

T H E
W I N E R Y

February Tasting 03.02.20
featuring Anne-Sophie Dubois

We are delighted to be joined tonight by Anne-Sophie Dubois, who makes very pure, very fragrant Fleurie - one of the ten Crus of the Beaujolais.

SPARKLING

Riesling Sekt Brut 2017, Steffens-Kess (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC 22.99

The Mosel is a stunningly beautiful, steep-sided valley that loops from Luxembourg through Trier up to Koblenz where it joins the Rhine. The vineyards are punishingly steep and dangerous to work. The entire valley, and its wine, is all about the slate – blue, grey or red. Mosel Riesling is known for its refinement, ethereal delicacy, raciness and terroir definition.

It has taken us a long time to realise that Harald Steffens makes Sekt. We had been buying his lean, feather-light dry Rieslings for the best part of a decade before we spotted it on his list when we visited recently. “You make Sekt?” “Yes. Have done for ages.” Ah.

We thought this was delightful, with a proper Mosel Riesling nose, lovely weight and balance.

WHITE

Wendelstück Riesling Kabinett trocken 2018, Steffens-Kess (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC 17.99

Full name: Burger Wendelstück Riesling Kabinett trocken 2018

Harald is friend and neighbour of Thorsten Melsheimer in the village of Reil on the Mosel. “I’m the one who filled out the forms and got Thorsten to sign up for Bio” he says. The Wendelstück (*spiral piece*) is the vineyard below Hahnenschritchen (*roosters’ little steps*) on the sun-favoured opposite bank to Reil. He makes his wines in a leaner, nervier style than most, with all the whiff and sense of slate that we love from the Mosel. “I want to make a wine that, when you finish one bottle, you want to open another...and another”.

One time we visited Harald at the end of February and the then recent high water was a topic along the valley. “It was high this year, but not as high as 1993 when I put my boat in the cellar and gave rides to my kids and their friends. I was in waders in the freezing water. Brrrr. They still talk about it!”

Riesling trocken 2018, Huff (Rheinhessen/Germany) 16.99

Nierstein is a town overlooking the Rhine on the strip between Mainz and Worms, and which historically has always been considered to be at the summit of the hierarchy of Rheinhessen’s vineyards.

We came across Christine Huff’s bright, minerally, dry Rieslings shortly after she finished at Geisenheim, the top German wine university. She has had a busy decade since then; increasingly taking control of the winery; meeting and marrying Kiwi Jeremy Bird (who came to help with the 2009 harvest and never left); having two babies; working tirelessly in the vines and cellar to create wonderful, finely-judged dry Rieslings from the red slate and sandstone cliffs (*der Roter Hang*: red from iron oxide, which can often infuse Riesling with some marked spicy and tropical notes).

And now for something completely different - our entire **Gewürztraminer** range!

Traminer Aromatico 2018, Paladin (Veneto/Italy) 13.99

Carlo and Milly Paladin have produced The Winery’s top performing, favourite organic Prosecco for 15 years. They have a spread of vines over the flat plains at Annone Veneto northeast of Venice, the Alps visible in the background. It’s an area rich with Roman history - the old Roman road, Via Postumia, runs right by the estate. In addition to acquisitions in Chianti, Franciacorta and Valpolicella, the Paladins are constantly adding new wines to an ever-expanding portfolio. We often have their delicious Malbec (Malbec), Sauvignon Blanc and a fascinating sparkling red called Raboso Fiore. Here’s another relative newcomer. Traminer Aromatico (aka *Gewürztraminer*) is rarely seen in this eastern part of the Veneto and Carlo Paladin’s experiment to grow it in the clay soils northeast of Venice has definitely been a success. Impressive, spicy, aromatic Traminer.



Gewürztraminer 2018, Pfirmann (Pfalz/Germany) ORGANIC LIMITED 14.99

We came across a Pfirmann Spätburgunder at Moro Moro, a restaurant attached to Daniel Nett's Landhaus in Neustadt-Gimmeldingen.

