

ROME IN ITS ORIGINS



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Women, winemakers and their top-scoring wines

International Women's Day is held annually on 8th March to celebrate the accomplishments of women, but like a great Champagne, there need not be a special occasion as reason to toast.



Olivia Mason
March 8, 2023



Winemaker Cecilia Leoneschi of Castiglion del Bosco Credit: Castiglion del Bosco

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That said, International Women's Day is an opportune time to highlight female talents — and in the world of wine there are many.

From the growing and making to marketing, managing and selling of wines, the wine industry is blessed with talented, pioneering women who continue to push the industry forward.

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By no means an all-encompassing list, but an outstanding representation of women behind the bottle, we highlight six women winemakers from across the globe whose wines greatly impressed the experts at **Decanter World Wine Awards** with 97-point wines.

Below learn more about these accomplished women in wine and discover some of their top-scoring wines from the 2022 competition well worth a try...

Australia

Courtney Treacher

Winemaker at Brookland Valley



Courtney Treacher Credit: Houghton Wines

Recognising winemaking was her career path of choice in secondary school, Courtney Treacher pursued her Bachelor of Science in Viticulture and Oenology at Western Australia's Curtin University of Technology.

Her winemaking experiences since have led her to the vineyards of Perth Hills, Swan Valley, Margaret River and Hunter Valley. Working her way up in the cellar from cellar hand to now senior winemaker for Houghton and Brookland Valley Wines, Courtney's perseverance in her career of choice is one of success — and the proof of her winemaking expertise is emulated in her wines.

Awarded not just one, but two **Platinum medals** at the DWWAs, Courtney's wines represent some of the best in the entire competition with both Brookland Valley's Reserve Chardonnay 2020 and Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2020 receiving 97 points.

Brookland Valley, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, WA 2020

Platinum, 97 points | A classic 'Claret' nose with blackcurrants, juicy black fruits, and some bell pepper notes. The palate is welcoming, with enticing bright blue and dark red fruits, toast, and a whiff of herbs. The palate is full, with fruit-driven tannins, and a wonderful length. **Alc** 14%

Brookland Valley, Reserve Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA 2020

Platinum, 97 points | Opens with a lifted aroma of cantaloupe melon with subtle toasty oak notes and some nutty richness. The oak leads the initial palate which opens into restrained ripe fruits with a mouth-filling texture. A trace of light bitterness on the end provides delicious freshness. **Alc** 13.7%

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Chile

Andrea Gillet

Winemaker at Bisquertt

Chilean winemaker Andrea Gillet has proven her talents in cellars across the globe from New World winemaking experiences in the US and New Zealand to Old World applications in Languedoc-Rousillon, France and Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

Returning to Chile, Andrea became assistant enologist at Viña Errázuriz before becoming winemaker at Santa Rita where she crafted wines for over three years. She is now head winemaker at Viñas Bisquertt, and it's its project 'Crazy Cows' which best reflects the anthropological outlook of Andrea. She comments, 'our Crazy Cows series highlights the origin of wines made from patrimonial grape varieties in Chile, which are grown thanks to the tradition and effort of thousands of small producers.' Revitalising Chile's heritage grape varieties Pais, Carignan, Moscatel and Cinsault with fruit from unwieldy old vines, Andrea is crafting wines which show the identity of the country.

Understanding and appreciating the origins of wine, Andrea adds, 'we want to honour the rural producers in southern Chile who make wine on a human scale, who maintain their small vineyards year after year, generation after generation.' Tasted blind at DWVA 2022 across three stages of judging to be awarded **Best in Show**, recognition of the talent behind the bottle is undeniable.

Bisquertt, Crazy Rows Carignan, Maule 2020

Value Best in Show, 97 points | Those drinkers with Carignan in their sights tend to enjoy its often wild, unbridled character, full of energy and unpredictability. They also know, though, that such wines tend to be made from old vines, since few new vineyards of Carignan have been planted in recent years. This is as true of Chile's old-established regions as it is of Western Languedoc — and it often signifies great value. This dark wine has an amply fruity aroma which succeeds in suggesting wild herbs and scrub too. On the palate, it is deeper and more concentrated than you might expect from a Value Best In Show. The rugged austerity of the variety, though, is mitigated by Chile's inherent charm, softness and affability, and the result is a value wine which seduces and stimulates in equal measure. **Alc** 13.5%

