

March 2026

We all receive offers from various wine clubs from time to time, so I thought it would be worth exploring what they put into the Virgin Wines starter packs which consist of 3 white and 3 red wines for a shade under £30. These are all wines that receive an average 4 star review amongst the wine club members, but as they are all exclusive to Virgin wines it is difficult to know what equivalent wines might retail for elsewhere.

1. **Les Trois Calices Essential Sauvignon blanc Colombard Gros Manseng Cotes de Gascogne**

Here winemaker Christelle Bourrange expertly balances perfumed Gros Manseng, Colombard and everyone's favourite; zippy Sauvignon Blanc. It creates the perfect trinity. The vines from which these grapes come are planted on alluvial river plains with mineral, rich soils. These are great for the cultivation of full-flavoured and elegant wines like Trois Calices.

"In the winery we call this blend "essentiel" because it brings together the three essential grapes of the region in equal proportions. This is the liquid embodiment of our land." - Christelle Bourrange, Winemaker.

Alcohol Content 10.9%
Normal Virgin Wine Price £11-99

2. **Billy Bosch Chenin Blanc 2024 South Africa Western Cape**

The playful title with a distinctive label, is an unpretentious offering from the very talented Ryno, and is a top end Chenin from the Western Cape. Bush vines usually reveal to us that there is some age and low yield, so fruit will be more concentrated. This Chenin is no exception, and has trademark notes of citrus, apple and a little honey - it's a dream with lemon sole.

Alcohol Content 11%
Normal Virgin Wine Price £10-99

3. **Brio Pinot Grigio 2024 Italy IGP Del'Emilia £10.99**

Brio, though a word without a literal translation, is about liveliness, vivacity and energy. That's what this classic Italian Pinot Grigio is all about. Forget everything else; this is a wine that is made to be enjoyed without any pretence. Fresh apples and ripe pear on the nose, fruitful on the palate with a lightness of weight that makes this the ideal aperitif wine.

Dell'[Emilia IGP](#) (or dell'Emilia IGP) is a prominent Italian geographical indication for wines produced in the Emilia part of the Emilia-Romagna region, covering provinces like Modena, Reggio Emilia, Parma, and Bologna. Known for versatile, often sparkling, and high-quality wines—especially Lambrusco (red/white) and white varietals like Chardonnay—these wines are characterized by freshness and fruity note

Alcohol Content 11.8%
Normal Virgin Wine Price **£10.99**

4. Ripper 2024 Shiraz South Eastern Australia

This little ripper is another superb offering from winemaker Frank Mollo. A Shiraz with a juicy black cherry and blackberry nose with spicy undertones. The winemaking is first-class and, being family owned and run, they are dedicated to achieving the very best quality. It makes the perfect accompaniment to wintery foods such as grilled meats, grilled vegetables, wild game or even beef stew.

Alcohol Content **12.3%**
Normal Virgin Wine Price **£11-99**

5. Florel Reserve Malbec 2024 Argentina

This Malbec does not disappoint: dried fruit character and notes of chocolate, yet plenty of fresh plum and blackberry fruit to balance.

From a winemaker Stephen Huse who trained in oenology at the University of Bordeaux. He has worked at top estates worldwide including Châteaux Margaux and Mouton-Rothschild. This wine perfectly combines French style finesse and Argentinian weight.

Great with grilled meats of all kinds - or veggie kebabs with a spicy marinade, if that's more your thing.

Alcohol Content 12.8%
Normal Virgin Wine Price £12-99

6. Marques del Parral Rioja Tempranillo

Hand-crafted by super-experienced Rioja winemaker Jose Javier Fernández, this delicious red is made with 100% Tempranillo and demonstrates exactly why this grape and region is one of the ultimate marriages in the world of wine. Only fruit in excellent condition is accepted during harvest and then carefully nurtured to wine under the watchful eye of Jose and his team. The result is a pure expression of the variety - ripe strawberry, sweet plum and a mild note of chocolate.

Jose Javier Fernández, originally from Rincón de Soto, has more than 30 years experience as a winemaker, 25 of those at Bodegas Corcel where he has mastered the techniques to bring the essence of this great region to the glass. Refining the quality of the fruit over this period has been behind the continual improvement of this excellent Rioja bodega.

"For me, this perfectly expresses our region and bodega. The feature here is the purity of the fruit, showing lovely ripe red fruit with subtle notes of sweet vanilla." - Jose Javier Fernández, Winemaker.

Alcohol Content 13.5%
Normal Virgin Wine Price £12-99

Notes and voting

All 3 white wines were light and dry; I deliberately did not refrigerate them before bringing them as I didn't want the temperature to suppress the flavours. Les Trois Calices was lacking in character; inoffensive, drinkable, but instantly forgettable. It did not receive any votes. The Billy Bosch was probably the most full flavoured, and the Pinot Grigio was also enjoyable, lighter and crisper.

I let the reds breathe before bringing them; I opened them in the morning, poured a generous glass out to bring the level of wine beneath the neck and left them open until it was time to bring them (I did pour the glassfuls back into the bottle) This allowed some of the tannins to oxidise, softening the flavour of these comparatively young wines and allowing the aromatics to develop as if left longer in a cellar. I find this particularly necessary for tannin heavy wines like Merlot and Rioja.

All three red wines were well received.

Voting (to be added for website - Michelle has the numbers)

More about the Virgin Wine Club

On taking up the introductory offer one sets up a monthly direct debit. It defaults to £25/month which goes into an account which accrues interest. The wine is delivered within days, together with an offers pack, including a £75 off voucher to give to a friend using the code FRIEND75.

Each month several special offers are received by email (typically £50 off a case). However, it is straightforward to cancel at any time, to obtain a full refund (but the interest is lost). The direct debit is cancelled, but membership remains, and the offers are still received; enabling one to make a one-off payment to take advantage of any offer that seems attractive.