

T H E

W I N E R Y

October Tasting *Fulham* 21.10.21

SPARKLING

Crémant de Loire Blanc Brut 'Les Quarterons' NV, Clos des Quarterons (Loire/France) 18.99

We were in the Loire valley a few months ago and revisited Xavier and Agnès Amirault of Clos des Quarterons in St-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil - a village on a flood plain reclaimed by engineers in the 1800s, where the Touraine meets the Anjou.

This part of the Loire is pretty much Cabernet Franc central - a grape we often hanker for. We also had a hankering for Chenin Blanc in all its forms: dry and sweet, still and sparkling.

Although Xavier & Agnès major in Cabernet Franc, they also grow some Chenin Blanc which makes this wonderful Crémant – an apricot, rosemary and lanolin nose, a creamy, round mouthfeel and a crisp finish.

WHITE

Bourgogne Chardonnay 2019, Trapet-Rochelandet (Burgundy/France) 23.99

We had been keeping a close eye on Trapet-Rochelandet in Gevrey-Chambertin for a few years and visited Laurent Rochelandet and his wife Anne on one of our emergency van trips during Lockdown. We were impressed with the range from the regional Bourgogne Aligoté, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir through the village Gevrey-Chambertin and up through the 1er Crus. Tonight we are showing their Bourgogne Blanc, a rarity - Chardonnay grown in Gevrey-Chambertin! Delightful white Burgundy, with good texture and a tiny touch of oak.

Theirs is a story of multiple marginal gains over several years; a new de-stemmer, upgrading the barrel-cleaning process, a new, much gentler press. We loved the 2014s (Gevrey-Chambertin Carougeots 2014 in particular), and the 2018s and 2019s go from strength to strength. One to watch - and enjoy.



Pyjama Godello 2018, Demencia (Bierzo/Spain) ORGANIC 17.99

It's Pyjama Time! Don't be alarmed - Pyjama is a white wine by Nacho León. We are big fans of Demencia, the sumptuous red which Nacho has been making since 2006 in the corner of a friend's cellar on the Pilgrim's Trail to Santiago de Compostela in Bierzo, northwest Spain. You'll be tasting Demencia later tonight. In 2011 he started bottling a different selection from his twenty-five parcels of Mencia and called it Pyjama.

Nacho then started experimenting with Godello, the local white variety, and has let us prise a few dozen bottles ever since his debut vintage 2015. Honeysuckle, almonds, lemon peel.

vom roten Schiefer Riesling trocken 2020, Clemens Busch (Mosel/Germany) BIODYNAMIC 24.99

The Mosel is a river, set in 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, dangerous and time-consuming to work.

The entire valley, and its wine, is all about the slate - grey, red or blue. Mosel Riesling is known for its refinement, ethereal delicacy, raciness and terroir definition.

Clemens Busch, who looks like Jesus, is something of a guru to his disciples, the New Wave German winemakers. In the late 1970s he was the first to show that, with meticulous work in the vineyards, 100% organic viticulture, and by picking late enough, you can make amazing dry Riesling on a river best known for its sweeter styles.

Clemens was invited to join the VDP in 2007. The VDP is the official Premier League of German growers and brings status and added recognition from the *Old Guard*.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the view outside Clemens and wife Rita's 17th Century house on the riverside, as you look up at the immense wall of vines on the opposite bank. One of the most beautiful views along a river packed with stunning views.

As usual, Clemens, Rita and son Johannes picked the grapes late from red slate parcels dotted around the Marienburg and allowed them to ferment until dry. Bursting with tightly-packed flavours, the late-picked ripeness of the fruit surges with electricity and exotic, spicy minerals from the red, iron oxide slate.

RED**Chianti Rufina 2019, Dreolino (Tuscany/Italy)****14.99**

A few years ago, we stumbled across a delicious Chianti Rufina by Dreolino in the unassuming and excellent Trattoria Tre Soldi in Florence. The following morning we were driving north-east out of Florence to the pretty town of Rufina and knocking on Sabrina Tanini's door. (Tanini? Dreolino? Dreolino was her grandfather, Gino Tanini's nickname).

