

Baltic
WINE LIST
AWARDS
2019



BALTIC WINE LIST AWARDS 2019

«The Baltic Wine List Awards in association with *Cross Keys Gin* and the leading European wine personalities were created to recognize restaurants and bars with good, great and extraordinary wine lists at a time when an appreciation for wine is becoming an integral part of Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian culture.

The Awards are designed to improve wine selection and service in the Baltics and encourage strong and passionate wine lists that complement our restaurants and cuisines.”

Raimonds Tomsons, Head of Jury, European
Somm Champion 2017





RIGA WINE & CHAMPAGNE

The first *Baltic Wine List Awards* in association with *Amber Beverage Group* took place in March 2018 during an international forum awarding the best wine lists and getting together of the best minds of the wine business!

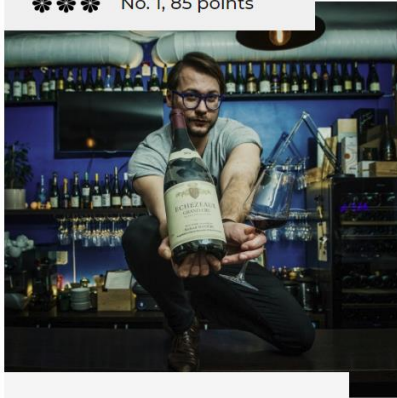


RIGA WINE & CHAMPAGNE

The winners of the first *Baltic Wine List Awards* featured representatives of all Baltic countries – the leading restaurants, wine bars, wine bars-shops, and hotel restaurants. There were two 3-star winners, ten 2-star winners, nine 1-star winners as well as nine «Recommended» wine lists.

