

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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# November Tasting 07.11.18

## *featuring* Reiner Flick

It has become an annual event – the visit of the dynamic Reiner Flick from the Rheingau, Germany. Reiner is the man who, among many other things, makes Queen Victoria's favourite wine: Victoriaberg.

### SPARKLING

**Nonnberg Riesling Sekt Brut 2016, Flick (Rheingau/Germany)** (*magnum 2016 - 49.99*) **24.99**

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.

Wine has been in the Flick family since 1775. Reiner, his family and assorted animals, live in (or around) a renovated 13<sup>th</sup> Century mill in the village of Wicker at east end of the Rheingau, next to Hochheim, where the River Main meets the Rhine and from whose slopes you can watch the planes on final approach to Frankfurt airport.

Reiner told us that the not particularly big road in front of their property was once the main route between Paris and Moscow, and that Napoleon passed their gates twice - once on his way to Russia and once on the way back, with the Prussian Army in hot pursuit. It was then that the village of Wicker was burnt to the ground after a particularly nasty battle.

Tonight we are kicking off with this mouthfilling, spicy, sparkling Riesling from the Nonnberg, a vineyard exclusively owned by Reiner.



### WHITE

**Victoriaberg Riesling trocken 2016, Flick (Rheingau/Germany)** **19.99**

We were really excited that from 2010 Reiner managed to rent the vines in a small vineyard in Hochheim called Königin Victoriaberg (*Queen Victoria's hill*). This was Queen Victoria's favourite wine and where the name "Hock" comes from (the British struggled to pronounce Hochheim and eventually referred to all Rhine wine as Hock). Victoria was so taken with the wine that she asked to see the vineyard on a visit to Germany in 1845. She observed it from her carriage and, shortly after, the vineyard was named after her and a monument was built to commemorate the visit.

We adore this wine and adore the historic label. Reiner phoned us to ask our opinion on whether he should keep the original label. "Yes, definitely!" we replied, emphatically.

And the wine? Elegant, expressive, opulent and reeking (in a good way) of history and breeding.

**Nonnberg Riesling trocken 2016, Flick (Rheingau/Germany)** **21.99**

The entire Wickerer Nonnberg belongs to Reiner. Nonnberg (*Nun's hill*) is on the hill at the edge of the village and overlooks his home and winery. There's a sandstone statue of a nun in one corner, the original Abbess of the monastery which owned the vineyard in the late 1200s. Reiner has worked hard with the chalky, clay soil and has introduced mixed flowers, grasses and herbs between the rows of vines.

His Nonnberg always produces impressive Riesling with explosive minerals, depth and concentration.

### ROSÉ

**Spätburgunder Rosé 2017, Flick (Rheingau/Germany)** **15.99**

Although Reiner is best-known for his top-class dry Rieslings, he does make some other wines, including this delicious Rosé which has been a pink smash here at The Winery for the past six years. It is made from the free-run juice of his Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir).

"Perky, bright strawberries. Clean, lively and very drinkable, with lots of lovely fruit."

**RED****Rosso di Montepulciano 2016, Il Macchione (Tuscany/Italy) ORGANIC 21.99**

We were having a wonderful dinner at Osteria La Porta in Montichiello between Montepulciano and Montalcino. The first wine was not our cup of tea – all juice and oak. “Do you have something, err, a bit more restrained, more traditional?” Daria Cappelli, the very helpful owner, and her wine-waiter looked at each other and came up with a bottle of Vino Nobile from Il Macchione. We phoned Il Macchione at the crack of dawn. “May we visit you? We are really sorry we only have one hour to cram a meeting in before heading to Montalcino.” “OK.” Minutes later, we arrived at Il Macchione to be met by Simone Abram, a bearded man with bags of energy and bags of quotes.

Quote #1 - “We’re not from Tuscany, our family is from Trentino. We were driving around for 5 or 6 years looking for the right spot.”

Quote #2 - “I didn’t choose Sangiovese – I chose this land”.

Quote #3 - “It’s just me, my brother and a gypsy. A real gypsy. One of the family. Totally committed.”

Quote #4 - “100% Sangiovese – not cut with Cabernet or Merlot or other stuff.”

Quote #5 - “Everyone talks about acidity and dark fruits and tannins and stuff – I taste with my body.”

Not certified but totally organic, we would describe Il Macchione as *beyond* organic. This is where we first saw Favino plants (Broad Bean/Field Beans) between the rows - an effective natural fertiliser, used to fix nitrogen in the soil.

We listened, loved the attitude, tasted with our bodies and were very impressed.

**Château de Lavagnac 2014 (Bordeaux/France) 12.99**

Philippe Rivière, with his brother Jean-Pierre, co-owns the Clos des Menuts, one of our favourite Saint-Émilions. They also individually own châteaux in Saint-Émilion’s satellite appellations. Jean-Pierre has Château Picampeau and Philippe owns Château de Lavagnac, a 15<sup>th</sup> century fort, down the hill from the picturesque town of Saint-Émilion, so close to the Saint-Émilion line that it’s still north of the Dordogne but just inside the Bordeaux Supérieur zone. Lavagnac 2014 is a classic Right Bank Bordeaux blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, punching well above its modest, basic Bordeaux status.

**Crôzes-Hermitage Rouge 2017, Maxime Chomel (Rhône/France) 17.99**

We first stumbled upon Maxime Chomel’s musky Crôzes doing some research in a shop in Tain l’Hermitage. A visit followed - although his high-altitude hideaway proved extremely hard to find.

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 makes picking-up a challenge unless we do it ourselves!

We love the unreconstructed style of his Crôzes-Hermitage: 100% Syrah. The 2017 is thick with violets, dark fruits and meaty notes.

**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** here at The Winery will be on **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December** when we will be joined by Johannes Landgraf of Becker-Landgraf (makers of our top-selling Spätburgunder). All being well, we may also be graced with a visit from the Mayor of Westminster.

**Just arrived** – Biodynamic Pouilly-Fumé from Pascal & Rachel Kerbiquet’s Domaine du Bouchot, mature Bordeaux from Chateau Calon and Corbin Michotte. Champagne by Marie-Noëlle Ledru and Christian Coquille of Saint-Chamant, stylish northern Rhône Syrah and Viognier by Aurélien Chatagnier, Chateauneuf-du-Pape by Banneret. Silky, sappy Ahr Spatburgunders by Thomas and Philip Nelles. More Bordeaux from the Rivière brothers – two levels of Lavagnac, Clos des Menuts, Callac, Sauternes by Villefranche and...drumroll...more of the ever popular Picampeau 2007.

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