online wine clubs for its simplicity and quality. The latter offers a dedicated delivery service that can be ridiculously efficient and quick, but also almost at any time during weekends. Fabulous!

Chapter 3

Free wine: a definitive guide to all kinds of free wines

It seems that nowadays we can get almost all things for free – free samples, free trial, free subscription, free classes, free diets and free organic food boxes, so why not to discuss free wine?

We are to explore not only how to get some free wine along the way, but how to buy your wine as gluten-free, sugar-free, alcohol-free, sulfites free (no added sulphites), but also with a free delivery and together with some free samples of food.

[Join our healthy and happy wine community and sign up for our monthly newsletter](#) to reveal a promotion that includes **free wine**! In the meantime, let's crack on with this guide to all kinds of free wine!

Vegan, vegetarian and gluten free wines

First of all, what about your dietary requirements?

Most of supermarkets, only only and specialised wine retailers (think [Majestic](#), [Waitrose](#), [Laithwaite's](#)) clearly mark their wines as *vegetarian* or *vegan* if you require wines which were not filtered or clarified using animal derived materials. I find it comforting to know that it has been made without such intervention.

Some people ask about *gluten-free wines*. We should add that most wines are gluten free as they are made from grapes, so they should be marked as gluten free. However there are a few notable exceptions – wines can be aged in oak barrels which were treated with glutenous

substances (flour paste to seal them) and secondly those wines could be also fined or clarified with the substances containing gluten, so these wines will not be strictly gluten free! These winemaking procedures are fairly rare now yet there is no major requirement to mark the wines as gluten free as the amount of potential gluten is actually very low. You are safe, do not worry!

Sulfites free wines

We have been writing about no sulphites added wines since the beginning of this healthy and happy community. Have a look at our [Organic Wines FAQ](#) to learn more about organic, natural (in most cases sulfites free) and biodynamic wines. They all offer more health benefits due to a reduction in harmful chemical compounds presents in the conventional wines – think about loads of pesticides used in non-organic farming and imagine that you are drinking all that! We are regularly reviewing organic wines and run [The Best Organic Wines](#) top list, but also a [list of wines to avoid](#); in addition that our monthly feature of [Wines to buy or avoid](#) regularly reviews organic and in some cases sulfites free wines. Check out [November issue](#) for 2 no sulphites added wines and other organic wines.

Sugar free wines

Wine can be that sugary drink that will not contribute to your health at all. Dryness of wine is one of the factors to look at when buying your wine. Look at bone dry red or white wines or Brut Nature when choosing sparkling ones to get your sugar free wine. Otherwise you are to buy a dry one with 1-10 grams of sugar per litre, off-dry wine (most of sweet-ish New World reds and some off-dry whites like Vouvray) will cost you 10-35 g/l and sweet wines will be from 35 to whopping 120 g/l. We are talking about residual sugars – those which were left in wine after fermentation, it is more or less natural cause of why your wine is sweet-ish or very sweet. Look at the cheapest wines in the market –

they were sweetened additionally to make them taste better (otherwise they would really taste awfully acidic and bitter) and should be avoided at all cost. Yet it is not simple as there is no requirement to state how much sugar is in wine (and its nature) on the label. Shocking, but true. This is when a term ‘cheap piece of crap’ comes in to play – most of wines that you find at £5 mark in the UK are with increased amount of residual sugar or artificially sweetness, so our motto is same – [drink better wines and drink less!](#)

Alcohol free wines

We must be honest with you – even though such thing exists as de-alcoholised wines (you can check out some examples of [de-alcoholised wines produced by Torres and more at Amazon here](#)), we are not fans at all. They taste awful and why not to buy a packet of Merlot grape juice from [Waitrose](#) instead?

Another point of interest here is actually lower alcohol wines – these are gaining massive popularity now as people decide to opt for lighter styles of wines, consume less alcohol units and stay healthy and happy. Check out our quick guide to [alcohol units in wine](#) here.

If you visit [Amazon.co.uk](#), you can find a selection of lower alcohol wines including some examples from the UK. [Ocado](#) also offers a selection of 12 wines (at the moment of writing), which are grouped in a special [Low Alcohol Wines webpage](#).

[Majestic Wine](#) does not have a special page for them, but you can search by abv – there are currently 27 wines that are below 12% abv, so you will have some options there too.

Wines with free delivery

So who is offering a free delivery for your wine orders? [Waitrose Cellar](#) is one of the most reputable companies to offer free standard delivery

on all orders provided there are at least 6 bottles in your order.

[Majestic Wine](#) goes even further – they will offer the same free delivery on all orders of 6 bottles or more and on top of that they will arrange it themselves using their own drivers and vans, so expect a call to discuss when it is most convenient for you. Amazing service!

[Perfect Cellar](#) is a relatively unknown brand in the UK, so they are going one step further and offering a free next day (weekday) delivery on all orders of £50 or more and they will also ring you up to confirm the suitable time. If you live in London and urgently need to wine they are to offer a same day (not free unfortunately, but for a price of £12.5) delivery service. Is it what you may call an ‘Amazon’ of wine?

Free wine with food

We are big fans of organic food and organic produce in general. It does not have the prolonged shelf life and it is better to source your food locally. If you sign up for vegetable, fruit, meat, poultry, game and other (i.e. salad) boxes from [Abel and Cole](#) you are getting both gorgeous organic produce delivered weekly to your door in an environmentally friendly packaging and ability to add some wine with your food. We have partnered with them to get you the best signup offer possible, so you will get your 4th weekly box for free, but also recipe cards, free organic olive oil or a bottle of Prosecco, which is now one of the most popular Italian sparkling wine. Please note that the signup offers differ from season to season, so check them out today to reveal your [Abel and Cole welcome offer](#).