RESULTS: TOP 20 BALTIC WINE LISTS 2018

*** No. 1, 85 points

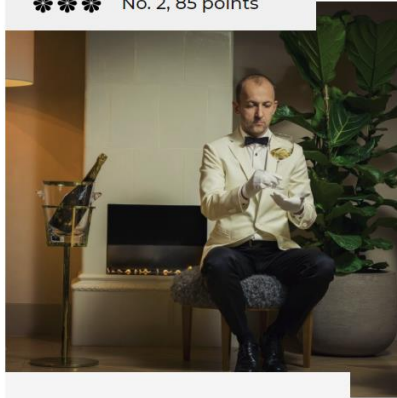


Vieta

📍 Latvia

☆ Best Wine List in the Baltic countries

*** No. 2, 85 points

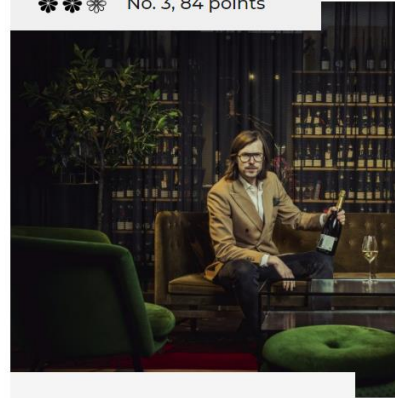


Le Magnum Bar

📍 Latvia

☆ Best Champagne List in the Baltic countries

*** No. 3, 84 points

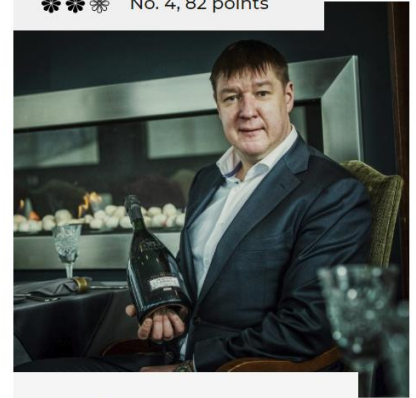


Modernists

📍 Latvia

☆ Best presentation in the Baltic countries

*** No. 4, 82 points



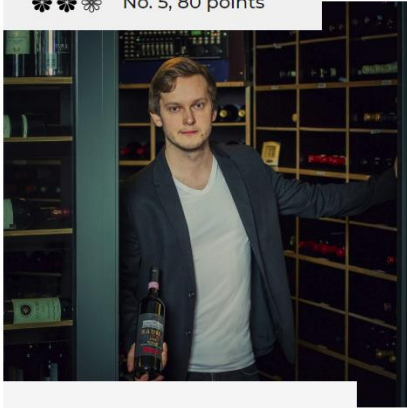
Gutenberg Terase

📍 Latvia

☆ Best Hotel Restaurant Wine List in the Baltic countries

RESULTS: TOP 20 BALTIC WINE LISTS 2018

*** No. 5, 80 points

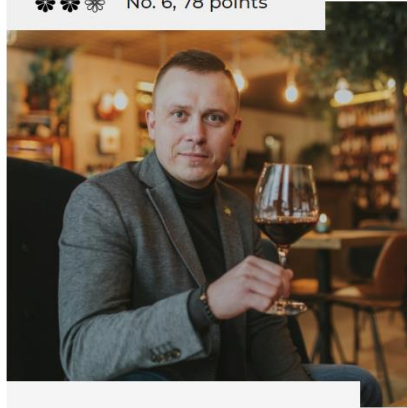


Vincents

📍 Latvia

★ Best Restaurant Wine List in the Baltic countries

*** No. 6, 78 points

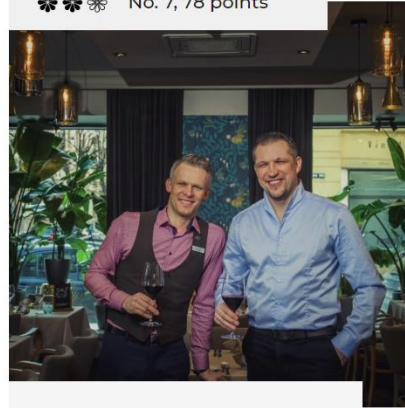


Time to Wine Bar and Shop

📍 Estonia

★ Best Wine List in Estonia/
Best Value Wine List in Estonia

*** No. 7, 78 points

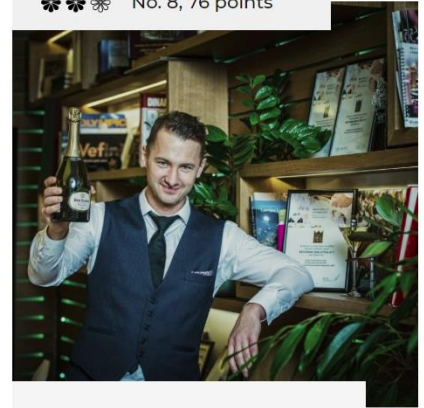


Riviera

📍 Latvia

★ Top 10 Baltic Wine List

*** No. 8, 76 points



Biblioteka N°1 Restorāns

📍 Latvia

★ Top 10 Baltic Wine List

RESULTS: TOP 20 BALTIC WINE LISTS 2018

*** No. 9, 76 points

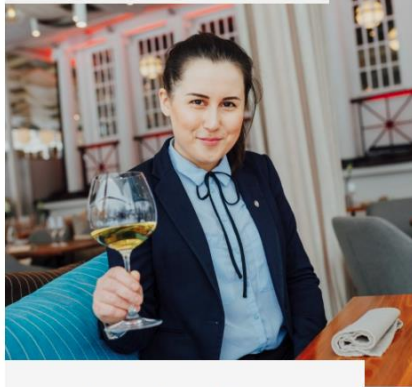


Leib Restaurant

📍 Estonia

★ Best Restaurant Wine List in Estonia

*** No. 10, 76 points



Kolonāde. Mūsu stāsti ...

