

T H E
W I N E R Y

June Tasting 11.06.18

SPARKLING

Zum Krug Riesling Sekt Brut 2016, Josef Laufer (Rheingau/Germany) 13.99

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rudesheim. The south-facing slope on the north bank between the two is the Rheingau, thick with castles, convents and vineyards. This is the classical home of Riesling and where *Spätlese* (late harvest) was born. Evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim - the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world.

Hotel Zum Krug, in Hattenheim, is a magical place: the embodiment of the Rheingau. Reminiscent of a gingerbread house, it's the sort of place that takes you back to mediaeval Germany with its atmospheric twists and turns in a wooden interior straight out of a fantasy grotto from ancient legend. Josef Laufer and his son Josef Laufer Junior, owners and fonts of local knowledge, always give us a warm welcome and we start with a glass of their brilliant dry Sekt made from top class Rheingau fruit just outside the village - a wake-up call to the senses in all its petroly splendour.

WHITE

Fiano di Avellino 2016, Salvatore Molettieri (Campania/Italy) 18.99

An hour's drive into the volcanic hills east of Naples, is the Taurasi zone. Taurasi is one of Italy's great reds: the so-called "Barolo of The South" - more on that shortly.

The Molettieri family make several Aglianico-led reds and also a couple of whites, Greco di Tufo and this Fiano di Avellino.

Fiano is thought to be the grape in *Apianum*, glowingly written about in Roman times. Fiano is one of the grapes (along with Greco di Tufo) that was rescued from the verge of extinction by high-profile pioneering local, Antonio Mastroberardino, after World War 2. Although also grown in Puglia and Sicily, and more recently popping up in Australia, Argentina and Rioja, the volcanic area around Avellino in Campania is considered its natural home.

Salvatore Molettieri and his oenologue son Giovanni pick their Fiano very late, usually at the end of October, sometimes even as late as November. The 2016 has good density and evocative of baked apple with some herbal notes.



Riesling trocken 2016, Busch (Mosel/Germany) BIODYNAMIC 17.99

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.

Clemens Busch looks like Jesus and has been something of a guru to the New Wave German winemakers of the 1990s and beyond. In the late 1970s he and his wife Rita were the first to show that, with meticulous work in the vineyards, 100% organic/biodynamic viticulture and extremely late picking, you can make amazing dry Riesling on a river best known for its sweeter styles.

Gau-Odernheimer Riesling trocken 2016, Becker-Landgraf (Rheinhessen/Germany) 17.99

From the ashes of Rheinhessen rises the twin-headed phoenix of modern dry Riesling and Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir). A local grower threw a party early last decade, hoping his daughter would catch Johannes Landgraf's eye. Johannes made a bee-line for another winery's daughter, Julia Becker, and so in 2004, Becker-Landgraf was born. Among other things (Pinot Blanc, Rivaner, Dornfelder and so on) they determined to make top-class, cool-climate, dry Riesling and silky Pinot Noir, slap bang in the rural centre of the region. Johannes and Julia's Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder is a perennial Winery Classic and multiple award winner. We are also fans of their Gau-Odernheimer Village-level dry Riesling, surging with minerals, opulent fruit and exhilarating freshness.

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RED

Freisa Secco “La Selva di Moirano” 2006, Scarpa (Piedmont/Italy) LOW HISTAMINE 19.99

Ever since our first bottle of Scarpa we have been hooked. “This is the best Barolo in the shop”, said the wine guy in La Morra, near Alba. “Sure you can spend more” (here he peppered the expectant air with high profile examples) “but this – this is proper Barolo. Anything else is *boolsht*.”

Scarpa was founded in 1854 and one of the first to bottle Barolo and Barbaresco in 1949. To this day, their cellar is a treasure trove of mature Barolo, Barbera and wines made from obscure local grapes such as Rouchet and Freisa. With the same winemaker, Carlo Castero, for over 50 years, the style is truly traditional.

Freisa is a relation of Nebbiolo and usually vinified off-dry, sweet or sparkling. At Scarpa they vinify it dry and then we all just have to wait for a decade or more. It has some of the tannic profile of Nebbiolo and plenty of fresh acidity.

Ever wondered why some people’s faces flush when they drink red wine? It may be sensitivity to Histamines. Histamines are naturally occurring and found in (among other things) aged cheese, fermented foods, smoked fish, dried fruit, avocado, aubergine, beer and red wine. Histamine levels in red wine tend to be anywhere between 5-40mg/l. Piedmontese reds are usually 5mg/l or lower, so are considered low histamine wine. Researchers at universities in the area are currently running studies to find out why.

Irpinia Rosso Ischa Piana 2014, Salvatore Molettieri (Campania/Italy) 16.99

We have a bit of a thing for Taurasi, the so-called “Barolo of The South”. The grape is Aglianico and here, in the volcanic hills, Aglianico is untamed, tannic and often grand.

The Molettieri family has been making wine for 4 generations in Montemarano, in the southern part of the zone. In 1983, instead of selling grapes to Mastroberardino (who was widely credited with bringing Taurasi onto the world stage), Salvatore Molettieri decided to make his own wine.

Salvatore, now 67, is joined by his 4 sons Giovanni, Giuseppe, Luigi, Paolo and their families. Giovanni, who studied Oenology, plays a leading role. Salvatore and his wife Angela had hoped to have a daughter but their Doctor told them they might need 12 children before getting a girl. They called it a day at 4.

Molettieri’s Irpinia Rosso comes from a single vineyard, Ischa Piana, planted in 1994 and is a blend of 85% Aglianico with 15% Piediroso (*red feet*) & Cabernet Sauvignon. The combination produces a rich, round, southern red.



Rioja Reserva 2011, Longrande (Rioja/Spain) 16.99

It is almost two decades since we came across Isabel Fernandez’s Longrande in the brilliant Casa Toni restaurant in San Vicente de la Sonsierra. We had tasted so much mainstream Rioja and her Crianza was a breath of fresh air – a revelation. We had to beg to see her, largely to overcome her fear of export. Fortunately, we were able to convince her to sell to us and her wines have been a fixture on our shelves ever since.

Isabel is as full of personality as her wines. She has been making the wine in her small family Bodega in the Rioja Alta for over three decades. She goes to great lengths to keep the whole process as natural as possible; treading the whole bunches by foot, using gravity to avoid pumping, never filtering. She determines the bottling date biodynamically, according to the cycles of the moon.

This is Isabel’s latest Reserva release. 24 months in American oak. Her wines are fascinating - often boldly perfumed, with a beautiful purity of fruit and surprising body and structure.

OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie

500ml - 14.99

Milly and Carlo Paladin’s latest Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Peppery, liquid gold.

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

Our next tasting at The Winery is scheduled for **Tuesday 3rd July**.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**

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