Free wine when placing your first order

Perfect Cellar is one of these companies who reward joining their wine club generously – if you just place your first order (min £50) you are to receive a generous £12 off and free next day delivery. If you decide to

join their wine club and subscribe to expertly selected wine cases you are to get £50 off your first case – that is a lot of free wine don't you think?

Free wine roundup

You can see that nothing is really free, but knowing the facts you can still do much better than everyone else – be it knowing more about wines, drinking organic and of course save money on your wine cases and orders – our advice is also free, but we hope you will make the most of it. Come and check more on organic wines and happy and healthy wine lifestyle at IBlameTheWine.com, where you can also connect to like-minded people at our [Forums!](#)

Chapter 4

Why wine clubs?

If you've never considered joining a wine club before now, now could be the right time as some of the UK's biggest clubs have made it easier to join while offering some amazing benefits for doing so. The UK is one of the world's most adventurous nations when it comes to trying new wines – if you don't join, you could be missing out on some wonderful wines that will never make it to supermarket.

If you enjoy a nice glass of wine, and many people do here in the UK where we reportedly drink 12 million more bottles of wine [every year](#) than we first thought. You've probably never been particularly adventurous with your choices – sticking with the same brands and the same labels from the same off license or supermarket for your weekend tittle.

It was once the case that few people considered joining a wine club; today, though membership has grown somewhat and they are shedding the reputation of being purely for wine connoisseurs and wine snobs. This reputation is unfair as people from many walks of life, both genders, all age groups and identities enjoy wine and can join to take advantage of some of the wonderful reasons for doing so.

The Benefits of Wine Clubs

The idea that wine clubs are for the elite, people who would describe themselves as “wine connoisseurs” or “wine snobs” is certainly a thing of the past as the average price of a good bottle of wine has come down. This has especially been the case in the last 20-25 years as new markets and vineyards have opened up in California, Chile, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand to challenge traditional producers of

France, Italy, Germany and Spain that had dominated the British market. We quickly moved from an attitude of “we don’t drink wine from the colonies!” to a wholesale embrace of [New World Wines](#).

We love wine here in the UK; today, we are one of the biggest consumers of wine from all over the world. In the early part of the 21st century when [wine consumption was falling globally](#), the UK bucked the trend in being a growing market, and it was towards the new world wines that our tastes were developing. It should come as no great surprise to anyone that wine clubs were able to take advantage of this growing interest and adventurous outlook, appeal to a broader scope of people and encourage membership.

Wine Club Deals and Discounts

One of the major advantages of joining a wine club is that they offer great discounts when you buy in bulk, half cases or whole cases of your favourite wines. Though buying 12 bottles from a supermarket will usually come with a discount offer, it is nowhere near the bulk buying discount opportunity offered by specialist wine clubs and you won’t get the service or the breadth of choice. Whether that is heavy discount on your first purchases of a new season, permanent low prices or package deals for buying a complete case, members of wine clubs can take advantage of special discounts only available through the club. These discounts are often available because the wine club selectors go direct to the vineyard and do not act through a distributor which will often push the price up.

Personalised Recommendations

Most of us already know what we do or do not like in a wine but few people go beyond dry-sweet light-full bodied in their selection. Being in

a wine club, especially as somebody who may not consider themselves a wine expert, you will be privy to the expertise of the selectors behind the club. As they analyse your personal tastes and buying history – as an individual and as a group – you will receive [personal recommendations](#) you will not get elsewhere.

If you like organic wines, low calorie wines, small producers, Fair Trade wines, British wines or wines made from produce other than grapes, you have a much better chance finding what you want in a wine club that can help you find the right wine or wines for you.

Special Events & VIP Areas

The social aspect of being in a wine club is a huge draw for many people. Far from being passive recipients of marketing material and buying interesting wine, it is the opportunity to go to wine tasting events, special member only meals and to receive first refusal tickets for public events. The social aspect and the sense of community of being in a wine club is a vital part of the experience. If you go to big events such as festivals and your particular wine club is present, you will have access to special VIP areas where you can enjoy your wine and a meal in peace. Special treatment is one of the great perks of joining a wine club and you can make new friends and acquaintances at the same time.

Sense of Discovery & Variety

Wine retailers and supermarkets carefully control what they sell – they have loss leaders to draw people in, offer discounts on core labels and stock the same labels and brands most of the year round with little variation. How supermarkets sell wine is quite unexciting. Visit your local supermarket six months apart and the chances are they will have much the same stock. Wine clubs are specialists and once you have

joined, you will rarely want to go back to such limited choice. As noted above, in the UK we are very adventurous in our wine choices. Wine clubs allow us to explore that adventurous spirit in offering us a sense of discovery and a much wider variety of wine choices, always updating their stock.

First in Line

There is a sense of excitement in knowing you will get to try out a product before it goes on general release – and this is just as true with wines as it is with anything else. You will find that some of these wines will never make it to our supermarkets or off licenses because of the buying methods that they employ. Producers prefer other distribution methods such as their own vineyard shops or to retailers who are slightly more discerning or knowledgeable about customer needs. Wine clubs are a great way for small vineyards to keep up with the large producers and a great way for members to discover them.