📍 Latvia

★ Top 10 Baltic Wine List

*** No. 11, 75 points



Atelier Wine Boutique and Tasting Bar

📍 Lithuania

★ Best Wine List in Lithuania/
Best Wine Bar-Shop in Lithuania

*** No. 12, 75 points



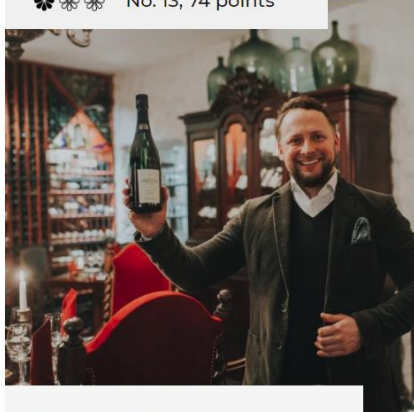
SOMM

📍 Lithuania

★ Best Wine Bar List in Lithuania/
Best presentation in Lithuania

RESULTS: TOP 20 BALTIC WINE LISTS 2018

*** No. 13, 74 points



Gloria Veinikelder

- 📍 Estonia
- ★ Best Bordeaux Wine List in Estonia/ Best presentation in Estonia

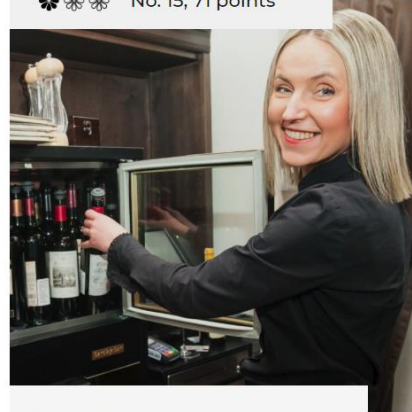
*** No. 14, 74 points



Molto

- 📍 Latvia
- ★ Top 10 Wine List in Latvia

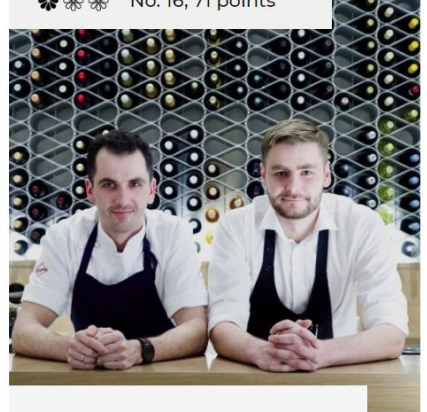
*** No. 15, 71 points



Monte Pacis

- 📍 Lithuania
- ★ Best Hotel Restaurant Wine List in Lithuania

*** No. 16, 71 points

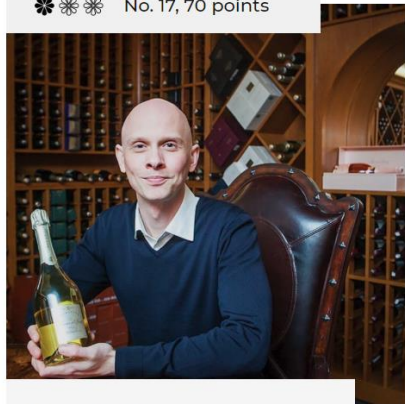


Ribe

- 📍 Estonia
- ★ Best Small Wine List in Estonia

TOP 20 BALTIC WINE LISTS 2018

*** No. 17, 70 points

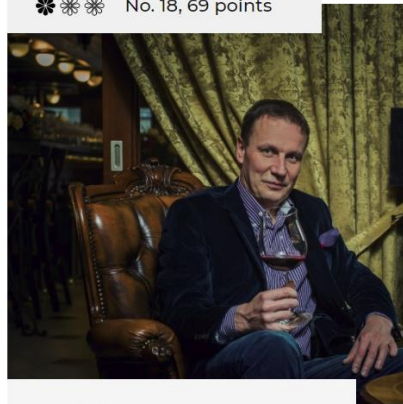


La Esperanza

📍 Lithuania

★ Best Champagne List in Lithuania

*** No. 18, 69 points

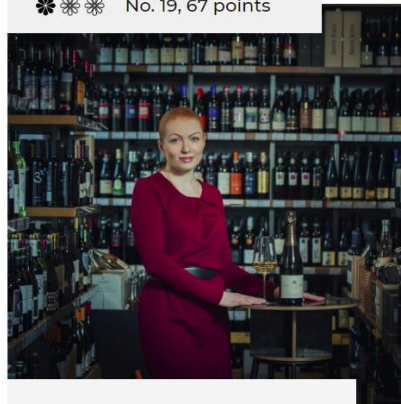


Monterosso

📍 Latvia

★ Best Italian Wine List in the Baltic countries

*** No. 19, 67 points

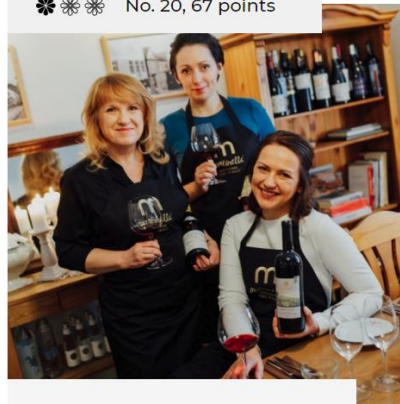


Vīna Studija

📍 Latvia

★ Best Wine Bar-Shop in Latvia

*** No. 20, 67 points



Martinelli

📍 Latvia

★ Best Small Wine List in Latvia

BRIEFLY about «RECOMMENDED» wine lists

The Good: Compact and nicely-selected wine lists, containing mostly *safe* and classic wine choices. Wines tend to represent a bit of everything, but seldom get off-the-beaten-track. Although one is not likely to find treasures or back vintages, expect plenty of safely calculated drinking pleasure.

The Ugly: A variety of spelling mistakes and missing vintages (a big NO for any self-respecting wine list). Sometimes these lists can be just too-safe, showing a lack of creativity. Sometimes the most famous names could be overpriced – so watch out!

BRIEFLY about ONE STAR wine lists

The Good: Fine, ambitiously selected, and creative wine lists that will capture the interest, curiosity, and excitement of wine lovers. Expect to experience a good depth of selections, some mature vintages, and a fair share of off-the-beaten-track wines. One star wine lists are clear indications that wine is in the DNA of a restaurant – so wine fun is guaranteed!

The Ugly: Sometimes too long for the sake of being long. Some lists tended to show the depth of knowledge rather than express the passion of the place or sommelier/chef team behind it. Layouts and presentations can be messy and difficult to read.

