

THE SHORTLIST

London's best independent wine and specialist drink merchants

■ **Bedales**, 5 Bedale Street, Borough Market, SE1, (020) 7403 8853, bedaleswines.com

Arnaud Compas's wine bars cum shops, located in the picturesque surroundings of Leadenhall, Borough and Spitalfields markets, feature regular tastings with eager, knowledgeable staff.

■ **Berry Bros. & Rudd**, 3 St James's Street, SW1, 0800 280 2440, bbr.com

The words 'iconic' and 'legendary' spring to mind when describing this traditional yet thoroughly modern merchant. Britain's oldest wine and spirit merchant, having traded from the same shop for over 300 years, is an institution in wine.

■ **Bibendum Wine Limited**, 113 Regent's Park Road, NW1, (020) 7449 4120, bibendum-wine.co.uk

A fine wine merchant established in the 1980s with an unstoppable passion for quality wine and a large and loyal following.

■ **Cheers Wine Shop**, 15 Craven Road, W2, (020) 7706 4684

A tiny place with a great selection of good value finds across the road from Paddington Station. Go for a wander while waiting for your train and pick up a gem for those you are visiting.

■ **El Vino Co. Ltd**, Vintage House, 1-2 Hare Place, Fleet Street, EC4, (020) 7353 5384, elvino.co.uk

Founded way back in 1879, El Vino is an institution in the City, with its ever-popular wine bars. As an independent wine merchant it offers a comprehensive choice of the world's best wines.

■ **Friarwood**, 26 New King's Road, SW6, (020) 7736 2628, friarwood.com

Established over 40 years ago, this family firm still lives by its values by organising tastings and keeping locals up to date with newsletters.

■ **Gerry's Wines & Spirits**, 74 Old Compton Street, W1, (020) 7734 2053, gerrys.uk.com

The greatest source of every spirit you can imagine from all over the world. For something unique, make this your first stop.

■ **Green & Blue Wines**, 38 Lordship Lane, SE22, (020) 8693 9250, greenandbluewines.com

Stop for lunch in this organic wine shop and deli and you'll find helpful staff happy to answer questions about their broad organic selection and smaller boutique producers.

■ **Haynes, Hanson & Clarke**, 7 Elystan Street, SW3, (020) 7584 7927, hhandc.co.uk

A fantastic local wine merchant in the heart of South Kensington supplying some of the great surrounding restaurants with the best wines from Burgundy and beyond.



The Sampler, N1

■ **Highbury Vintners**, 71 Highbury Park, N5, (020) 7226 1347, highburyvintners.co.uk

This establishment has not only an amazing array of over 1,000 wines from smaller producers, but also a great selection of boutique beers. Just don't go when Arsenal are playing at home.

■ **Justerini & Brooks**, 61 St James's Street, SW1, (020) 7484 6400, justerinis.com

So grand that they don't have any actual wine on view in their shop at all. Instead, choose your selection from their catalogue and they'll arrange to have it sent to you.

■ **Lea & Sandeman**, 170 Fulham Road, SW1, (020) 7244 0522, leaandsandeman.co.uk

One of four branches across London, but if you head to the Chelsea original you can often find owners Charles or Patrick in situ. One of the greatest wine shops in the capital.

■ **Planet of the Grapes**, 9 New Oxford Street, WC1, (020) 7405 4912, planetofthegrapes.co.uk

Matt and Marc, the new kids on the block, have a fantastic shop and tasting room at 9 New Oxford Street as well as a bar at 9-10 Bulls Head Passage in Leadenhall Market.

■ **Philglas & Swiggot**, 21 Northcote Road, SW11, (020) 7924 4494, philglas-swiggot.com

The first shop opened in Battersea's Northcote Road; now, two decades later, they have extended the empire to Richmond and more recently Marylebone. A great selection.

■ **Roberson**, 348 Kensington High Street, W14, (020) 7371 2121, robersonwinemerchant.co.uk

A merchant fighting the transformation of our high streets into a series of faceless chains, this individualist supplier is passionate about good wine.

■ **Royal Mile Whiskies**, 3 Bloomsbury Street, WC1, (020) 7436 4763, royalmilewhiskies.com

This award-winning Aladdin's cave of whiskies has been a mecca for those with a taste for the malty stuff since 1991. There's a vast range from Scotland with greats from Japan and the US too.

■ **Selfridges**, 400 Oxford Street, W1, 0800 123 400, selfridges.com

Buyer Dawn Davies has selected the greatest wines available in the UK to buy under one roof, in the spectacular surroundings of the 'Wonder Room'.

■ **Theatre of Wine**, 75 Trafalgar Road, SE10, (020) 8858 6363, theatreofwine.com

These purveyors of fine wines and specialist spirits also have an eclectic selection of boutique and rare beers for those with a fancy for the frothy stuff.

■ **The Four Vintners**, 3 Fleet Street, EC4, (020) 7353 7733, thefourvintners.co.uk

Not only a decent wine merchant but also suppliers of a fantastic range of beers, spirits, minerals and even a great range of cigars – a breath of fresh air in the City.

■ **The Sampler**, 266 Upper Street, N1, (020) 7226 9500, thesampler.co.uk

Stocking over 1,500 unusual wines from around the world, The Sampler offers 80 different wines to sample at any time from 10 sampling machines, with something to appeal to all tastes and budgets.



Uncorked, EC2

■ **The Winery**, 4 Clifton Road, W9, (020) 7286 6475, thewineryuk.com

Stocking highlights from Germany and Burgundy, the proprietors of this popular local shop make time to actually visit vineyards and take pride in discovering new small growers.

■ **Uncorked**, 3 Exchange Arcade, EC2, (020) 7638 5998, uncorked.co.uk

One of London's leading merchants, Uncorked is proud of the quality of its range and also of its willingness to cease stocking underperformers.

■ **Vinoteca**, 7 St John Street, EC1, (020) 7235 8786, vinoteca.co.uk

It's no surprise this strongly individual wine bar and shop is winning so many plaudits and awards for its concept and effortless style. A must-visit.

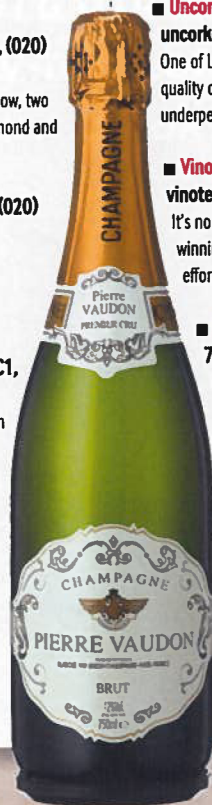
■ **Vintage House**, 42 Old Compton Street, W1, (020) 7437 2592

If you want a wine, port or other favourite tittle in a particular vintage for a birthday or an anniversary, then look no further. You'll definitely find something in this amazing shop.

■ **Wine of Course**, 216 Archway Road, N6, (020) 8347 9006, zelas.co.uk

Get an education on 'natural' fine wines and a course on organics from this merchant, which promotes vineous liquids in their purest, most honest form.

Written and compiled by Christopher Cooper



Berry Bros & Rudd, SW1