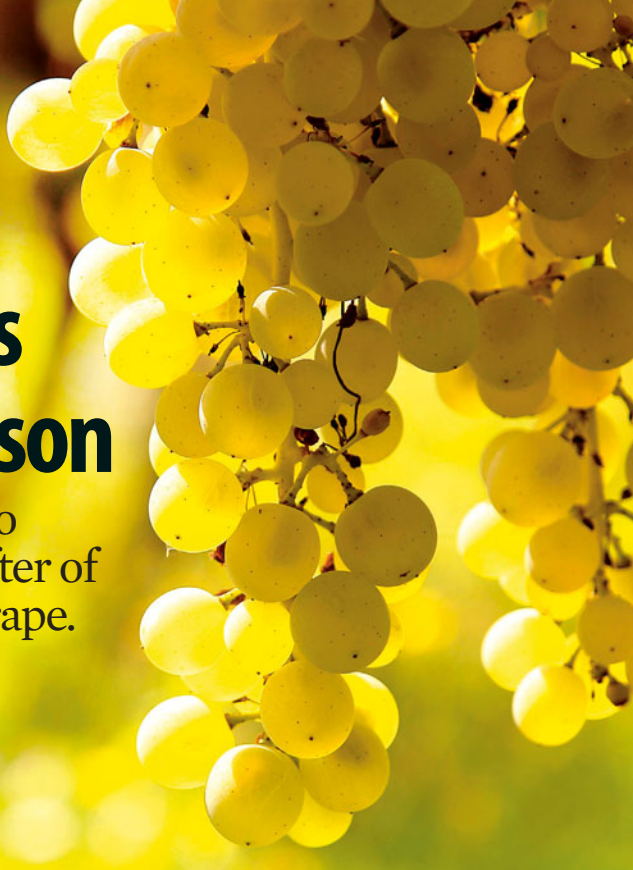




**WINE**  
by Michael Cooper

# Savvy picks for the season

Sail from spring into summer with a snifter of our most famous grape.



showing good intensity and an appetisingly crisp, dry finish. Good value. \$20



**Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2018**  
★★★★★

The latest vintage of Marlborough's most famous wine was predominantly cool-fermented in tanks, but 7% of the blend was fermented at warmer temperatures in old French oak barriques and large-format vats. Weighty (13.1% alc/vol), fleshy and finely textured, it has generous, ripe tropical-fruit flavours to the fore, a herbaceous undercurrent, good complexity and a long, crisp, dry finish. \$37

**T**he sauvignon blancs from the 2018 vintage, mostly from Marlborough, are hitting the shelves right now – and looking good. After its hottest January on record and wettest February by far, Marlborough's 2018 sauvignon blancs are less herbaceous than usual, with a stronger expression of ripe, tropical-fruit aromas and flavours, but they still show good vigour and intensity.

**Amisfield Central Otago Sauvignon Blanc 2018** ★★★★★  
This classy wine was estate-grown at Pisa, in the Cromwell Basin, and fermented in tanks predominantly, and barrels. Ripely scented, it is full-bodied (14% alc/vol) and vibrantly fruity with fresh, concentrated tropical-fruit flavours, showing good complexity, tangy acidity and a finely balanced, long, dry finish. Well worth discovering. \$25

**Astrolabe Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2018** ★★★★★  
This skilfully crafted regional

blend is a fully dry style. A very harmonious wine, it is fresh and weighty (13.5% alc/vol), with lees-ageing notes adding complexity and strong, vibrant, tropical-fruit and herbaceous flavours. \$23



**Auntsfield Single Vineyard Southern Valleys Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2018** ★★★★★  
Estate-grown on the south side of the Wairau Valley, on a site where the region's first wines were made

in the 1870s, this youthful wine was mostly handled in tanks; 5% was fermented in old French oak casks. Mouth-filling (13% alc/vol) and dry, with excellent weight and depth of ripely herbaceous, grapefruit/lime flavours, it's a powerful, finely poised wine with a long finish. \$25

**Black Cottage Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2018** ★★★★★  
From Two Rivers, this is a

good-value wine with lots of drink-young appeal. Fresh, full-bodied (13% alc/vol) and racy, it is dry and crisp with good intensity of passionfruit, lime and green-capsicum flavours. \$18

**Blind River Awatere Valley Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2018** ★★★★★  
This single-vineyard, partly oak-fermented wine is already delicious. Highly aromatic, with mouthfilling body (13% alc/vol), it has punchy, ripe, passionfruit/lime flavours, vaguely toasty notes adding complexity and a long, dry, rounded finish. \$25



**Brightwater Vineyards Nelson Sauvignon Blanc 2018** ★★★★★  
Grown at Hope, on the Waimea Plains, and briefly aged on its yeast lees, this fresh, punchy, full-bodied wine (13% alc/vol) has passionfruit and green-capsicum flavours,



**Dog Point Vineyard Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2018**  
★★★★★

Hand-harvested at several sites in the Wairau Valley, this wine is lees-aged in tanks and handled without oak. Tightly structured, it is mouthfilling (13% alc/vol), sweet-fruited and very youthful, with strong, vibrant, ripely herbaceous flavours, showing a distinct touch of complexity that builds to a long, dry finish. Certified organic. \$26