BRIEFLY about TWO STAR winelists

The Good: Excellent wine lists created with care, knowledge, and passion to reflect the personality of the place and people behind it. Two star lists boast a wide range of both artisanal and classic wines, plenty of mature bottles and rarities, some verticals of sought-after producers, as well as clear and thought-out presentations. The best tend to offer sensible markups inviting to trade-up and spend more. Expect to find superb selections by the glass and excellent wine and food matching programmes!

The Ugly: Just learn that French, friends!

Briefly about THREE STAR wine lists

The Good: World-class wine lists! Very original and providing a clear evidence of passion and real vision of the teams behind it. Outstanding selection of wines, including leading producers both classic and new-wave. Expect to find a wide range of wine styles and prices as well as a very good mix of vintages in terms of maturity, quality, and style. Three star wine lists are the definite Baltic wine destinations!

The Ugly: Nothing really. Expect to get carried away and spend all your savings here!

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JUDGING PROCESS 2019

JUDGES and FOUNDERS



Aigars Nords (LV), founder of **Riga Wine & Champagne festival** and **Baltic Wine List Awards**.

The first in the Baltics to acquire WSET Diploma in 2010, he set up the festival in 2012. Since its first champagne masterclass by Peter Liem, the festival has grown into a grand celebration of fine wine & champagne with some of Latvia's most anticipated tastings - the annual «Bubble Parade», «Wine of the Year» and many others.

Aigars is a true ambassador of wine and champagne, has a monthly wine column in Latvia's leading lifestyle magazine KLUBS. He also runs marathons, and is the founder of Lattelecom Riga Marathon.



Raimonds Tomsons (LV) is the **Europe's Best Sommelier 2017** and **World's No.7 Sommelier 2016**. Raimonds has been a long time sommelier and CEO of **Vincents**, the Baltic's leading restaurant.

Raimonds has been active in Baltic and European wine scene, is the Board member of the Latvian Association of Sommeliers. Jury member of Latvia's **Wine of the Year** competition since 2014.

JUDGES: Baltic countries



Kristjan Peäske (EE) is Vice-President of Estonia's Sommelier Association.

He started his career as a *maître d'* at Pädaste Manor on the island of Muhu, worked in 5* hotels across Estonia and won a number of sommelier competitions (Estonia's best sommelier, Baltic's best sommelier) before opening award-winning restaurants Leib in 2011 and Umami in 2014.



