

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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July Tasting 12.07.17  
*featuring* Schloss Vaux  
& Chateau La Haye

Tonight we are delighted to welcome Christoph Graf of top Rheingau Sekt producer Schloss Vaux and Chris Cardon & his wife Caroline of Chateau La Haye in St-Estèphe, Bordeaux.

**SPARKLING WHITE**

**Cuvée Vaux Sekt Brut 2014, Schloss Vaux (Rheingau/Germany)**

**19.99**

It was Claudia von der Papen, one of our talented interns from Geisenheim who brought us our first bottle of Schloss Vaux six or seven years ago. We were very impressed: 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 in Lorraine, eastern France, which became Chateau Vaux. Fifty years later it was time to move from Metz to Eltville in the Rheingau, where, at first, they focused on making Sekt from top Rheingau sites. From the beginning it was based on the French Champagne House model and, at the time, had no vines of their own.

Tonight we are opening with Cuvée Vaux, their calling card, which has become a Winery staple. It's a blend of Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) with a splash of Riesling and spends 24-28 months on its lees to add complexity and texture. According to last year's UK Top 50 German Wines panel - "Malty aromas of brioche and spice. Creamy citrus mousse and good length on the finish."

**Riesling Sekt Brut 2015, Schloss Vaux (Rheingau/Germany)**

**19.99**

Until very recently Schloss Vaux owned no vines and relied on longstanding grape contracts with top growers such as Kloster Eberbach and Langwerth von Simmern from which they produce startling sparkling versions of the legendary Steinberg and Erbacher Marcobrunn Rieslings and the red Assmannshäuser Höllenberg from Spätburgunder (coming up later). They recently bought a cellar in nearby Geisenheim and have been making some of their base wine themselves for their Riesling Reserve Sekt. They source their grapes for this Riesling Sekt from a grower in Deidesheim in the Pfalz (the *Palatinate*). The Pfalz is warmer than the Rheingau and produces plump, round, forward fruit.

**WHITE**

**Pinot Grigio 2015, Alessandro Vicentini Orgnani (Friuli/Italy)**

**17.99**

From the Friuli-Grave, in the foothills of the Alps in the top right hand corner of Italy.

A massive earthquake in 1976 reduced the Orgnani home to rubble - the family moved their home into the winery and the winery into the barn. Alessandro came back from architecture college in nearby Venice, took over from his father, overhauled and modernised everything, and decided to bottle the entire output himself. When we visited him again in May, we found that the style has changed since we last visited. What happened? "Quite a lot. My wife and I split up, I have a new girlfriend called Raffaella, I ditched my Oenologues and made the wine myself". In our opinion, ditching the consultants was a very good move. The wines are bolder and more textured. Bravo!

To all intents and purposes, he has been organic for several years (and using very low levels of SO<sub>2</sub>) but is currently, finally, going through the certification process.

If you like his Pinot Grigio, we strongly recommend you try his Friulano (previously known as Tocai Friulano) – the finest local grape.



**RED****Barbera 2015, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy)****9.99**

The little-known region of Oltrepó Pavese is a bump on the plain 60kms south of Milan. 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. The Cantina is very switched-on and started a "quality project" with their best 50 growers, bringing in famous Italian consultant Riccardo Cotarella. Clearly they were making notes whenever he visited and the quality of the entire range was transformed. Try as we might, we just couldn't resist: they make a great range of modern wines.

In 2008, the Cantina di Casteggio was bought (although they euphemistically describe it as a "fusion") by the Cantina di Bronis in the town of Broni just 12kms to its east. Quality has gone from strength to strength. Their dynamic boss, Livio Cagnoni has been driving big projects through and, when we visited in April, we saw their shiny new, extensive, state-of-the-art facility in Broni. The combined group now has 900 members spread across 28 villages, 90% of them in the hills.

This Barbera is ripe and sleek, packed with bright summer fruits and soft tannins.

**Chateau La Haye Saint-Estèphe 2012 (Bordeaux/France)****36.99**

Chris Cardon is the owner of a veterinary pharmaceutical company with headquarters in the outskirts of Bruges, Belgium. He took part in the Médoc Marathon a few years ago – an unusual, messy form of marathon that involves wine at every waypoint – with runners often reduced to crawling. *It's not the winning – it's the taking part that counts.* Chris fell in love with the region and decided he wanted to buy an estate. In 2012 he became the owner of Chateau La Haye.

The Chateau, one of the oldest in Saint-Estèphe, was originally a hunting lodge used by Henry II and Diane of Poitiers. Henry was married to Catherine de Medici, but always retained a "special affection" for Diane, who had been his governess. An affection so special that their H and D interlaced monogram was carved in stone at the Chateau's entrance and has carried through to the labels today. Janot Bernard of Leyssac bought the property and planted the first vines in 1557. The property stayed in the Bernard family until the 1920s. We first fell for La Haye with their 2010 and, with the help of André Bertrem who works for Chris, bought as much as we could. The 2010 is long gone but we have just scooped up the last of their moreish, mineral 2012s.

**SPARKLING RED****Assmanshäuser Pinot Noir Sekt 2013, Schloss Vaux (Rheingau/Germany)****34.99**

Sparkling red? Sparkling. Red? Forget Lambrusco. Forget sparkling Shiraz. This is different. It's Pinot Noir from the Rheingau's most famous red wine village, Assmannshausen, a few nautical kilometres along the Rhine north of Rudesheim. Grapes from Robert König, one of the top addresses in the village. Spätburgunder (*aka Pinot Noir*) with bubbles? Crazy. And yet delicious.

**OLIVE OIL****Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie****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** will be here at The Winery on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August**.

**Just arrived** – from Beaujolais; muscular Moulin-à-Vent by **Laurent Gauthier**, organic, ethereal Fleurie by **Anne-Sophie Dubois**. Sancerre by **Didier Rimbault**, Pouilly-Fumé by **Bouchot**. From the Rheingau, Germany; **Schloss Vaux, JB Becker** and **Fred Prinz**. More Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder by **Becker-Landgraf**. **Il Macchione** from Tuscany. **Alessandro Vicentini Orgnani & Franco Toros** from Friuli. Champagne from **Marie-Noëlle Ledru, Vautrain-Paulet, François Secondé & Saint-Chamant**. From Burgundy; **Thierry Drouin & Guillemot**, Fruit Liqueurs (Cassis, Mûre, Myrtille, Pêche de Vigne, Framboise) by **Baccate**. Bordeaux. Lots of Bordeaux. **Chateau La Haye, Chateau Calon, Grandmaison, Chateau de France, Jonqueyres, Peybonhomme-les-Tours, Lavagnac, Clos des Menuts**. **MORE** of everybody's favourite Provençal Rosé by Gaëlle Maclou of **Mauvan**.

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