Ethical Shopping

For some, [ethical shopping](#) is an important part of the food buying experience. Concerns about the use of chemical fertilisers drive people toward buying organic, concerns about exploitation of workers in developing countries drives people to look for ethical labels such as Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance or other similar schemes with a strong ethical focus. Though most retailers have responded to the ethical trading requirements of their customers, walk through any supermarket wine aisle and there is not that much choice. The perception that wine clubs work on a personal level with smaller producers who act ethically is one that drives people towards joining.

Best Wine Clubs in the UK

The Wine Society

The biggest and arguably the best wine club in the UK is [The Wine Society](#). They were founded in the mid-19th century following appeal from wine producers from all over the world who wanted somewhere to store their wine during the last of the Great Exhibitions. Guests of the exhibition were interested in the wines that had been shipped in that General Scott, one of the architects of the Albert Hall, proposed setting up a co-operative to acquire high quality wines to sell to the clubs members.

Today, they are still going strong and they keep their membership numbers relatively low to avoid over-expanding. In their 100+ years, they have won many awards for their dedication as a club as well as some of the superior wines that they have selected.

The Wine Society Benefits

As a member of The Wine Society, you will have all the benefits of being associated with a prestigious organisation with a long heritage that prides itself on selecting some of the best wines from global small producers. The club sources direct from the producer and each member is a shareholder. It has always had amongst the largest ranges of wines and has not reduced its dedication to promoting the highest-quality products.

The Wine Society offers its members £20 off their first order as well as regular deals on special vintages and limited editions. It is the country's most prestigious club, but we have definitely others who compete well.

Naked Wines

Few members-only clubs have a waiting list, but [Naked Wines](#) is one of them. Tailored with the environmentally and ethically conscious in mind, Naked Wines works on a different model from the others in that members (Angels) are asked to add a £20 monthly fee to be part of the club. The money is used to fund and help independent winemakers and members reap the benefits of being an “Angel”. Year on year, they work with the same producers to help them focus on quality rather than quantity and maintain high standards. They have been bought by [Majestic Wine](#) this year, so we expect more synergies to come as a result of this merger, but so far you can enjoy the benefits of [Majestic Wine](#) alongside of Naked.

Naked Wines Benefits

£20 per month may sound rather a lot to become an Angel, but the model is successful because of the unique member benefits that it offers in exchange for the fee. It’s not just about altruism in supporting small producers and independents, being an Angel entitles you to discount on exclusive wines produced by the vineyards affiliated with Naked Wines. As an Angel, you will also get freebies and invitations to exclusive events. You will also not lose out, you can use the money invested in wines from the site or you can take it out if you don’t like the system.

Marks & Spencer Wine Club

Of all the wine clubs run by high street companies, [M&S Wine Club](#) is considered the most prestigious. Like conventional wine clubs, they boast access to exclusive vineyards from around the world and a dedicated team who created detailed information on the wines so that members without extensive wine experience do not feel intimidated by the choices available. They have two club types – the Classic and the

Reserva. Both are free delivery and offer excellent discount on premium wines.

M&S Wine Club Benefits

The greatest benefit of the [M&S Wine Club](#) is that there are no risks associated with being a member. There is no contract and no sign up fee. You're also under no obligation to buy a minimum number of wines every year. What's more, you are guaranteed around 25% discount on every order you do place. M&S have a reputation to uphold as a provider of quality food and produce on the high street their wine club is no exception.

Virgin Wines

[Virgin Wines](#) was one of the earliest “modern” wine clubs to operate through internet ordering. Like most of the Virgin Group, they like to make things as easy as possible and their wine club is no exception. They base their rankings and recommendations on what their members are telling them. This way, they can continually improve their range based on reviews. Wine tasting sessions take place every week. They categorise wines based on style rather than by country or region of origin, allowing their members to have a proper wine experience.

Virgin Wines Benefits

The first major benefit is that your opinion counts. Virgin Wines ask their members to rate and review the wines they buy, that way they can rank them according to preferences. It also means they will tailor their recommendations based on your personal preferences. If you are also a member of their Virgin Flying Club, you can also collect air miles every time you buy wine from their site. There are three different membership types; Discovery Club allows you a quarterly case at a reasonable price. justREDS allows members to buy just red wine. WineBank requires a monthly fee, but Virgin donates money into a fund for you to build

WineInterest points. Do not forget that you can always use [Virgin Voucher](#) to give the gift of wine and help your gift recipient to pay for their Virgin Wine case.

Waitrose Cellar

[Waitrose Cellar](#) is a relatively new division of [Waitrose](#), but it has been picked up very nicely by its members as a reputable and exciting destination for wine. There is no club or community here, but they do work with the customers as if they are in a some sort of a club – having a robust loyalty system shared with this reputable grocery chain allows them to offer you personalised recommendations that can definitely tempt you, maybe now now, but for a special occasion?

With over than 100 wines to choose from you will find much more options than just shopping at [Waitrose](#) grocery site, in addition to that, they regularly send out offers and 25 % off wine or money off vouchers.

Laithwaite's Wine and Sunday Times

Wine Club

[Laithwaite's Wine](#) and [Sunday Times Wine Club](#) may have different customer support or marketing offers, but in a nutshell they are operated by the same company, so in terms of functionality of their online wine club software or even variety of wine offers they are the same. Their approach is very well suited to those who like being nurtured and pampered with wine education (wine cards) and personalisation of their wine cases, but also who likes a good deal as they are sending out offers almost every month – from mystery cases to money off vouchers and generous seasonal discounts.

