

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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## October Tasting 09.10.19

### SPARKLING

#### **Champagne Carte Or Brut NV, Amyot (Champagne/France)**

22.99

Champagne is vast. The northern sections fan out from Epernay; north across the chalky Montagne de Reims towards the city of Reims, west along the Marne Valley towards Paris, then due southwards, the Chardonnay slopes called the Côte des Blancs. Way further south there is Montgueux, just to the west of Troyes. Finally, in the bottom right hand corner, there is the Aube, also known as the Côtes des Bars. Here, off the beaten track, the tiny village of Loches-sur-Ource is the very rural home of Champagne Amyot. They speak an impenetrable local dialect: it took us the best part of a decade to understand what we were saying to each other. Their entry-level champagne, a Blanc de Noirs (100% Pinot Noir, grown on sandy soil), is always powerful, big and biscuity and has been the biggest selling item in The Winery for the past two decades.

### WHITE

#### **Riesling trocken 2018, Graf von Schönborn (Franken/Germany)**

16.99

The Schönborn family can trace its ancestry back to the 12th century. Their family members have acted as Bishops, Cardinals and Princes. Many were elected as ecclesiastical rulers in the Electorates of Mainz and Trier, and the Princely-Bishoprics of Speyer, Worms, Würzburg and Bamberg. The family were responsible for some of the great Baroque buildings, an era which is referred to as “Schönbornzeit” – synonymous with prosperity. They even had their own fiefdom in Franken. The Schönborns were key players in the Holy Roman Empire until Napoleon dissolved it in 1806. Somehow, they managed to cling onto their property in Franken. Their unprepossessing Schloss is referred to as their “secret castle”.

Today, Paul Graf von Schönborn and his son Alexander have two wine estates, one in the Rheingau the other in Franken, plus a magnificent castle nearby (Schloss Wiesentheid). Their wines are classic Franken, expressing their roots and their volcanic geology. Estate manager Georg Hünnerkopf and winemaker Klaus Wagenbrenner make a wide range of dry Riesling, Silvaner, some experimental varietals and a top-of-the-range Spätburgunder. Some are bottled in the distinctive Bocksbeutel that we adore.



#### **Bernkastel Riesling trocken 2018, Wegeler (Mosel/Germany)**

21.99

Wegeler is another estate in the unusual and enviable position of having wineries in two top locations: the heart of the Rheingau and the heart of the Mosel.

People with long memories or those interested in German wine trade history may remember the Deinhard name. The Deinhard estate in Bernkastel-Kues was co-owned by the Deinhard and Wegeler families until the 1990s, when the energetic, suave Tom Drieseberg and his wife Anja Wegeler, bought the Deinhard's out, including top vineyard holdings in the Bernkasteler Doctor and the Wehlener Sonnenuhr.

The style is classic Mosel: ethereal, minerally and with a beguiling lightness. That said, this village-level Bernkasteler is more open-throated and expressive in 2018.

#### **Viognier 2018, Aurélien Chatagnier (Rhône/France)**

22.99

We often get asked for Viognier. Finding one that isn't heavy or flabby is tricky. Viognier's spiritual home is Condrieu, south of Lyon, in the northern Rhône valley. We stumbled upon Aurélien Chatagnier's wines in Ampuis, the small town below the Côte-Rôtie, not far from Condrieu.

Aurélien says he was “bad at school”. When he was 16, his mother said he should probably knock it on the head and get a job. He went to work for a couple of famous winegrowers, Jamet and François Villard. He loved it – and especially enjoyed working in the vines. In 2002, after a gentle, encouraging nudge from Villard, he set up on his own, starting with just a single hectare. Although he now has 7.5 hectares, he still doesn't make much and it took over two years to claw some bottles from his grip.

This wine has all the classic characteristics of Rhône Viognier: aromatic, expressive, vine peach, apricot stone.

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## RED

### **Iperico Valpolicella 2016, Valentina Cubi (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 16.99**

It's thirteen years since we first came across Valentina Cubi's wines in the wonderful Enoteca della Valpolicella in Fumane, just east of Lake Garda. It took another five years before they were on our shelves, since when they have been frequent visitors.

Winding back further - Valentina's father-in-law Federico Vasan was a big name in Negrar in the neighbouring valley until he sold his wine business in World War 2. In the 1970s, Valentina and her husband Giancarlo Vasan found and bought an old winery in Fumane, which produced and sold wine in bulk. They were trying to restore it, but the building fell down when a worker accidentally knocked down a supporting wall. A complete rebuild became necessary.

We have often experienced Valpolicella as a crunchy, breezy red to choke down with pizza and were surprised by the elegance and complexity of Valentina's wines. This is her basic Valpolicella "Iperico": 75% Corvina with the remaining 25% split between Rondinella and Molinara.

### **Syrah 2018, Aurélien Chatagnier (Rhône/France) 18.99**

In terms of red wines, the northern Rhône – from Côte Rôtie to Cornas - is all about Syrah. Depending on the winemaking style, Syrah can evoke violets or, in contrast, wild animal notes and grilled meats. Regardless of style, it is usually a powerful, structured wine with great aging potential.

Aurélien's cellar is up on a plateau above the broad Rhône valley in a remote, draughty, lawless part of the elongated St Joseph zone. Back in March 2016, thieves broke into his remote winery and made off with most of his wine, including cases earmarked for us. Alarmingly, this is a frequent occurrence in the region. The good news is that this is the third hit of Aurélien's pure, modern wines to make it out of "Dodge" to The Winery intact.

### **Armentino 2017, Schola Sarmenti (Puglia/Italy) 17.99**

The Men in Black are the stuff of legends at The Winery. We had a Godfather moment when we were sniffing out new wines in Puglia many summers ago.

"We'll meet at 17.00h in the square."

"How will we recognise you?"

"Don't worry, we'll find you".

Men in black, following a black car along remote country roads, horses heads in beds, we experienced them all – (apart from the horses heads). Puglia's hot southernmost corner is known for its big, juicy reds. Armentino is made with 50/50 NegroAmaro and Primitivo (also known as Zinfandel).



## OLIVE OIL

### **Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie (Veneto/Italy) 500ml - 13.99**

Milly and Carlo Paladin's latest Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Peppery, liquid gold.

## LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a Flower Day.

Our following tasting at The Winery is scheduled for **Wednesday, 20th November**, when we will be joined by **Gerrit Walter** and his dry Rieslings and Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) from the **Mosel**.

**Arriving soon** – from **Italy**; Casteggio, Il Macchione, Bosco del Merlo. From **France**; Chateau de la Mallevieille (Bergerac), Lavagnac, Picampeau, Clos des Menuts, Callac (Bordeaux), the life-extending Saint-Guilhem Fronton by Philippe Laduque near Toulouse and a van-load of Rhône and Champagne.

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