

T H E
W I N E R Y

January Tasting 14.01.14

featuring Clemens & Rita Busch

Happy New Year! We are starting the year with a bang - starring tonight is the legendary biodynamic winemaker Clemens Busch who, with his wife Rita, join us from the Mosel valley. He was the first grower on the Mosel to prove it is possible to make stunning dry Rieslings in a valley better known (at that time, in the late 1970s) for its off-dry and sweet styles. We are showing two of their brilliant dry Rieslings and, until we run out, an off-dry Kabinett.

SPARKLING

Cuvée Vaux 2010, Schloss Vaux (Rheingau/Germany)

17.99

It was Claudia von der Pappen, one of our talented interns from Geisenheim who brought us our first bottle of Schloss Vaux. We were very impressed. It turns out that Schloss Vaux is one of the top sparkling wine producers in Germany. Schloss Vaux originally started in Berlin in 1868 and in the 1880s had the opportunity to buy a winery in Metz, which became Chateau Vaux. Fifty years later it was time to move from Metz to Eltville where they focused on making sekt from top Rheingau sites. From the beginning it was based on the French Champagne House model. Although they own no vines, they have longstanding grape contracts with top growers such as Kloster Eberbach and Langwerth von Simmern and produce startling sparkling versions of the legendary Steinberg and Erbacher Marcobrunn Rieslings and the red Assmannshäuser Höllenberg from Spätburgunder. Cuvée Vaux, their calling card, is a blend of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir, with a splash of Riesling.



WHITE

Clemens Busch (Mosel/Germany) BIODYNAMIC

Clemens Busch, the man who looks like Jesus, is something of a guru to his disciples, the New Wave German winemakers. He was the first to show that, with meticulous work in the vineyards, 100% organic viticulture - biodynamic even, and if you pick late enough, you can make amazing dry Riesling on a river best known for its sweeter styles. Fairly recently elevated to the VDP (the official Premier League of German growers) brings with it added recognition and status from the Old Guard, but it also means Clemens now has to play the politics game. Tinkering with labels and classification - fiddling with skis, in our opinion.

Based in the village of Pünderich, between Traben-Trarbach and Zell, it's easy to forget the bureaucracy as you stand outside Clemens and Rita's 17th Century picturebook house on the riverside, looking up at the overwhelming wall of vines on the opposite bank. Truly one of the most stunning views in a beautiful river valley.

Riesling trocken 2012, Clemens Busch

15.99

This is Clemens and Rita's first level, dry Riesling from the Pündericher Marienburg - until recently labelled Riesling Kabinett trocken. Mosel valley Riesling is all about the slate. Although their Rieslings are exclusively from one village, Clemens and Rita have two colours of slate to play with; grey and red. Their wines are packed with minerals and, year-in year-out, are clear, expressions of their geology and their vintage. Precise, focused, always balanced, mineral-laced and tingling with fresh, crisp acidity.

vom grauen Schiefer Riesling trocken 2011, Clemens Busch

19.99

Until 2009 this wine was called Pündericher Marienburg Riesling Spätlese trocken two star. "From the grey slate" seems a bit less wordy.

As usual, Clemens and Rita picked the grapes for this wine late from grey slate parcels dotted around the Marienburg and allowed them to ferment out dry. Bursting with tightly-packed flavours, the late-picked ripeness of the fruit surges with electricity and savoury minerals.

W I N E R Y

WHITE (FRUITY)

Pündericher Marienburg Erste Lage Riesling Kabinett 2012, Clemens Busch 19.99

Clemens Busch may be best known for showing that you could make fantastic dry Rieslings on the Mosel, but he also makes small quantities of sweet wine. He usually makes two classical fruity Kabinetts. This is the upper level – Erste Lage – the equivalent of 1er Cru, in the VDP's new classification system. A classical Kabinett should always be lighter in alcohol. Delicious, energising and uplifting, these wines can also be aged for 30-40 years.

RED

Bergerac Rouge 2010, Chateau de la Malleveille (Southwest France) 10.99

It was a fascinating dry white wine, Montravel, that brought us to a hill within Bergerac, east of Saint Emilion and Castillon in Bordeaux. We bought some Montravel a couple of times from Chateau de la Malleveille a decade ago. Four days into our recent Bordeaux trip, Montravel popped into our mind and, seeing how close we were geographically, we thought we would drop in.

Once they had called off the imposing and very vocal Alsatian guard dog, we were very warmly received by Thierry Biau and his father Philippe. The wines are authentic, clear, expressive and thoroughly enjoyable, each punching well above its weight. The Bergerac Rouge was consistent across the two vintages we tasted – a blend of 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Cabernet Franc. Proper red wine, touch of lead pencil in the nose and wonderfully balanced between salty savouriness and ripe saturated fruit.

Nero d'Avola 2010, Mimmo Paone (Sicily/Italy) 11.99

For the past three years the return of Mimmo Paone's Nero d'Avolas from Sicily is always eagerly awaited. Funnari barely touches the shelves before selling out. And yes, although we're not tasting it tonight, we do have more Funnari. Not for long.

Mimmo is a Sicilian with the firmest, bone-crunching handshake we have ever experienced. Once our hands had recovered, we were blown away by his two dark, brambly Nero d'Avolas. Although they are based on the north coast, in the top right hand corner of the island, Mimmo's Nero d'Avola is picked in Agrigento on the south coast and driven overnight to their winery in Condoro' near Torregrotta.



Ribera del Duero Tinto Joven 2012, Alvides (Ribera del Duero/Spain) 10.99

If you ask the Spanish which region makes their finest wine you might be surprised to hear it's not Rioja but Ribera del Duero (unless you are actually in La Rioja, of course). Around 150kms north of Madrid, between Valladolid and Zaragoza, Ribera del Duero combines the deep, gutsy, sweaty tones we associate with Spanish reds with silky elegance. Our latest hit from Alvides, a small family winery in the outskirts of Aranda del Duero, arrived shortly before Christmas. Completing the line-up tonight is their Tinto Joven. It may be their young wine but it is 100% Ribera del Duero, 100% Tempranillo and 100% delicious!

OLIVE OIL

Il Mercante di Delizie Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Paladin (Veneto/Italy) 1 litre - 17.99

Extra Virgin Olive Oil from the Paladin family in Annone Veneto.

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a Flower Day.

The next event awaits confirmation. Our dinner in The Quince Tree at Clifton Nurseries last October was very popular and we are currently looking at possible dates for another dinner in late February or early March. Keep an eye on the tastings page on our website for advance notice of the next date – whether it's a tasting here at The Winery or a dinner at The Quince Tree in Clifton Nurseries.

NEW ARRIVALS - we are very excited that our latest shipment from **California** has just landed. Our entire Californian top shelf is now entirely given over to the widest collection of vintages of **Dunn's** amazing Cabernet Sauvignons. A couple of shelves lower is the full complement of **Green & Red** lush Zinfandels, Sauvignon Blanc and museum vintages of Syrah and Petite Sirah.

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