Laithwaite's Wine Club Benefits

Both clubs are very well designed and allow a complete personalisation and customisation of your wine cases. Say you are to subscribe for a

Taste of Spain wine plan and your next case is just not exactly what you want right now. You can login to your club account and start going through bottles changing their amount, adding or removing bottles and at the end you can end up with a completely different case! That is just fine – you will still get it cheaper than what you would have paid if you were to buy it being a non-member. We normally have around 16-17% off the wine case which is a great saving in the long run. Customer service is very fast and friendly at both [Laithwaite's Wine](#) and [Sunday Times Wine Club](#), so we can recommend to deal with them and be safe and sound that you are getting the most out of these prestigious UK wine clubs.

Which one is the best wine club in the UK?

We have been reviewing wine clubs in the UK before (see our [top wine clubs list](#) here), but is there one or a few that will stand out of these 6 wine clubs offering deals and wines that we recommend you the most?

Apart from money saving features and great discounts on wine, there is something that we feel of even more importance – the social aspect and the sense of community of being in a wine club, which are in our opinion vital parts of the experience and should be cherished.

[Laithwaite's Wine](#) and [Sunday Times Wine Club](#) offers regular wine tasting experiences where you as a club member can join a real life tasting session, meet other club members, feel the ambiance of being in a wine club, taste and socialise, drink and enjoy the company of wine-loving people. No money can buy a sense of community and feel of belonging!

Chapter 5

Wine deliveries: How not to order wine online?

'It has been a dozen of calls from a wine company and a delivery company, I feel totally exhausted and at the point of just wanting my money back.'

Or 'it has been a few weeks of 'missed' deliveries, when noone even bothered to inform me when my case of wine would be delivered and by whom.'

Sounds familiar?

Some of us already had these types of wine shopping experiences, where we are down to arguments, sheer dissatisfaction, may be even losing money, feeling nervous and wishing 'I'd never deal with them again'.

Online wine retail is not yet as developed as the traditional one, but I fail to agree that you and me should pay for these inconsistencies – let's explore this problem further on and find out who does a good job in terms of wine delivery and who is to be avoided online.

Many retailers will argue that when the wine leaves their premises they have done their job. Legally it may be correct (are we all reading all those lengthy Terms and Conditions on their websites?), but for you and me as consumers it doesn't simply cut it – we want our wine, stress free and hassle free. If it is not happening like that, we will feel disappointed and frustrated, not even to mention a possible loss of time and money. Who wants that?

Luckily, our UK wine market is not in its infancy and we have got plenty

of choice.

Let's explore who are those screw-ups and share the most astonishing and hard to believe stories. I sincerely hope you find it useful as we should not blame those wine deliveries – the ones who do it wrong should simply be avoided!

The Good ones

[Majestic Wine](#) has their own delivery service and that is why they are great. Imagine this – I once had an occasion of ordering a case of wine on Sunday morning, they rang asking about a delivery and as soon as I have been at home in the next couple of hours they have delivered it then. It was up to three hours between the order and their delivery, simply fab! It is what I call a very smooth integration of personalised service (contacting by a telephone) and a smooth Internet transaction. 10/10!

[The Wine Society](#) is doing quite well as they also offer their own delivery service (subject to availability), so make sure you choose that during checkout as failure to do that will mean they will otherwise use a cheap third party (last time I checked it was Parcelforce). Parcelforce is a division of Royal Mail and even though I use them to send anything abroad (simply because of the rates), their delivery service is below average as they can turn out at anytime during the day, which means you need to be in the whole day and your 30 mins trip to a nearest supermarket can also mean you've missed them and got a calling card. Their own Wine Society van service arrived on the day with a 4-hour window during which I must be in (no exceptions possible as they cannot rebook this service). 8/10

[Vintage Roots](#) is a specialised retailer (and wholesaler actually) for organic wines. 'The Organic Wine People' as they call themselves (and what they put on their recycled boxes) are my current favourite retailer

because of their range of organic wines, but also because they do ring you up to follow up on your order and try to accommodate your additional requests as you can indicate yours during checkout. I have specified that I do not want either Parcelforce or APC service, but preferably DPD, I got a reply that they are using APC, but can send it overnight with a morning slot (that will trigger an additional £2.5 charge), so I know I do not need to wait the whole day for the delivery. It was very helpful and I do appreciate them trying to make me pleased. 8/10

[Waitrose Cellar](#) as part of [Waitrose](#) offers a separate wine delivery service (will not be a part of your grocery delivery) that offers a more expensive 'name a day' delivery service so paying an extra of up to £5 you can specify a day, which is quite useful. Yet they still use an above mentioned Parcelforce, which means no commitment to any time slots. Yet they provide the tracking and you at least know when your wine is coming. You can pick the date at The Wine Society, so [Waitrose Cellar](#) may have dropped this charge altogether I think. 7/10

[Laithewaite's Wine](#) and [Sunday Times Wine Club](#) are operated by the same processing centre, so I have grouped them together. Online system is simple, but fully adequate as they do inform you about the status of your order and then advise on an approximate delivery day. Again, no certainty is provided here, but there were no major issues so far and they do follow up nicely with the delivery company, so they at least call if there are issues. My own faultless experience (including some generous welcome offers, for which I recommend visiting my [Wine Clubs](#) page) is one thing, but definitely a lot of room for improvement to keep us all informed on what is happening and when the wines are suppose to arrive. 6/10

[The Sampler](#) is a fantastic retailer with an impressive service in their shops, the wines are different and I was really pleased with the range. Yet upon placing an order I haven't received any communication about it at all – no delivery dates, no tracking etc. I was lucky to be in

basically. The good thing was that the packaging was thorough, expensive and spot on. The delivery was left to a sheer luck, so it is just 5/10.

