

T H E
W I N E R Y

March Tasting 21.03.17

SPARKLING

Clems Pinot Brut Spumante NV, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy) 16.99

When we visited Piedmont last Spring we had another memorable visit to Guasti Clemente in Nizza Monferrato. Andrea's mobile hand and arm movements captivated us again – as did the fabulous wines. Andrea and brother Alessandro are best known for their deep, fleshy, unreconstructed Barbera d'Asti and you will currently find a newly arrived vertical of older vintages on our shelves. We were also impressed by their sparkling wine, unpromisingly named "Clems", made with Pinot Nero grapes sourced from Trentino.

Diary Date - We are delighted to announce that Alessandro will be joining us for our tasting on 23rd May.

WHITE

Weisenstein Riesling trocken 2014, Bastgen (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC 19.99

Imagine a big loop in a beautiful river, so loopy that the next loop round almost meets the previous one in the middle. Now imagine a saddle-like hill brow at the top. Now imagine you built a beautiful house of wood and glass right there. That's where Armin Vogel and his wife Mona Bastgen live. They named the winery after her surname, partly because their family was known in the village of Monzel– as butcher, baker and candlestick maker. But mainly because Armin didn't want their wine to be called "Bird", which is what his name means. They make nervy, slate-infused, dry Rieslings from the steep, slate slopes of Kesten and Brauneberg here on the Middle Mosel. Weisenstein is a full south-facing vineyard close to the river on the road towards Bernkastel-Kues. The deep soil and late evening sun give the wine power and a softer acidity. Made in a big old 1,000 litre fuder (cask), it has a touch of wild yeast in the nose and a lovely, wide mouth-feel.



Schwabsburger Riesling trocken 2014, Huff (Rheinhessen/Germany) 18.99

Nierstein is the best known wine town in Rheinhessen, famous for its red cliffs ("*Der Roter Hang*") that overlook the Rhine south of Mainz. We had been on the lookout for a great Nierstein ever since our beloved St Antony winery changed hands in 2005. A dinner at the excellent Schloss Sörgenloch restaurant deep in the rural Rheinhessen countryside ended in intense conversation with the owner, Thomas. Nierstein? Try this Fritz Ekkehard-Huff. Yum. When we phoned the next morning, Fritz's daughter Christine said, "that's amazing, I only dropped a single sample bottle off at Sörgenloch!" Fate. Christine was fresh out of Geisenheim, the top German Wine Uni, and had headed back to join the family winery in the suburbs of Nierstein.

She has had a busy half decade; increasingly taking control of the winery; meeting and marrying Kiwi Jeremy Bird (who came to help one harvest and never left); having two babies. She has also been making some wonderful, finely-judged dry Rieslings from the red slate and sandstone cliffs around the town - red from iron oxide, which can often infuse Riesling with some marked spicy and tropical notes).

The Schwabsburger is a Riesling Spätlese trocken – the grapes are picked late and vinified until dry.

Crôzes-Hermitage Blanc 2015, Maxime Chomel (Rhône/France) 16.99

We first stumbled upon Maxime Chomel's Crôzes-Hermitage doing some research in a shop in Tain l'Hermitage back in 2013. A visit followed and, despite the best efforts of our SatNav, his place was very hard to find. The trail ran cold along virtually every lane exiting above the village of Gervans just north of Tain. Eventually we found our way through to Monsieur Chomel's Eagles' Nest. His magnificently sweaty 100% Syrah was what brought us to his high altitude hideaway.

When we visited last year he also had some serious white for us. White Crôzes-Hermitage is generally a blend of Marsanne and Roussanne. In 2015 Maxime made it with 100% Marsanne. Usually his white is 12.5-13% alcohol. In 2015 it is a leg-wobbling 14.8%. Careful now! Honeysuckle nose. Big, powerful and surprisingly elegant.

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RED

Chateau Valade Bordeaux Supérieur 2012 (Bordeaux/France) 13.99

Herbal, minty, cedary, juicy nose. Well-made, silky tannins and mouthfeel - leaning towards the modern end of the spectrum. Surprisingly for its location, in the lush green countryside at the eastern edge of the Entre-Deux-Mers, close to Duras and Bergerac, it is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot (the proportions here are usually reversed).

Funnari Nero d'Avola 2013, Mimmo Paone (Sicily/Italy) 16.99

For the past six or seven years the periodic return of Mimmo Paone's Funnari from Sicily is always eagerly awaited. Funnari barely touches the shelves before selling out.

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 he is based on the north coast, in the top right hand corner of the island, Mimmo's Nero d'Avola is harvested in Agrigento on the south coast and driven overnight to their winery in Condro' near Torregrotta.

Crôzes-Hermitage Rouge 2015, Maxime Chomel (Rhône/France) 16.99

Maxime Chomel's magnificently sweaty Crôzes-Hermitage red was what brought us first to his high altitude hideaway.

Maxime's father and grandfather had a hectare of apricot trees and, when Maxime took over in 1984, he bought vineyards and taught himself how to make wine. He now has 8.5 hectares, most around his secluded domaine on sandy loess and granite. It is so secluded, it is impossible for lorries to make it up to his winery. Yes, that does make picking up quite a challenge!

We love the unreconstructed style of his red Crôzes-Hermitage: 100% Syrah. In 2015 it is thick with violets and perfumed, dark fruits with some distant, gently meaty notes. In surprising contrast to his white, the red came out at 13.9% Alcohol. Does that almost qualify as a lunch wine? Probably not.



OLIVE OIL

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

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

Diary Date - Milly and Carlo (Bosco del Merlo), who make The Winery's favourite organic Prosecco, some northern Italian whites and a Malbec (*sic*), will also be joining our tasting on 23rd May.

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

Our following tasting here at The Winery will be on **Monday 3rd April**.

Just arrived – **Champagne** Amyot, Right Bank **Bordeaux** from Chateau La Jarre, La Croix Sainte Anne, La Fleur Poitou, Fort Pontus, Renaissance, Martinet, Clos du Vieux Plateau Certan. More of the mature La Croix de Saint Georges 1999. Left Bank Bordeaux from La Tour Cordouan.

Wall to wall **Italians**: Cantina di Casteggio from Lombardy, Mimmo Paone from Sicily, Alessandria, Cavallotto, Osvaldo Viberti and Guasti Clemente from Piedmont. Bosco del Merlo & Paladin Prosecco, north Italian whites, Malbec. Castelvevchi Chianti Classico.

Isabel Fernandez's Longrande **Rioja** – including her first Gran Reserva for almost a decade.

Coming soon – more **Bordeaux**; Chateau La Haye Saint-Estèphe, **Germany**; Gerrit Walter and Fred Prinz, and **Burgundy** - we are off there next week.

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