Arūnas Starkus (LT) is one of the founding fathers of Lithuanian wine scene.

Arunas set up Lithuania's Sommelier Association and founded the Sommelier School alongside his duties of running a successful wine importing business *Vyno Klubas*, and organizing *Wine Days* exhibition. Arunas is also studying for *Master of Wine* qualification.

International JUDGES



Michael Sager is a sommelier and owner of Sager & Wilde wine bar in London, UK

After working in California with the award-winning sommelier Raj Parr, Michael Sager opened and developed Sager & Wilde – a now famous wine bar and a bustling restaurant in Bethnal Green. In October 2018, Michael surprised London again by opening Fare Bar and Canteen.



Giovanni Sinesi is the Wine Director and Head Sommelier of Niko Romito Group.

Since 2004 he has been the Head Sommelier of the World's Restaurant No.33 – three star Michelin restaurant *Reale Restaurant* in Abruzzo, Italy.

International JUDGES

Andreas Larsson was born in Stockholm and worked as a chef before training as a sommelier. He is currently head sommelier at Restaurant PM & Vänner in Sweden.

His ability has been amply recognized by many awards: Swedish Sommelier Champion 2001 and 2002, Nordic Sommelier Champion 2002, Meilleur Sommelier de Suède 2003, Ruinart European Sommelier of the Year 2004, and **Best Sommelier of the World 2007**.

Andreas loves white wines from Austria, and when not working, he enjoys playing and composing music.



OVERALL PROCESS.

#1 What's inside the list?	50p
#2 How much?	25p
#3 How is it presented?	20p
<u>#4 Can they surprise us?</u>	<u>5p</u>
TOTAL:	Max 100p

85 – 100 points = Three star wine list

75 – 85 points = Two star wine list

65 – 75 points = One star wine list

#1 WHAT'S INSIDE THE LIST? 50/100 points

Clear vision:

Is the wine list a stylistic choice in relation to restaurant vs. «one size fits all» philosophy?

How strongly does the wine list relate to the personality of the restaurant?

How suitable are the wine selections for the cuisine and the establishment?

Breadth and depth:

Spread of countries and wine styles from across the world? Or focus on wines from a single country?

A particular regional focus and strength?

In-depth listings of producers?

A mix of vintages - age, maturity, quality, style?

Offering:

A good by-the-glass program? With/without Coravin?

A selection of half-bottles and larger formats?

#2 HOW MUCH? 25/100 points

Markups:

How high are the markups relative to the market?

How high are the markups relative to the type of restaurant/ wine bar?

Encouragement to drink more & better:

How affordable are entry price point wines?

Does the pricing of the wines encourage ordering & spending more?

Does the list provides tempting prices further up the list?

Are all wines priced with a fixed percentage margins from bottom to top?

Are there aggressive markups on the famous names?

#3 HOW is it PRESENTED? 20/100 points

Design & Clarity:

Is the design and the feel of the wine list in the context of the restaurant?

Is it a compact and well-picked/presented vs. a huge tome?

How clear is the organization and presentation?

Is the list accurate and complete?

Does it include origin, producer, wine, vintage, price, and format or serving size?

Staff & experience:

How knowledgeable and experienced are the sommeliers/staff of the restaurant? Who are the people on the floor serving wine based on CVs?

Optional – if checking on site:

What sort of stemware does the restaurant use? Temperature of the wines?

Can they deliver a great wine experience in terms of presenting, pouring, decanting, and telling the story? Is the staff as interested in the wines as the management?

#4 CAN THEY SURPRISE US? 5/100 points

The element of a surprise:

Is it an original one-of-a-kind list?

Have the owners/sommeliers gone out of their way to secure the wines in the list?

Does it offer a selection of smaller, obscure, hard to find producers, vintages, styles, varieties?

Is it done in an innovative, brave or creative way?

Is it far from standard expectations of what a wine list should look and behave like?