Screw-ups

Finally the ones that do not get even to an average mark or shall we call them screw-ups?

One of the bottom scores was triggered by my interaction with the Spanish focused online retailer **deVinos**. I was quite interested to try some of the wines and decided to try this relatively a no-name company. Again, there was not any communication about the delivery. When I received a card, and tried re-scheduling it, they did not acknowledge it and after a second one I have made an attempt contacting the retailer that they cannot do anything and they also did not pay for a possible Saturday delivery, so I cannot re-schedule it for that day. The end of the story was in rude-ish emails from their customer service (they decided to remind me that for future orders I must be in!), and that ended up with the bottles arriving completely damaged and some even broken. I call it a poor delivery, but even poorer service from that retailer to make sure their customers actually get the products. Nerve-wracking, 4/10 simply because I have got the wines at the end. No excuses, no regrets from their side though!

Finally a company that managed to open a fifth store in London, but did not manage to care about a customer service much – **Bottle Apostle**. What happened is that I had no communication from the store within a week (!!!), and I mean no emails or notifications about my order, when it would be shipped and delivered and by which delivery company. All I had is just ‘processing’ status that did not change for a week. To my further surprise, after sending a very polite message through their contact form (which said that the response time can be long as they are busy tasting wines! – should anyone care really?), I had no response

whatsoever! Horrific service. So after waiting for another week, I've decided it was time to give them a call. Mind you, an assistant was very polite and tried to help, but after a few days of calls back and forth, she had informed me that the wines were probably stolen as the driver delivered it to my address (around the time I used the contact form). The problem is that there was a call from a driver indeed, asking for directions, and I have allowed him to drop a package at my place. After getting back home, I did find a card ('two packages near the flower pot'), and the two packages were there – yet not the wines, but plants that I have ordered. So at the end I am left without wines, and the solution from Bottle Apostle was to offer me 10% on my next order! Do you think it can be remotely acceptable? Bottle Apostle as a wine merchant has failed to inform me of anything with regards to the delivery, I had no communication prior to actually trying to sort things and get to know where my bottles are, and they now expect me to take this 'offer'? No freaking way! It is 1/10 for some time spent by that girl over the phone – she was helpless, but not entirely rude to be fair.

Peace of Mind Wine Delivery

To sum up, [Majestic Wine](#) is a true leader in terms of offering an exceptional delivery service. They do it themselves, so you are guaranteed a time slot and a very helpful approach. Surely not everyone can offer that as it is a lot of cost and infrastructure to bear, so there are other companies like [Vintage Roots](#) which offer a top-notch customer service.

I must add that I'm working in digital marketing for almost 10 years now and it makes me an expert on quality of online marketing and delivering on the promise. My wine knowledge ([WSET](#) certified) is of no relevance here – you and every other wine drinker – we order wine according to the tastes, willingness to try something new or for a special occasion.

The above mentioned retailers, both delivering good service and those

who completely screw this up, are mapped using just one criteria – a quality of their delivery service. I hope you will avoid the latter bunch and stick to the ones that go extra mile to serve their customers, making them happy and thus loyal.

Cheers to happiness!

Chapter 6

All Wine Clubs in the UK

A brief information on their offering, delivery, returns policy, promotions and organic wines selection is also provided so you can make up your mind about joining a wine plan (that is how some wine clubs call their wine subscription services) or several.

Please note that we do not rate wine clubs in this review. For our careful recommendation of wine clubs to join please visit our [Best UK wine clubs page here](#) or read our wine clubs and wine subscription recommendations below.

[Laithwaite's](#) and [Sunday Times Wine Club](#)

Having started life as 'Bordeaux Direct' in 1969 and selling only one type of wine, Tony [Laithwaite's](#) company has become the UK's No.1 home-delivery wine merchant and is the current UK wine merchant of the year. With over 1500 wines to choose from, there's something to suit all tastes and budgets. You'll find a bottle of 2009 Saint-Estèphe Chateau Tronquoy-Lalande with cigar box, cassis and blueberry aromas for £35 and a 4* rated 'Party Perfect' Hungarian Campanula Pinot Grigio at £6.99. Customer reviews and ratings might help or hinder as you get sucked into the time vacuum of reading other people's thoughts.

Join their wine plan ([wine club](#)) and receive 50% off your first case of 12 bottles, with free delivery and two free stemless glasses. All wines come with tasting cards, and future orders have 10% off and can be cancelled at any time.

Delivery:

Standard delivery is £3.95 but if you plan on becoming a Laithwaite's regular, receive free unlimited deliveries for a £24 annual fee.

Returns:

Often praised for their excellent customer service, they are so confident in their wine buying, they offer an exchange or no-quibble 100% money back guarantee, and will even collect the offending bottle(s).

Promotions:

Check out the [Laithwaite's](#) Bin Ends section for cases of 12 bottles from £77.88 (£6.49/bottle).

Organic selection:

While they do have occasional bottles of organic wines, there isn't a dedicated organic selection to choose from.

Other notes:

In case you need help choosing which wine goes best with Sunday dinner, call or live chat with their wine advisors seven days a week.