Before taking over from his father Otto in 2000, Jürgen Pfirmann studied at Neustadt and Bad Kreuznach. He went to school with Karsten Peter, the young winemaking star at Gut Hermannsberg in the Nahe. Jürgen isn't doing a bad job either!

He and his wife Sabine are based in the village of Wollmesheim, just outside Landau, and make Spätburgunder/Pinot Noirs and a range of whites. We were particularly struck by the aromatic whites: the oily, dry Gelber Muskateller (yellow Muscat) and this classic, exotic Gewürztraminer - all roses, lychees, ginger, cloves and cinnamon.

Gewürztraminer GG trocken 2016, Zimmerling (Sachsen/Germany) LIMITED 500ml 37.99

Full name: Pillnitzer Königlicher Weinberg Gewürztraminer Grosses Gewächs 2016

Sachsen (Saxony) is Germany's easternmost wine-growing region and one of its smallest, with vineyards clustered to the northwest and east of Dresden. The region has tended to produce mouth-puckeringly sharp whites. Klaus Zimmerling has re-written the script with a combination of tiny yields (20hl/ha), organic viticulture and perilously late harvesting. Klaus lives and works in the eastern outskirts of Dresden with his wife, Małgorzata Chodakowska, a successful sculptor. Her sculpture features on the label and changes each year. Without doubt, Klaus is the finest winemaker in Saxony.

Klaus and Małgorzata met hiking in the Polish Alps 30 years ago. Klaus, originally from Leipzig, gave up his engineering job and they moved in together in 1992. They started with 1.5 hectares across the small road below their house and over time have bought another 3 hectares up the hill at their rear. The vineyard is Pillnitzer Königlicher Weinberg. He makes Riesling, Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris/Grigio), Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc/Bianco), Kerner (a crossing from 1929 by August Herold of Trollinger, the red grape, with Riesling), Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir, which he vinifies as a still white wine and a zero dosage Sekt), Gewürztraminer, Traminer and Muskateller. Like all his wines, this GG (*Grosses Gewächs = Grand Cru*) dry Gewürztraminer is stunning; dense and concentrated.

**RED****Fleurie L'Alchimiste 2017, Anne-Sophie Dubois (Beaujolais/France) ORGANIC 23.99**

Anne-Sophie Dubois comes from the Champagne region, three hours north of Beaujolais. Her parents have three hectares in Sézanne, halfway between Epernay and Troyes. They had two kids, wanted to expand and bought eight hectares of vines in Fleurie, one of the ten Crus in the pretty, rolling hills of the Beaujolais. After internships at Roblet-Monnot in Volnay and various Champagne producers around Sézanne, Anne-Sophie took over the small Fleurie domaine in 2007. She started producing two Fleurie cuvées: l'Alchimiste and Clepsydre, L'Alchimiste is from vines of 40 years-old or more.

All her vines are in a single block on a southwest facing granite slope around her house and winery. Although not certified, she farms organically and uses many biodynamic techniques. The only difference is her refusal to use copper (widely used in organic viticulture), which she says is toxic and can leech into the groundwater.

Her winemaking style is very gentle, to emphasise the purity, fragrance and elegance of the Gamay fruit. Long maceration, wild yeasts, no new oak, no filtration or fining, no pumping – just gravity.

Fleurie Les Labourons 2017, Anne-Sophie Dubois (Beaujolais/France) ORGANIC 25.99

This bottling, made from even older vines (60 years-old or more), was labelled Clepsydre (named after a water clock created by the Ancient Greeks). The bottling now carries the name Les Labourons: the *Lieu Dit* (the vineyard name of the parcel), which is also the name of this subzone of Fleurie.

Deeper, more concentrated, more complex - the embodiment of finesse. Gamay at its most exquisite.

OLIVE OIL**Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Heredad Pangua Sodupe (Rioja/Spain) 500ml - 13.99**

In addition to making Rioja in red and white, Roberto Pangua also bottles his own olive oil.

The date of our **next tasting** in **March** is in flux. We are trying to synchronise diaries with Philip Nelles who makes impressive Spätburgunder in the Ahr valley near Bonn.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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