

# TOP 8 dressings TESTED

## Dressing to impress

Roz Crowley

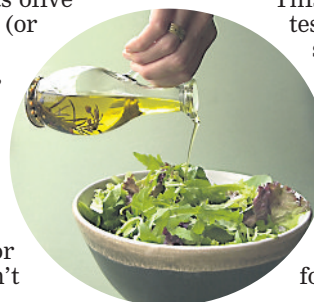
**T**HIS terrific summer has brought with it superb produce that looks as good as it tastes. Salad dressings can liven up any leaf and provide a variety of tastes for the most ordinary head of lettuce. Easy to make, a simple blend of four parts olive oil to one part lemon juice (or vinegar) is hard to beat, with a touch of garlic, salt, pepper and mustard depending on how delicate the leaves or vegetables are. Chopped basil, mint and/or parsley ring the seasonal changes.

The simpler the better for soft lettuce leaves, and don't

drown them in the dressing. A gentle anointing is all they need. When leaves are tough, such as chicory or spinach, warm the dressing and pour it over immediately to soften them. (See my blog [rozcrowley.com](http://rozcrowley.com) for more ideas.)

This week we mixed things up, testing new dressings along side well-established brands.

While the old-favourites continue to deliver a consistent flavour, we found some welcome surprises among the new arrivals. We scored each product on its own merit, judging on taste and value for money. **IN**



### Nash Citrus and Poppy Seed dressing, 250ml €3.95

The oil here is not specified, but has a rich texture, livened up by delicious lemon and lime flavours. Added interest comes from honey and poppy seeds. Delicious with all summer salads and vegetables, blended with mashed potatoes instead of butter, and with fillets of fish and fish cakes. An excellent new product.

**Score: 9**



### Ponti Glassa Gastronomica, 250g €3.99

This balsamic glaze from Delitaly, a new Italian deli on Marlboro Street, Cork, comes in a squeeze bottle for fancy flourishes on plates and food. Balsamic vinegar is thickened with maize starch and xanthan gum which do it no harm, so the taste is rich and slightly sweet with the expected vinegar hit. Try on pannacotta and with yoghurt as well as on salads and hot vegetables.

**Score: 8**



### Newman's Own balsamic dressing, 250ml €2.29

Rapeseed oil is used here which gives it quite a fatty feel, but the flavour is perked up with quite a lot of garlic and some pepper, as well as balsamic vinegar. 3% extra virgin oil and barley malt vinegar help with the balance and the dressing is thickened with xanthan gum. Overall, a little fatty for our liking.

**Score 6.5**



### Ballymaloe honey & mustard dressing, 250ml €2.95

In a squeeze bottle, this thick, grainy dressing has a terrific sweet and sour balance. Sunflower, extra virgin and basic olive oils are blended with honey, and white wine vinegar. Wholegrain mustard gives extra textural interest. Good on hot new potatoes and on the side with fish, as well as on salads.

**Score: 8**



### Hellmann's balsamic vinaigrette, 235ml €1.99

Lacking in depth of flavour, this has quite a lot of thickener. The spout is wide so it's easy to over-pour. A short list of ingredients is commendable and results in a pleasant enough dressing. Good on new potatoes.

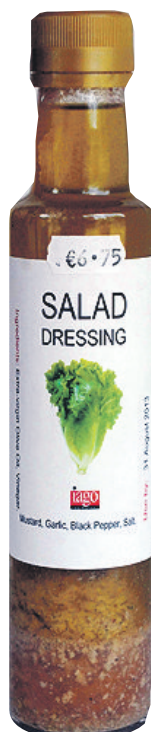
**Score: 6.5**



### Iago Salad Dressing, 255ml €6.95

A simple list of ingredients for this classic vinaigrette includes plenty of grainy mustard which gives it some density along with fresh garlic and decent extra virgin olive oil and vinegar. Nicely seasoned with salt and black pepper. Not cheap, but good quality. From Iago, English market, Cork.

**Score 8.5**



### Olives et Al Raspberry & Mint dressing and marinade 250ml €5

A blend of raspberry purée and raspberry vinegar gives this dressing a kick and it has a lovely floral overtone of mint. Rapeseed oil is not too heavy here. Delicious on grated raw beetroot, French bean salad, grilled goat's cheese. Made in Britain and available Sheridan's Cheesemongers and Brown Thomas Emporium, Cork.

**Score: 8.25**



### The Kitchen Castlemartyr Hotel Asian Dressing, 255ml €6.25

Oyster sauce, honey, black sesame seeds, pickled ginger, sesame oil, soy sauce, rice wine, mirin (rice wine) and chilli sauce blend to make a very full-flavoured dressing. The sesame oil needs diluting so is best suited, as suggested on the label, for vegetable and noodle salads. An interesting dressing, but too salty and overblown and not for green leaves. Expensive for what it is. Available The Emporium, Brown Thomas and at the hotel.

**Score: 6.75**

