

T H E
W I N E R Y

August Tasting 21.08.18

SPARKLING

Berg Rottland Riesling Sekt Brut 2016, Asbach-Kretschmar (Rheingau/Germany) ORGANIC 19.99

Rüdesheim is on the western edge of the south-facing Rheingau, an area thick with castles, convents and vineyards. The Rhine changes direction here, making a sharp turn north. There's a statue of Germania (not unlike Britannia) at the top of the hill and the car ferry from Bingen below. A cable car crosses the vines.

Organic for over two decades, Peter and Tania Kreuzberger of Asbach-Kretschmar apply such attention and loving care to their small parcels of vines in Hallgarten, Rüdesheim and Oestrich-Winkel - whenever we call they seem to be working in the vineyards.

When we visited last week, we were also taken with this Sekt from the Berg Rottland, one of the Rheingau's steeper, rockier vineyards that overlooks the Rhine where the ferry comes in.

WHITE

Riesling trocken 2015, Lubentiushof (Mosel/Germany)

15.99

We'll be getting geeky now with a Lubentiushof dry Riesling vertical – same wine, three different vintages. Spot the difference? We think so!

The stunningly beautiful, winding river Mosel is, along with the Rheingau, the classical home of Riesling. The geology is all about slate – blue, grey and red, each of which imparts a different minerality in the wines. The ridiculously steep slopes are incredibly difficult to work but the results are often spectacular. Mosel Riesling is known for its lightness of touch, ethereal delicacy, raciness and terroir definition.

We now find ourselves in the suburbs of Koblenz, where the Mosel joins the Rhine and the vineyards are dizzyingly steep - terraced to squeeze out every last bit of late autumn sunshine. Andreas Barth studied Law and Music but decided, with the support of his interior designer wife Susanne, to turn to wine-making. Almost entirely self-taught Andreas bought the run-down cellar of Lubentiushof in 1994 and five hectares of steep parcels with old vines. With tiny yields and very late harvesting you can really taste the age of the vines. Bold, yeasty, oily and spicy, the volume is cranked up to eleven.

This particular bottling was previously labelled "Spontan" (German for spontaneous) and refers to the spontaneous, natural fermentation that happens when you just use the wild yeasts present on the grapes, sometimes leading to some striking aromas. 2015 was a ripe vintage with relatively low acidity.



Riesling "von der Leyen" trocken 2010, Lubentiushof (Mosel/Germany)

15.99

Why the different name? Good question. Von der Leyen was a family of successful silk merchants who became landowners along the Mosel in the 1500s. Gondorf (where Lubentiushof have their vines and cellar) is where the family had their castle. Enter Ursula von der Leyen, Germany's current Defence Minister. To avoid any confusion or association with the von der Leyen dynasty, Andreas and Susanne thought it best to quietly drop the name.

The 2010 vintage is a complete contrast to 2015, particularly along the Mosel valley, and has a unique flavour profile. The Rieslings are marked by extremely high concentrations and very high acidity. It's a vintage that will age indefinitely and retain freshness.

Riesling trocken 2016, Lubentiushof (Mosel/Germany)

22.99

Gutsriesling? *Gut* usually means "good" but can also mean "estate" - eg: *Weingut* = "wine estate".

Andreas' career trajectory has been impressive. Early on, he caught the attention of Daniel Deckers and Stuart Pigott who both write for in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and has been collecting rave reviews ever since. Since 2005 he has also been winemaker at the historic von Othegraven estate on the Saar. This section of the Lower Mosel has also enjoyed a status recalibration over the past 15-20 years, thanks to growers like Andreas, Matthias Knebel and Reinhard Heymann-Löwenstein: it is now known as the *Terrassen-Mosel* (the Mosel Terraces).

We adore the 2016. Not quite as rich as the 2015, it has some additional freshness and is packed with minerality and explosive potential.

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RED

Château La Fleur Poitou 2015 (Lussac-Saint-Émilion/Bordeaux/France) 15.99

This is one of our favourites from a 30-bottle tasting at Horeau-Beylot during our visit to Bordeaux late last year. Château La Fleur Poitou, owned by the highly-regarded Pomerol estate Certan de May, is from Lussac-Saint-Émilion - one of the satellite appellations of Saint-Emilion, which shares similar geologies with its more famous neighbor.

A blend of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon - the higher proportion of Cabernet Franc balances the soft, supple Merlot with an extra sense of structure and purpose.

Château La Tour Cordouan 2014 (Médoc/Bordeaux/France) 16.99

It was our local Art-dealer friend Charles Asprey who pointed Vanessa Dubosq (born Cruse) of Château Laujac towards us.

You forget how big the Left Bank is until you head for Bégadan to visit Laujac – it's way beyond Pauillac and Saint-Estèphe, and 75kms from the centre of Bordeaux. When you finally arrive, you find that Laujac is a fascinating group of buildings - a château & farmstead with homes originally built for workers and sprawling land holdings with 61 hectares of vines, 400 hectares of forest and pastures for livestock. The château was built in 1810 in the classical style commissioned by M de Villemot, who had made his fortune furnishing guns and supplies to Napoleon.

The Cruse family were wine merchants from Denmark. In 1852 Vanessa's Great-Grandfather Hermann Cruse was keen to buy a Château and it came down to a choice between Laujac in the northern Medoc and Cos d'Estournel in Saint-Estèphe. At the time, Laujac was held to be similar in quality to some Pauillac estates. Nowadays the hierarchy may be different. Doh!

Vanessa trained as an architect and met her husband René Dubosq in New York, while he was working for IBM. She started selling Laujac in the States before they both moved back to France to run the estate.

La Tour Cordouan, named after the island lighthouse close to the entrance of the Gironde estuary, is Laujac's junior bottling, a 50/50 blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot from young vines grown on gravelly soil with a hint of clay and raised in oak for 6 months. Silky and very stylish.



Malbec "Gli Aceri" 2014, Paladin (Veneto/Italy) 22.99

Carlo and Milly Paladin have a spread of vines over the flat plains at Annone Veneto northeast of Venice, the Alps visible in the background. It's an area rich with Roman history - the old Roman road, the via Postumia runs right by the estate.

Milly and Carlo's Bosco del Merlo Prosecco is a long-term favourite at The Winery. We also buy a few other wines from them, including this cool, smooth, cherry-chocolatey Malbec. The Paladins are particularly fond of their *Malbec*. Merlot has long been the red of choice in this corner of northeastern Italy and Malbec is relatively rare. Their family's first success in a show was with Malbec in 1975, predating the acquisition of their Bosco del Merlo vineyards near Annone Veneto in 1977.

OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie (Veneto/Italy) 500ml - 14.99

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

Lunar Calendar Observers – today is a **Fruit Day**.

We haven't quite managed to schedule our **next tasting** yet. As soon as we know, we'll post the date on our tastings page. We will of course email details closer the time.

Just arrived – Champagne by Amyot, Louis Casters, Vautrain-Paulet, Marie-Noëlle Ledru, & Sabine Godmé. Bordeaux by Chateau Martinet, Fort Pontus, La Tour Canon, Fleur Poitou, Tour Corouan, Laujac, more of the indestructible and very drinkable La Croix de Saint-Georges 1999 and a van filled with Mosel and Rheingau Riesling from Gerrit Walter, Lubentiushof, Asbach-Kretschmar, Wegeler, Zum Krug and Querbach,

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