Perfect Cellar

It is a new kid on the block and they do not take any prisoners here – with the £50 off your first club case, your personal Account Manager and hand-picked wines you could not be in any better hands than these. Wine shopping is easy with the straightforward red, white and mixed case subscription and opportunity to have a chat with the Advisor to tailor the case to your tastes and preferences. They are a startup so not a massive choice of wines, but some of the classic regions are represented with good or even outstanding wines. Have a look yourself.

Delivery:

Free delivery on orders of £50 or more.

Returns:

Full guarantee on their products means you can exchange or request a full refund for faulty items. Yet even if you are not fully satisfied with a product you can return it to [Perfect Cellar](#) – all they ask is that the bottle is at least half full so they can assess the issue. Great returns policy, one of the best in the market.

Promotions:

If ordering individual wines you can get £12 off and free delivery when

spending £50 or more.

Organic selection:

Guys at Perfect Cellar stock up to 50 organic wines, some of the mixed cases also contain organic wines, so you can have quite a good choice.

Naked Wines

A customer-funded wine project, become an 'angel' and give £20 a month to fund talented, independent winemakers who want to set up their own business, but don't have the cash to do so. The money is invested in grapes, winery space, barrels, bottles and other direct costs and in return the customer gets discounts off every bottle.

It's best to read the terms and conditions so you'll realise the full potential of becoming an angel and the benefits you'll receive, but in short, they bypass the middlemen and offer the wines to their 'angels' at close to wholesale prices.

Every wine has a customer rating, with eight wines at 100%, which means all those who have already purchased it would buy again. Johan Kruger, a South African winemaker has the highest rating bottle with his Kruger Family Elements, said to give Bordeaux a run for its money. The 'Angels' price for this is £10.99

Delivery:

£4.99 standard delivery, with free delivery on a case of 12 or more.

Returns:

Easy returns on damaged or unsuitable wines. Use live chat or call to organise a fuss-free collection.

Promotions:

Receive a £30 first wine plan discount – meaning a mixed case of 6 bottles costs only £19.99.

Other notes:

Their team is available to answer queries from Monday to Saturday.

Give them your likes and dislikes and they'll be able to give you tailored recommendations. A nice touch is being able to leave a message to the

winemaker, who often responds to any comments and questions.

Virgin Wines

(buy a [Virgin Voucher](#) to get even more value)

Browse over 500 wines, but you must fill a case before checking-out, so expect to purchase at least 12 bottles at Virgin Wines. Alternatively, join one of their two wine clubs, 'The Discovery Club' and 'JustREDS'. The first month's membership allows you to choose a case for £59.98 and they will ship a case every three months as well as at Christmas, but you can stop deliveries at any time and get your money back for any bottles you simply don't like. They also hold online wine auctions, and run a wine bank scheme. We find their wines quite dull, so after getting the most out of their wines from the first delivery you can simply cancel the plan.

Delivery:

£7.99 per order, next day delivery. Spend £150 for free delivery.

Returns:

A hassle-free 90 day returns policy, with a full refund if you don't like a bottle. Virgin Wines will collect a full case if one bottle has been opened and rejected by you.

Promotions:

Nothing really of much interest, but they normally have some special deals on themed cases of wine.

Organic Selection:

They have a choice of 21 organic wines from £8.99 to £44.99, so it is not a great selection and you will quickly run out of options.

Other notes:

Virgin Wines makes it easy for you to buy wines online, join wine plan and return anything unsuitable. If you need some help making a choice, call or email a free wine advisor for assistance no matter if you know next to nothing or consider yourself a wine aficionado. Please note that their marketing is quite intrusive with a lot of mailers, calls, and we find this quite annoying. Wine Advisors have some extra offers to give you,

which is normally £1-2 off a bottle of wine, so you can save up to £20 on a tailored case, but again we find it difficult to find enough options what to buy there. Ouch.

Rude Wines

Rude Wines company was established by two wine enthusiasts who wanted to do away with the wine snobbery and complicated tasting notes aspect of wine buying and simply offer a quality yet down to earth service to like-minded customers. With around 200 wines in stock, and preferring small producers to big brands, they are always seeking undiscovered gems and as such are one of the UK's few stockists of Peruvian wines. Minimum order is a 12 bottle mixed case.

Delivery:

They currently offer free delivery on all orders.

Returns:

A robust cancellation and returns policy means they have a 100% satisfaction guarantee. Unopened bottles can be returned up to 14 days after date of delivery, and you don't have to pay for any wines you don't like.

Promotions:

Rude Wines has a VIP club (exclusive wine plan) costing £99 per quarter entitling you to an almost exhaustive list of free delivery on every order, 25% off any order, a 12 bottle case from a different region every three months, invitations to wine tasting events, your own wine advisor and wine tasting folder. Alternatively, try their six bottle Intro Case for £50.45 and receive two Dartington crystal glasses and three months free VIP membership. The perfect solution to see you through the party season is a mixed case of 12 bottles, two champagne flutes and a free bottle of bubbly for £76.99 delivered.

Organic Selection:

Three organic wines in stock, all around £20.

Other notes:

A team of dedicated wine advisors with a century of wine experience

between them ensure you get a personal, bespoke service. If you need to know how to serve wines, the best foods to have with them and the winemakers they work with, they are eager to help by phone or email.

[Adnams Cellar and Kitchen](#)

[Adnams Cellar and Kitchen](#) is a relatively new name on the wine radar, yet established in 1872 they are best known as brewers of beer. Their [website](#) is clean and somewhat simplistic, yet it all clearly identified and easy to navigate (through wines, beers, spirits). [Adnams Cellar](#) also offers wine club, where you can get 10% discount and regular shipments of your favourite drinks.

