

T H E
W I N E R Y

March Tasting 21.03.16

Tonight's tasting features a flurry of recent arrivals from France, Italy and Germany.

SPARKLING

Postumio Metodo Classico NV, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy) 13.99

The little known region of Oltrepó Pavese is a bump on the plain 60kms south of Milan. There is one major player in town. It's fair to say Cantina di Casteggio is bigger than any other winery we work with – much bigger. A Co-op with 350 members and a massive facility, part run-down *fascista*-style, part space-age. Try as we might, we just couldn't resist the wines. The Cantina is very switched-on and started a "quality project" with their best 50 growers, bringing in high-profile consultant Riccardo Cotarella. 100% Pinot Noir, Postumio is a true *Methodo Champenoise*, fermented and aged for 18 months in bottle.

WHITE

Mâcon-Solotr -Pouilly "Sur le Mont" 2014, Cheveau (Burgundy/France) 15.99

In southern Burgundy, near M acon, the primal presence of the two jagged rock faces of Vergisson and Solotr  dominate the skyline above the tiny village of Pouilly, the village that time forgot. When we first visited 14 years ago, the whole Cheveau family, from Grandparents to Grandchildren, gathered in the doorway to watch the hot-shot wine merchants from London taste their wines. At that time Nicolas Cheveau made M acon, St-V eran and Pouilly-Fuiss . Much has changed since then. When we visited recently Nicolas (now 39) proudly showed us the brand spanking new, much more accessible winery on the approach to the village. There are also several new bottlings. Four M acon, one Bourgogne Blanc, one St-V eran and no fewer than four separate Pouilly-Fuiss  selections. "Sur Le Mont" is from higher vineyards above the village, from 40 year-old Chardonnay vines and aged in tank. No oak.



Riesling trocken 2014, Riffel (Rheinhessen/Germany) ORGANIC 13.99

Bingen is on a massive corner on the Rhine, opposite R udesheim. Carolin and Erik Riffel have vines in the full south-facing Bingen Scharlachberg vineyard. Millions of years ago the Rhine looped below it, which may explain why their wines have an element of Rheingau opulence. The Riffels make electric, dry, modern Riesling which express the steep, quartz-infused, fossil-laden slate it is grown on and the very late October harvesting which extracts maximum ripeness. They are now fully organic and Erik was telling us about their aim to become biodynamic (the extreme end of organic viticulture where decisions are aligned with the Lunar Calendar). He showed us the Camomile and Yarrow which are used to make infusions to spray in the vineyard in homeopathic concentrations. How can such small concentrations have any effect? Somewhat incredulously, he says, they seem to work.

H lle Riesling trocken 2012, Flick (Wicker/Rheingau) 18.99

Reiner Flick and his family live in a renovated 13th Century mill in the village of Wicker, next to Hochheim, on the eastern flank of the Rheingau, where the River Main meets the Rhine and from whose slopes you can watch the planes on final approach to Frankfurt airport. Reiner is well-known here at The Winery as the grower who produces Hochheimer K onigin Victoriaberg, Queen Victoria's favourite wine – the one with the flamboyant Victorian label.

Hochheim is the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. The British struggled to pronounce Hochheim and eventually referred to all Rhine wine as Hock.

We unearthed a stash of Reiner's Hochheimer H lle in our latest stock count. This is the epitome of classic Rheingau - opulent, perfumed and oily – a beautiful balance between floral and savoury, with almost herbal notes. It was a UK Top 50 German wine winner with the following tasting note, "Gorgeous nose of jasmine and satsuma. Fresh, weighty and complex."

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RED

Chateau Moulin de Seret 2007 (Bordeaux/France) 10.99

We have been working with the excellent Clos des Menuts in the historic town of Saint-Émilion for almost four years. The Rivière brothers, who own Clos des Menuts, Chateau Lavagnac and Chateau Picampeau also have parcels from other Chateaux in their cellars. Mature bottles from Brisson and Chelivette in Castillon, Callac in the Graves and this, a nicely maturing Bordeaux, made by Catherine Bonnamy in Sainte Radegonde the other side of the Dordogne from Castillon. It's a classic Right Bank blend; 60% Merlot with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc from a clay/limestone ridge dominated by a windmill.

Rendez-vous sous le Chêne Rouge 2014, Grand Jacquet (Rhône/France) ORGANIC 13.99

The impressive and distinctive Mont Ventoux towers over the Ventoux region, as it does over the whole southern Rhône valley. Despite it's steepness, the mountain seems to be a magnet for cyclists - like moths to the flame.

Grand Jacquet has been on our radar for some years. Our colleague Ben's family lives nearby and frequently picked up wine from them. The best-known restaurant in the area, Chez Serge in Carpentras, features their wines heavily. It was only a matter of time before we stopped circling and called-in.

Patricia and Joël Jacquet started their winery in 2000 and have been organic since 2002. They work with the Lunar Calendar. They have added several small parcels around the village of Mazan and have accumulated 15 hectares.

We were blown-away by their beautifully fragrant, organic reds with evocative names such as "Rendez-vous sous le Chêne" (*rendezvous under the oak tree*) and "Juste avant les Sangliers" (*just before the wild boars*). The "Rendez-vous sous le Chêne" red is 80% Grenache, 20% Syrah and reminiscent of lavender and violets.

Barbera d'Asti Fonda San Nicolao 2010, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy) 17.99

One of the highlights of a trip to northern Italy was stumbling across a ridiculously good Barbera d'Asti in Le Due Lanterne, a restaurant in Nizza Monferrato in Piedmont. We were there to visit the iconic Scarpa winery and were wading through a bottle of their delicious Barbaresco 1999 when we asked the restaurant owner if he could recommend something else from his winelist that was in a similarly unreconstructed and old-fashioned vein. He thought for a moment and said "there is just one other wine I can think of". He disappeared and came back with a bottle of Barbera d'Asti Fonda San Nicolao by Guasti Clemente. It was excellent. Plump, deep, dark autumnal fruit with a whisper of truffles and distant bonfire.

The following day, after a wonderful tasting at Scarpa, we hot-footed it around to meet Andrea and Alessandro Guasti and to be dazzled by Andrea's incredibly mobile and expressive hand gestures - and the wines.



OLIVE OIL Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie (Veneto/Italy) 500ml - 11.99

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a **Fruit Day**.

Our following tasting is slated for **Wednesday 13th April**, here at The Winery.

NEW FACE – we welcome **Natalie Davids** to our team. Natalie, part Brit/part South African, has been working as a Data Analyst for TfL and running her own Wine Events company, specialising in Wine Tastings for Hen and Stag Parties.

JUST ARRIVED – **France** - Bordeaux from the Rivière brothers; Clos des Menuts, Picampeau, Lavagnac, Chelivette, Callac & Moulin de Seret. White Burgundy – Mâcon & Pouilly-Fuissé by Nicolas Cheveau. Organic wines by Grand Jacquet from the Ventoux. Crazy Natural Wines from François Grinand, a one man pianist/wine-making operation 50 minutes due east of Lyon. **Germany** – Riffel from Rheinhessen and, from the Rheingau (hopefully today) Fred Prinz and more of those fantastic 2002, 2001 & 1989 dry Rieslings from the Beckers.

Italy – Il Chiosso, Guasti Clemente, Casteggio & Bosco del Merlo.

ARRIVING SOON – from **Provence**, amazing **Bandol** - one of France's great age-worthy reds (including some 1998s) by **Chateau Vannières**. **Germany** – Peter-Jakob Kühn (more of that fabulous Klosterberg) and Gut Hermansberg.

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