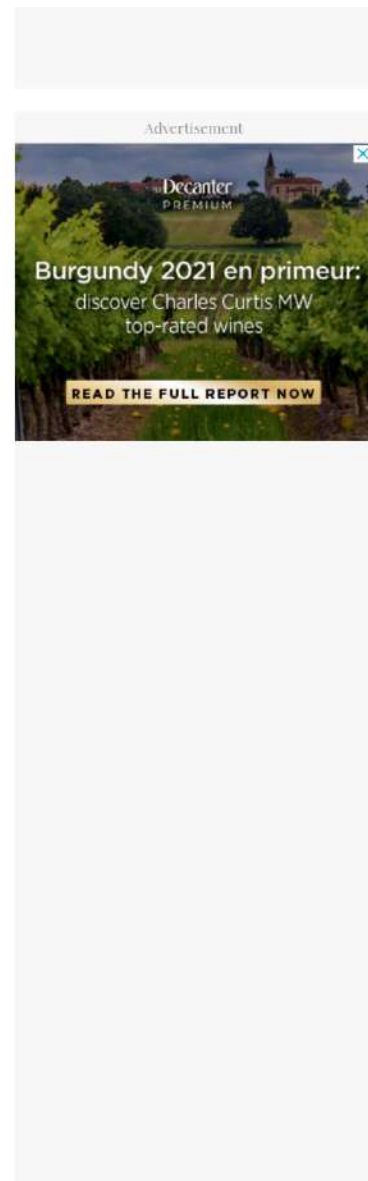
Bisquertt, Crazy Rows Cinsault, Itata Valley 2021

Silver, 91 points | Fresh red fruit and leafy hints, good acidity, sandy tannins, and a pleasant juicy finish. Invites you to a second glass. **Alc** 13.5%

France

Carine Bailleul

Chef de Cave at Champagne Castelnaud





Elisabeth Sarcelet (left) and Carine Bailleul (right) Credit: Kramer O'Neill / Castelnaud

In charge of the Champagne-making process at Champagne Castelnaud is the talented Carine Bailleul who was appointed chef de cave in 2021, though she has been with the Champagne house since 2003, starting first as an intern.

Under the guidance of the house's last cellar master, Elisabeth Sarcelet, Carine's journey at Castelnaud has seen her grow and develop under the leadership of another influential woman in wine.

With two decades at Castelnaud under her belt, Carine's understanding of the Champagne house's style, with cuvées which are characterised by extensive lees ageing and a high percentage of Chardonnay, means her talents are integral to expressing the heart and soul of each Champagne produced.

Castelnaud, Brut, Champagne 2006

Best in Show, 97 points | Praise has been lavished on the 2008 Champagne vintage in recent years, and justly — but this beautifully aged Champagne also underscores how the 2006 vintage, here as elsewhere in France, has a terrific amount of pleasure to offer. The colour has yet to deepen towards gold, and for the time being keeps its bright straw allure; the aromas are rich, bready, enticing and refined, beginning to show the harmony of age. It's pure and structured on the palate, clearly built on fine Meunier and Pinot Noir, with Chardonnay adding grace notes and charm. The dosage is sagely discreet: cellar time as much as grams of sugar give the wine its finishing roundness and poise. **Alc** 12.5%

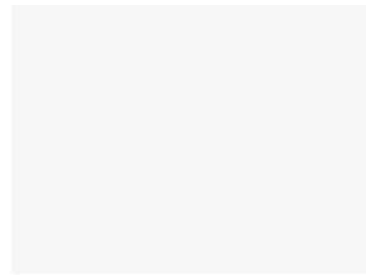
Castelnaud, Hors Categorie Brut, Champagne NV

Silver, 91 points | High finesse and intensity on the nose, with parsley, celeriac, field flowers, citrus oil and smokiness. Silky mouthfeel, enticing, lingering finish. **Alc** 12.5%

Italy

Cecilia Leoneschi

Winemaker at Castiglion del Bosco



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Cecilia Leoneschi Credit: Castiglion del Bosco

Cecilia Leoneschi's wines are as expressive as her captivating personality. Working both in the vineyard and cellar, Cecilia is one with the vines, understanding the health of her vineyards and grapes is integral to the quality of wines she can produce.

From Maremma, Tuscany, Cecilia has a deep love for her region and an incredible grasp on Sangiovese, which she has been closely acquainted with since childhood. Following her father's footsteps as a lifelong winemaker, Cecilia studied Viticulture and Enology in Pisa, then winemaking in Avignonesi, before joining Castiglion del Bosco, one of the founding members of the 'Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino,' in 2003.

With a winemaking philosophy which starts in the vineyard – sustainability being of paramount importance – and drawing on in-depth knowledge of the local terroir and traditional practices, Cecilia follows the production process in its entirety. Having crafted wines at Castiglion del Bosco for a decade now, Cecilia has and continues to unwaveringly put her mark on the Rossos and Brunellos di Montalcino produced.

