

T H E
W I N E R Y

October Tasting 17.10.18

SPARKLING

SVIC Pinot Nero Metodo Classico Brut NV, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy) 14.99

The little-known region of Oltrepó Pavese is a bump on the plain 60kms south of Milan. Casteggio is a small town at the base of a small range of hills. We have been importing from the Cantina di Casteggio for well over a decade. It's fair to say Cantina di Casteggio is bigger than any other winery we work with – much bigger. It started in 1907 as a Co-op with 100 members and after WW1 was successful enough to buy SVIC (Società Vinicola Italiana Casteggio), the local sparkling wine producer. By the time we found the Cantina in 2007 it was a Co-op with 350 members and a massive facility - part run-down *fascista*-style, part Space Age.

In a nod to - nay celebration of - their history, the SVIC label and identity has been recently revived. Check out the beautiful label on their Vermouth behind our counter.

This impressive sparkling wine is a true *Methode Champenoise* - 100% Pinot Noir, fermented and aged for 18 months in bottle. A hint of red fruits (raspberries?) in the nose, full in the mouth yet crisp and balanced.



WHITE

Montravel 2014, Chateau de la Malleveille (Southwest France) 12.99

It is this fascinatingly oily, aromatic, dry white wine that repeatedly brings us to a hill in the Bergerac, a short drive east of Saint-Émilion and Castillon in Bordeaux.

While it is often a battle to calm Thierry Bernardinis' oversize and very vocal Alsatian guard dog, the tasting that follows is always a joy. Each wine in the line-up (Montravel, Bergerac in white and three reds at different levels) is packed with character, thoroughly enjoyable and punching well above its weight.

Blauschiefer Riesling trocken 2017, Bastgen (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC 16.99

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 and that you built a beautiful house of wood and lots of 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 taut, lean, dry Riesling from the steep slate slopes of Kesten and Brauneberg here on the Middle Mosel. Blauschiefer means "Blue Slate". Nervy, smoky, slaty minerality with notes of white flowers and pears.

Rheingau Riesling trocken 2016, Wegeler (Rheingau/Germany) 17.99

Wegeler is an estate in the unusual and enviable position of having wineries in two top locations: the heart of the Rheingau and the heart of the Mosel.

People with long memories or those interested in German wine trade history may remember the Deinhard name. The Deinhard estate in Bernkastel-Kues was co-owned by the Deinhard and Wegeler families until the 1990s, when the energetic, suave Tom Drieseberg and his wife Anja Wegeler, bought the Deinhard's out including top vineyard holdings in the Bernkasteler Doctor and the Wehlener Sonnenuhr.

In the Rheingau Wegeler has grand vineyard parcels stretching from Rudesheim to Oestrich-Winkel. They also produce an oddity called Geheimrat "J" which they started in 1983 and describe as the Forefather of the GGs (Grosses Gewächs/Grand Cru). It is the best selection of the Rieslings from all their Rheingau vineyards - very low yield, long slow fermentation, long lees contact. They make it as a Riesling Spätlese trocken and as a Sekt in a unique tall bottle and hold onto vintages for late release. Yes, we have some.

Tonight we are showing their regional dry Riesling which struck us as classic Rheingau - opulent, perfumed nose, some flesh and body with a limey finish.

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RED

Barbera 2016, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy)

9.99

Back to Casteggio in Oltrepò Pavese south of Milan. Try as we might, despite the size of the Cantina, we just couldn't resist the wines. The Cantina had started a "quality project" in the early 2000s with their best 50 growers, bringing in high-profile consultant Riccardo Cotarella.

In 2008, the Cantina di Casteggio was bought (although it was somewhat euphemistically described as a "fusion") by the Cantina di Broni 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 recently, 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 (where the quality is finer).

The Casteggio Barbera is a fixture at The Winery. Teetering between crunchy and full, it is always sleek, with hints of autumn fruits and soft tannins.

Pécharmant 2015, Haut-Pécharmant (Southwest France)

16.99

One night, on a trip to Bordeaux five years ago, after a long day in the Médoc, we found ourselves in the quirky Au Petit Bois wine bar, the one with a tree inside the bar. The wine of the evening was, surprisingly, not a Bordeaux. It was a wild, sweaty Pécharmant from Bergerac. The dangerous scent of undergrowth, the animal sweat of this uncompromising, untamed red wine got us excited. So excited that we re-organised our timetable to drive east to meet Didier Roches of the Domaine du Haut Pécharmant, the winery at the top of the slope that is Pécharmant, northeast of the city of Bergerac.

Didier's Pécharmant is Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc with some Merlot and Malbec. The rich 2015 isn't quite as "lived-in" as the 2009 or 2010, but it still has some of those gently perspiring, countryside-meets-locker-room aromas. Proper French wine from the southwest.



Funnari Nero d'Avola 2015, Mimmo Paone (Sicily/Italy)

16.99

For the past eight years the periodic return of Mimmo Paone's Funnari from Sicily is always eagerly awaited. Funnari doesn't survive long on our shelves.

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.

OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Heredad Pangua Sodupe (Rioja/Spain)

500ml - 13.99

In addition to making Rioja in red and white, Roberto Pangua also bottles his own olive oil.

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a Flower Day.

Our following tasting will be at The Winery on **Wednesday 7th November**, when we will be joined from the Rheingau by Reiner Flick who makes Victoriaberg – Queen Victoria's favourite wine.

New arrivals – Champagne Amyot, Chateau de la Malleveille & Domaine du Haut-Pécharmant from Bergerac, Mimmo Paone from Sicily, Cantina di Casteggio from Lombardy, Flick from the Rheingau (ready for 7th November).

On their way –organic Vino Nobile di Montepulciano from Il Macchione. Biodynamic Pouilly-Fumé from Domaine du Bouchot. From Bordeaux; Chateau Calon from St-Georges-St-Émilion, Chateau Lavagnac Bordeaux Supérieur, Clos des Menuts Saint-Émilion, Chateau Callac Graves, Larmevaille Entre-Deux-Mers, Villefranche Sauternes.

On our way next week – to the Rhône, Burgundy and Champagne.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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