Additional CATEGORIES

Based on the applications received, the Jury deserves the right to award special award categories, for example, but not limited to:

- ✓ *Best Wine List of Latvia/ Lithuania/ Estonia/ Belarus/ Best Baltic Wine List;*
- ✓ *Best Hotel Wine List/ Best Wine Bar List / Best Restaurant Wine List / Best Wine Bar-Shop list, etc.;*
- ✓ *The Most Complete/ Best Value/ Best Presentation/ The Most Surprising List;*
- ✓ *Best Champagne/ Sparkling/ Fortified/ Bordeaux/ Best Old-World List / Best New World List, etc.;*
- ✓ *Best Large/ Medium-size/ Compact Wine list;*
- ✓ *Best by-the-glass list, Best selection of Large format bottles.*

Three brands by Amber Beverage Group – Frescobaldi, Arinzano, Achaval Ferrer – have the right to award Special Prizes as suggested by the Jury.

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JUDGING TIMELINE 2019

THE PROCESS. TIMELINE.

#1 Submission of wine lists via rigawinechampagne.lv: Nov 15, 2018 – Jan 15, 2019.

Required: a questionnaire + EUR129/179 (+VAT) fee per restaurant.

The fee serves as an entrance to the Baltic Wine List Awards Forum during Riga Wine & Champagne on March 7. The early bird fee of EUR129 applies until December 15.

#2 Judging process. Jan 15 – Feb 6, 2019

#3 Awards Ceremony during *Riga Wine & Champagne* spring session on March 1, 2019

#4 Riga Wine & Champagne Sommelier Forum: gathering of the leading sommeliers and restaurateurs in Riga on March 1, 2019

#6 Publication of «the Best Baltic Wine lists» in **Baltic Outlook**, the official media partner of the Awards, March 2019

#7 The searchable online results at «the Best Baltic Wine lists», March 2019

THE BEST WINE LISTS IN THE BALTICS

Last month the first Baltic Wine List Awards were presented to acknowledge restaurants, bars, and wine boutiques in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia that offer exceptional wine lists. Here is your complete list of award winners, each carefully chosen by the jury – which was headed by European Sommelier Champion 2017 Raimonds Tomsons – and based on the consistency of the wine list, its uniqueness, and presentation.



◀ BEST WINE LIST Vieta ***

Vieta and its energetic owner, Jānis Volkinšteins, have put great effort into creating a wine selection that represents an outstanding balance of classics, new vintages, and off-the-beaten-track wines in terms of wine styles and prices, this wine list is so vast that it will suit every wine lover's taste and budget.

Sommelier's Pick:
Henri Giraud Ay Grand Cru 'Fût de Chêne 1970'
Magnum and Richard Maniere Echezeaux 2014
K. Valdemāra iela 61-1, Riga
vietabari.lv

▶ BEST ITALIAN WINE LIST Monterosso ***

The Monterosso restaurant is one of the pioneers of Italian cuisine in Riga. Housed in a unique early-20th-century building in the heart of Old Riga, it offers a fine representation of Italian wine geography and introduces both off-the-beaten-track artisanal growers and such cult names as Quintarelli, Clerico, and Caja. The list also features a great choice of French classics and a fine selection of Bordeaux and Champagne.

Sommelier's Pick:
Siro Pacenti Brunello di Montalcino Riserva PS 2007
Valņu iela 9, Riga
monterosso.lv



▶ BEST HOTEL RESTAURANT WINE LIST BEST BORDEAUX WINE LIST BEST VALUE WINE LIST Gutenbergs Terasē

For more than 14 years, Hotel Gutenbergs' terrace restaurant has been serving classic French cuisine with a solid focus on French wine.



▶ BEST RESTAURANT WINE LIST Vincents ***

Vincents has been the paramount culinary destination of Latvia for over two decades and consistently ranks at the very top of Baltic restaurants. It has a perfectly curated wine selection, the result of teamwork between the restaurant's two sommeliers, Raimonds Tomsons and Roberts Brenčins – and chef Aļeksandrs Rāimonds Tomsons. Vincents has an outstanding Coravin selection by the glass, excellent wine and food pairing offers, and even a wine-up of Chef's Favourites.

Sommelier's Pick: Masobrodering Taurasi Riserva 2000
Elizabetes iela 19, Riga | restorans.lv



BEST PRESENTATION Gutenbergs ***

Champagne bar



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