Delivery:

[Adnams Cellar](#) has a £5.99 standard delivery charge or spend £60 for free delivery. £7.5 will get you a next day delivery service (as opposed to a standard of 3-5 days).

Returns:

They offer a straightforward returns policy offering you an option to return wines within a month of purchase. Delivery charge is non-refundable. Should you receive a damaged package you should indicate this to a delivery company straightaway, so the process is quicker.

Promotions:

No major promotional activity apart from free delivery on orders of £60 or more.

Organic selection:

Wide selection of organic produce (51 items currently) with a range coming from France, Italy and Spain, but also from other regions. The range is balanced, so you can find bottles around £7-£8 mark, but also £30 for some more premium positions.

Other notes:

They are not a wine specialist as such, so prepare to also find kitchenware, food, vouchers and corporate sections on their website. Tempted to see what they have in their range – visit their [online shop](#)

[here](#).

[Fortnum and Mason wine club](#)

Some retailers simply do not require introductions. Established in 1707, [Fortnum and Mason](#) is one of the most reputable food department stores. They are traditional, conservative and expensive, and will meet your expectations with regards to a superior quality. Mixed Wine Cases selection is small – 14 items -, yet very exclusive; they have also displaying Fortnum's House Selection of 20 different bottles ranging from £9.90 for the Ordinary Claret and to £150 for a double magnum of Margaux.

Delivery:

Standard delivery charge is £5.95 and increasing to £9.95 for the next day one. You can also click and collect your order for free.

Returns:

Broken items could be returned within 30 days, faulty – within 28 days. For other cases it is not certain how they will treat it as they state in their policy that food items cannot be returned. Yet should you wine be corked, you can send it back as faulty.

Promotions:

[Fortnum & Mason](#) is currently offering 15% off their mixed wine cases.

Organic selection:

Nothing thus far.

Other notes:

It is a question how their selection matches a rather steep charge, yet for those who prefer a classic selection of Bordeaux, Burgundy and quality Champagne, [Fortnum & Mason](#) will serve as an excellent alternative. Wine club has an additional incentive to join (15% discount).

[Marks and Spencer wine club](#)

[M&S](#) is a reputable food retailer and has recently launched their online wine club, so you can benefit from a selection of their wines delivered to your door. A very straightforward selection of wines and only two

options – Club Classic and Club Reserva are offered. Please see what is currently on offer in their [wine club here](#).

Delivery:

£3.99 next day delivery or free for orders of £50 or more. This is another example of a great value for money. Don't you think you will spend much more on petrol or public transport? Order by 10pm to get your case next day – what a fabulous offer.

Returns:

They state that most items bought online can be returned or exchanged for free. A variety of shipping options are offered, so you would have a convenient way to return something that is not up to scratch. Please see M&S site for more on returns.

Promotions:

Get £10 off your first wine club case.

Organic selection:

None so far.

Humble Grape

Humble Grape is a newcomer on the wine scene with their first shop in Clapham and stylish web store. They operate a small wine bar and a shop, but the personalised wine club is quite interesting. If you visit their site and leave some feedback in terms of what exactly would you want, they get back to you with the tailored case and the subscription would be 100% personal to your preferences. They also run their tasting events, which were not yet extremely exciting so far.

Delivery:

£10 for standard delivery, which means that the orders placed before midday will be dispatched next day for standard postal delivery. Same day delivery to Greater London is also offered at astonishing rate of £35, so if you are really desperate for wine, order before noon and they will deliver your wine from 3 to 7pm on the same day. It is almost like Amazon, but really expensive.

Returns:

No returns policy as such, but they state that should you encounter any broken bottles you should inform them immediately so they can arrange for a replacement. Not a lot of effort to reassure the customers.

Promotions:

Seems like this part is completely missing.

Organic selection:

A few interesting organic wines worth exploring (we have seen exciting French and Spanish examples) .

Berry Bros and Rudd

BBR does not need a lot of special introductions – we all know this well-established wine merchant just off Green Park, yet what is rather hidden (we haven't found much information in-store) is their wine club. They offer monthly cases ranging from £60 to £150 and you are guaranteed to receive it together with tasting notes, producer notes, some information on the producing regions and grapes, so you can also learn more about wines in general.

Delivery:

Standard delivery is £7.50 and free when you spend more than £100. The advanced options (Next day and Saturday) are £12.50, which is quite steep comparing to other clubs.

Returns:

A bit stricter policy requiring you to inform them in writing. They will also charge £10 for a collection if necessary. Overall, they seem to be reputable enough to provide an excellent service, yet they do not guarantee a full refund if something goes wrong.

Promotions:

Currently they offer 25% on sparkling wines and further 10% discount for wines and events when you are a wine club subscriber.

Organic selection:

Not much at all, they do not seem to focus on organic wines unfortunately.

The Sampler

The Sampler is an amazing wine store to visit – it provided us with a lot of inspiration to do more for the world of wine. When you are actually there you can sample the wines from the tasting machines and decide for yourself which ones you like and which ones not so much. They also run their wine club, which offers 6 bottles a month for the price of £100 whilst £150 a quarter will get you a good 12-bottle case and if you want to splash out a bit more just spend £300 for 12-bottle Deluxe case. It is pricey, but the selection of wine is quite interesting, so if you are running out of options they can definitely tailor a wine plan specifically for you.

Delivery:

Free for all wine club cases. Fantastic.

Returns:

No information. Weird.

Promotions:

20% off your first wine subscription case.

Organic selection:

Quite a wide selection of rare organic wines.