Castiglion del Bosco, Brunello di Montalcino, Tuscany 2016

Best in Show, 97 points (DWWA 2021) | Translucent black-red in colour, shading to a glowing garnet rim, with refined, artfully composed scents of subdued berry fruits, warm summer forest, dried mushrooms and soft suede. The wine is intense, deep, perfectly pitched in structural terms between lively, well-rounded acidity and brisk, sober tannins: a dignified, grave yet rewarding wine for a fine dinner. It is fully accessible now, yet the quality of its fruit and its balance suggest many years' ageing potential, too. **Alc 14%**

Castiglion del Bosco, Milecento, Brunello di Montalcino Riserva, Tuscany 2016

Silver, 90 points | Intense and ethereal deep red forest fruits. Chunky, yet fresh with layers of Moroccan spices and sweet berries. **Alc 15%**

Spain

Maria de Uña

Winemaker at Bodegas Mazas

Maria de Uña is a winemaker and viticulturist, holding a winemaking degree from Universidad de Zaragoza as well as two master's degrees in Agricultural Engineering from Universitat de Lleida and Winemaking from Rovira i Virgili University in Tarragona.

Following her studies, Maria produced wine in both hemispheres as well as multiple regions in her home country of Spain. Toro won her heart, saying 'the land, the grapes and the viticultural practices were in line with what I wanted to do, which is natural wine.'

Winemaker at Bodegas Mazas, Maria is involved in both the vineyard and winery. In the vineyard low intervention and organic farming principles are applied, and in the winery 'we do very little' she says. With the aim of producing quality wines

which reflect the special and unique vineyards of Toro, Maria's winemaking expertise is helping shape the perception and future of wines from this less-known region.

Bodegas Mazas. Mazas Roble, Toro 2020

Value Best in Show, 97 points | We haven't welcomed Toro to our Best in Show selection in the past, but the sheer power and exuberance of its celebrated Tempranillo strain (Tinta de Toro) has often attracted our judges' attention as we hunt down silvers and golds. This wine puts all of that generosity into the glass, but does so at a price that qualifies for a Value Best In Show: a combination that's hard to resist. It has been oaked, but not with the wild exuberance of some of its pricier peers: look for damson and bramble fruits to come singing out of a glass of this dark, almost-black wine. Like most Toro, it's gratifyingly soft in the mouth but texturally rich for all that: creamy and coaxing. It's hard not to sprawl and wallow in all of that luscious damson and bramble darkness, but soft, discreet acidity combines with the plush tannins to stop the wine cloying. **Alc** 14.5%

USA

Carmel Greenberg

Winemaker at Clos du Val



Carmel Greenberg Credit: Clos du Val

Carmel Greenberg is a Viticulture and Enology graduate from the University of California, Davis with in-depth knowledge of and experience in crafting super-premium Napa Valley wines; Cabernet Sauvignon being her specialty.

Having discovered an interest in wine in her home country of Israel, Carmel pursued her passion first studying wine locally, then relocating to California to make her dreams of winemaking a reality – excelling every step of the way. Her winemaking experiences since have led her to work for well-known estates including Cakebread Cellars, Buccella, Dominus and now Clos du Val where she is head winemaker.

At Clos du Val, Carmel brings her strong foundational education and work and life experiences to the forefront to craft terroir-driven, Bordeaux-style red wines.

Clos du Val, Hirondelle Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District, CA

Best in Show, 97 points | The Stags Leap District of Napa has been a consistent performer down the years in DWWA: its balanced, digestible wines with their distinctive combination of plush fruits and poised, intrinsically complex flavours often win our judges' approval. This Cabernet Sauvignon from the promising 2019 vintage is midnight black in colour, and its aromas (at this youthful stage) are full of floral charm as well as ripely tender blue and black fruits. The tannins are delicate and the fruit-infused acidity is soft and tender. The wine has clearly been made with little extractive force in order to provide an overall picture of great refinement and subtlety – yet the quality of the raw materials here guarantees a long future, as does the wine's inner wealth. **Alc 14.5%**

Clos du Val, Estate Cabernet Franc, Stags Leap District, CA 2019

Platinum, 97 points | Nose of dark, rich, juicy cassis and plum with lovely floral leafiness, hedgerow fruits, dried herbs and a hint of umami. Great concentrated fruit ripeness on the palate, with a firm, grippy tannic structure. Long, crunchy finish with ripe redecurrant and fleshy red fruit. Still has a way to go. **Alc 14.4%**

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