

How Low Can You Go? Are Low/No Alcoholic Drinks Any Good? (samples available)



PUBLISHED MAR 9, 2021
BY [PRESSAT](#)

The Wine Society, takes a look at the lo/no alcohol sector and invites you to sample from its range.

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As we witness a huge boom in the production and sales of low and no alcoholic drinks, the world's oldest wine club, The Wine Society, takes a look at the sector and invites you to sample the following from its range:

According to IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, sales of no/low alcoholic beverages will increase by 31% in volume by 2024. Research undertaken by the IWSR has found that consumers around the world are increasingly prioritising health and wellness when selecting their favourite drinks brand. As consumers continue to pursue healthier lifestyles (the global pandemic has provided yet further impetus in this regard), the sector is poised for further expansion.

So, what is non-alcoholic wine? Pierre Mansour, director of wine at The Wine Society, explains:

"According to 'The Oxford Companion to Wine', alcohol is 'an important, intoxicating constituent of wine and all other alcoholic drinks. Ethanol, often called simply 'alcohol', is colourless and odourless but can have considerable impact on how a liquid tastes. Of course, alcohol plays a part in the joy of drinking wine; it makes sharing moments with friends and family convivial and memorable. Alcohol also adds roundness and mouthfeel, contributing to a sense of 'fullness' and body.

If a winemaker wants to remove alcohol from a wine, there are several methods, with varying degrees of success; these

processes sometimes also remove the aromatics and flavours that make wine such a pleasure to drink to begin with. The expensive and often heavy-handed industrial processes used to produce many 'no-alcohol' wines is probably why it's rare we find any that meet The Society's high quality standards, but there are always exceptions, such as a lovely French fizz from a Champagne house: Gratien and Meyer Festillant Sans Alcool is consistently good and costs only £4.50 a bottle.

At The Society, we have tended to focus on naturally low-alcohol wine. Some of the world's greatest white wines are naturally low in alcohol: the dry, steely whites of the Hunter Valley in Australia, from early-harvested grapes, range from 10-11.5%. Germany's exquisite rieslings, ranging from dry to fully sweet styles, energise and refresh with delicate alcohol levels that reach just 10%, such as our Ruppertsberger Hoheburg Riesling Kabinett 2020 at £7.95. Sparkling wines are often also naturally low, seldom exceeding 12.5% (dry styles) and Italy's sweeter speciality Moscato d'Asti is a joy to drink at just 5.5%. But finding decent red wines below 12% is a challenge.

While it's true that lower-alcohol wines can be very good, especially whites and fizz, you should do your research when venturing into the world of de-alcoholised; the quality of the final product is most often disappointing. More successful, in my opinion, is de-alcoholised beer (there's less alcohol to remove therefore less impact on the taste), such as Drink'in The Sun Alcohol Free Pale Ale from Denmark, at £2.50 for a 33cl bottle."

For more information on alcohol units and alcohol-free days, visit [DRINK AWARE](#) .

Samples are allocated at the discretion of The Wine Society.

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of Pressat, on Mar 9, 2021. For more information subscribe and [follow us](#).

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