The Wine Society

It is certain that they are the biggest wine club in the UK if you count their dozens of thousands of members. Wine Without Fuss is their wine club, which offers a rather flexible opportunity to get your cases delivered to you – be it once a month or once a year. You can choose from Everyday selection, Premium case or French classics and they will cost you from £83 to £149 respectively. You can choose the frequency yourself. Wine buyers who are one of the best in the industry carefully select the wines, so they offer not just wines, but educational sensory experience as well. Their wine plan is one of the best in terms of value for money.

Delivery:

Free UK delivery for the wine club cases

Returns:

No questions asked return policy (how it should be).

Promotions:

No promotions available right now.

Organic selection thewinesociety.com:

You can select from a few dozen of organic wines, there is also a special organic wine page you can choose from their menu, but the choice is limited as the range is not growing much lately.

Avery's

Wine merchants established 1793 and operating a very clean website offering a good selection of wines including all possible options – En Primeur, Fine Wines, and of course Wine Plans (wine club to both of us). Every three months you can get a selection of wines based on your wine plan subscription and enjoy a further 10% discount. Tasting notes are provided including the ones for sneak previews, so you can get a feel for your next case.

Delivery:

Free delivery

Returns:

They guarantee a full refund or exchange for whatever reason possible. Simply call them if you're not satisfied with your wine plan bottle.

Promotions:

£50 off Classics and Bordeaux Discovery cases. Free bottle of Prosecco when signing up. Cheerful welcome indeed.

Organic selection:

The site's function doesn't work correctly as 'organic' search does not return any results, yet we have managed to find at least five different wines that are certified organic. Not a great selection and the wines are fairly uninteresting.

Stone, Vine and Sun wine merchants

Cheerful website, just slightly outdated in terms of its design and

functionality. Wine Club is not easy to find as they call it a Doorstep Dozen service. Three different cases are offered: Stone Case (£80), Vine Case (£100) and Sun Case (£120) and the selection varies from just fruity and fresh wines to 'vin de terroir' selection' and finally famed and up and coming appellations around the world. You need to call or email them to join their wine plan. Tasting notes for every bottle will be provided. You should expect 2 bottles of three whites and three reds in each case.

Delivery:

£5.95 for a case of 12 bottles and rises, will be free for orders over £150.

Returns:

They state that they are not expecting the returns as everything is carefully selected and prepared, yet should there be a breakage they also expect a courier company rot del with it themselves. If you still find a wrong bottle in your case you should call them immediately. No further returns guarantee is given.

Promotions:

Nothing clearly advertised.

Organic selection:

At least three dozen of quite exciting organic wines ranging from £9.25 to under £30. A fair selection for a good value.

All Wine Clubs in the UK: verdict on the best wine plan

You can see that the majority of wine clubs in the UK is not flawless. Some of them offer exciting ranges but forget to deal with returns, some are full of promotional activities and wine offers, but do not pay attention to how competitive their delivery charge is.

[I Blame The Wine](#) recommends [Laithwaite's](#) and [Sunday Times Wine Club](#) for the exceptional customer service – peace of mind for your deliveries, returns, refunds and exchanges. For the best wine deal on a wine club we recommend [Perfect Cellar](#) – they are young but mighty with with their £50 off your first subscription case. For exceptional service and superb but traditional wine selection choose [Fortnum & Mason wine club](#).

Afterword

This guide is a collection of the most popular roundup posts on IBlameTheWine.com and we hope it will be useful for you. If you have any feedback or believe something should be added to it, please get in touch. Our contact information is below.

As an additional bonus we also want to share some useful links that can help you further and you can keep them altogether should you need anything in the world of good wines. [Click here for the one page list of our most useful links and resources.](#)

What are your own thoughts on the preferred places to shop for wine? Which ones have you tried and which were great and which were rubbish? Please share it with our wine community at [Forums](#).

Let us share our verdict.

We believe that the most value when shopping for wine you get either joining a quality wine club (monetary value) or visiting your preferred independent wine shop and getting an expert advice and expanding on your wine knowledge.

Each of the above mentioned merchants and wine clubs is a bit different - some focus on specific wines (be it New World or classic French ones), some are offering a unique delivery service (i.e. [Majestic](#) own vans) and some are creating a community of wine drinkers (an old and well established Wine Society, or a more modern Laithwaite's wine club).

Social aspects of wine drinking should not be underestimated - we all like to share our sensory experience, be it a formal dinner, a celebration or a well organised wine party. Catering for different dietary needs is essential, so our recommendation is to avoid wines with added sugar. They are normally the cheapest ones you find in your local off-license. Yet also be vigilant with sparkling wines - unless it is Brut Nature it can

seriously drive your sugar intake up.

Delivery issues are not to be overlooked as we all strive for a peace of mind with our deliveries. Good communication between wine retailer and their customers is a must. There should not be any excuses of an inadequately functioning website or some faults with notifications - we need a reliable service. Full stop.

Another soft criteria that could be important for you is so called sense of belonging. Being a part of a wine club that also gathers members for wine tastings and provide slightly more than just a wine by the case shipping could be an answer. Hence we want to explore and deliver a professional advice which of the wine clubs are worth it.

Finally, we also are advocates of a mindful wine drinking.

We are to launch a resource on this, so stay tuned (get back to us if you are interested!), but in the meantime just a quick thought: if you will focus on tasting your wine slowly and mindfully, you will drink less, but enjoy more. Isn't it what we all want - more health and more enjoyment?

Cheers!

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