**Graham Norton's Own Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2018** ★★★★★  
From "chief winemaker Graham Norton", Invivo's latest release has lots of youthful impact. A very easy-drinking style, it is aromatic, full-bodied (13% alc/vol) and smooth, with fresh, ripe, passionfruit/lime flavours and a dry, moderately crisp finish. \$19

**Grove Mill Wairau Valley  
Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

Offering good value, this fresh, medium-bodied wine (12.5% alc/vol) has vibrant passion-fruit/lime flavours, showing good ripeness and intensity and a touch of complexity from 5% barrel fermentation. \$20

**Jules Taylor Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc 2018 ★★★★★**

Delicious young, this mouth-filling wine was grown in the lower Wairau, Southern and Awatere valleys and produced in a bone-dry style. Highly aromatic, it has excellent weight (13% alc/vol), balance and depth of vigorous, ripely herbaceous favours and a very persistent finish. \$25



**Kumeu River  
Sauvignon Blanc 2018  
★★★★★**

This very age-worthy wine is from the long-established Auckland company's newly purchased vineyard on an elevated, north-facing site in Hawke's Bay.

Hand-picked and fermented with indigenous yeasts, it is a distinctive, medium-bodied (12% alc/vol), youthful wine with citrus, lime and apple flavours, showing good intensity, a mineral streak, a touch of complexity and a long finish. \$25



**Lawson's Dry  
Hills Reserve  
Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

This classy wine was grown in the Waihopai and Awatere valleys and 15% was barrel-fermented with indigenous yeasts.

Bright, light lemon/green, it is mouthfilling (13% alc/vol), with vibrant tropical-fruit and herbaceous flavours, showing very good vigour and complexity and a dry, lasting finish. \$25

**Mud House Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc 2018 ★★★★★**

Estate-grown in the upper Wairau Valley, the new season's wine is fresh and medium-bodied (12.5% alc/vol), with very good depth of crisp tropical-fruit and herbaceous flavours. Bargain priced. \$15



**Opawa Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

Delicious young, this Wairau Valley wine is medium-bodied (12.5% alc/vol), very punchy and vibrant, with fresh, ripe tropical-fruit flavours, showing a touch of barrel-ferment complexity and a finely balanced, crisp, fully dry finish. \$22

**Rapaura Springs Reserve  
Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

Offering fine value, this Wairau Valley wine is full-bodied (13% alc/vol), with ripe passionfruit/lime aromas and flavours. A fleshy, dry style with balanced acidity, it's already drinking well. \$19



**Spy Valley  
Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

Grown in the Wairau and Waihopai valleys, this tangy, vibrantly fruity wine was partly barrel-fermented and made in a fully dry style. Medium to

full-bodied (12.8% alc/vol), it has passionfruit, lime and green-capsicum flavours, showing some complexity, good intensity and a crisp, racy finish. \$20

**Starborough Family Estate  
Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

Estate-grown in the Awatere Valley and Wairau Valley, this is a freshly scented, fleshy wine, with very good weight (13.1% alc/vol) and depth of tropical-fruit and herbaceous flavours. It is finely balanced, dry and generous. \$20

**Summerhouse Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc 2018 ★★★★★**

This instantly appealing wine was grown in all of Marlborough's sub-regions – the Wairau, Awatere and Southern valleys. Offering very good value, it is full-bodied and fleshy (13.5% alc/vol), with ripe tropical-fruit flavours, showing excellent delicacy and depth and a dry, smooth finish. \$19

**te Pā Marlborough Sauvignon  
Blanc 2018 ★★★★★**

Priced right, this powerful, full-bodied (13% alc/vol) wine was mostly estate-grown in the lower Wairau Valley, at Rarangi, and made with some barrel fermentation. It has strong, ripe tropical-fruit flavours, a good acid spine and a tight, dry finish. \$20

**Thornbury Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc 2018 ★★★★★**

Offering terrific value, this is a "full on" style from similar amounts of Wairau Valley and Awatere Valley grapes. Highly aromatic, it is mouthfilling (13% alc/vol), with good intensity of vigorous, passionfruit and lime flavours and a dry, appetisingly crisp finish. \$15



**Tohu Awatere  
Valley Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

This punchy, sweet-fruited, intensely varietal wine is full-bodied (13% alc/vol), with fresh melon and green-capsicum flavours, showing excellent delicacy, purity and generosity. Priced sharply. \$18



**Two Rivers  
Marlborough  
Convergence  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

This impressive wine is from sites in the Awatere, Southern and Wairau valleys. Matured on its yeast lees in stainless-steel, clay and concrete vessels, it is weighty (13% alc/vol) and vibrant, with deep tropical-fruit and herbaceous flavours that build to a harmonious, long, dry finish. \$24

**Vidal Reserve Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc 2018 ★★★★★**

This good-value wine was grown principally in the Waihopai Valley, tank-fermented and aged on its yeast lees. Mouthfilling (13% alc/vol), with generous, ripe tropical flavours and a dry finish. \$20



**Whitehaven "Greg"  
Single Vineyard  
Awatere Valley  
Marlborough  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2018 ★★★★★**

This wine is very aromatic and punchy. Mouthfilling (13.5% alc/vol), it has lively melon, lime and green-capsicum flavours, appetisingly crisp, dry and long. Top drinking through 2019. \$28 ■