Sabrina's wines are no-nonsense and toothsome – breezy strawberries/raspberries on the palate and yet savoury, with weight and texture. It was a welcome relief after too much overhyped, overpriced Chianti Classico.

We agonised long and hard over whether or not to buy it in the straw-covered flasks, finally opting for the newer label and bottles. We have since taken the plunge. After all, you may need new candle-holders for your 1960s retro interior, right?

Sabrina's daughter Francesca walked into our Fulham shop the other day – she had just moved into the area while studying at university. She told us her mother would be over today, so we are crossing our fingers that they both make it along to the tasting later tonight!

Bürgstadter Spätburgunder 2015, Josef Walter (Franken/Germany)**24.99**

Spätburgunder = Pinot Noir

Franken (*Franconia*) is 1, 2 or 3 hours drive east of Frankfurt (depending on which part you are heading for and how fast you drive) and, in wine terms, is all about the *Bocksbeutel* and minerals. "*Bocksbeutel*" is the name of the funny squat bottles many Franken wines come in, said to be derived from a "goat's sack" and dangerously reminiscent of a Mateus Rosé bottle – but there the similarity ends; the contents could not be more different.

The main difference (as everyone in Franken keeps saying) is all to do with minerals. It is something of a volcanic playground. 250 million years ago, the bright sandstone rock Franken now sits on was on the equator and 100 million years later, as the continental plates shifted northwards and outwards, became the predecessor of the Mediterranean, accumulating fossil-heavy chalk. These layers fan outwards, exposing their seven different geologies to widely scattered pockets of the Franken vineyards. Geology is a prime component in *terroir* – the expression of the soil, of the place, that finds its way into wine.

There was a sense of inevitability about us starting with Christoph Walter of Bürgstadt almost a decade ago. We had spotted a photo on Anne Kriebel's twitter feed almost simultaneously with an overnight in Michels Stern restaurant in Marktbreit in Franken. The enthusiastic and very helpful Stefan Michel guided us to one of Walter's bottles. Verdict? Elegant, refined and a different style from other parts of Germany.

Christoph has vines in the Burgstädter Centgrafenberg vineyard. His wines age beautifully. This village-level 2015 from younger, vigorous vines on lower slopes, is concentrated and autumnal.

**Demencia 2015 (Bierzo/Spain) ORGANIC (not certified)****32.99**

It was 2006 when Nacho León started making Demencia in tiny quantities in the corner of a friend's winery in the lush, green, rain-soaked, hilly region of Bierzo on the Pilgrims' Trail to Santiago de Compostela. The witty-edgy name was enough to get our attention. Demencia - *of Mencia* (Mencia is the name of the grape) - *demented*, get it?

Mencia - an old, indigenous variety in this northwestern corner of Spain - is a total contrast to many other heavy Spanish reds, usually producing a crisp, fresh red with low tannins - a breezy, crunchy glugging wine. In Nacho's hands, however, it is deep, brambly and powerful. When we visited Nacho first, he showed us every one of his twenty-five tiny parcels of beautiful, gnarly, old vines in villages outside Ponferrada.

"I am working organically because I believe that's the way to get better, healthier wines. We are working mostly in the vineyards in order to get the best fruit with the characteristics needed for aging and to avoid adding products or other oenological materials. I believe in minimal intervention to get the most honest wines that show better their origin and 'terroir'.

In the vineyards, we are not using herbicides, pesticides, chemical fertilization. The vines are old and produce very low yields. Although not certified, our wines are organic since 2010."

Deep, saturated brambly fruit, rich and powerful.

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

Our following tasting will be at our shop in Clifton Road W9 1SS on **Monday 8th November**.

Next tasting in Fulham is slated for **Wednesday 17th November**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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