

T H E

# W I N E R Y

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## September Tasting *Maida Vale* 28.09.21

Welcome to our first tasting in Clifton Road since March 2020! We have been open without interruption and have travelled throughout the past 18 months to keep the shelves stocked - so there was plenty to choose from for tonight's line-up.

### SPARKLING

**Champagne Cuvée Supérieure NV, Louis Casters (Daméry/Champagne) (halves 19.99) 36.99**

Pinot Meunier is the third grape of Champagne – less well-known than Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. It has become increasingly chic recently and many growers are doing 100% Meunier bottlings. Louis Casters, a family domaine just west of Épernay, whose magnificent Cuvée Eugène is one of our top-shelf favourites, also make this bold Pinot Meunier.

### WHITE

**Vouvray Silex Sec 2019, d'Orfeuilles (Vouvray/Loire) 23.99**

Given how much we like Chenin Blanc, it's alarming how rarely we make our way to Tours or Angers in the Loire valley. The hankering for Chenin Blanc became overwhelming, so we recently dropped-in on Arnaud Hérivault of Domaine d'Orfeuilles in Vouvray. Arnaud makes the full, delicious spectrum of Chenin Blanc: dry, off-dry, sweet, very sweet and sparkling.

We picked up 2018 and 2019 recently. 2021, on the other hand, has not been going well. Frost in April, frost in June and hail in July. The hail was so forceful that it left marks on the wooden posts in his vineyards. Imagine the impact on newly-formed bunches of tender grapes. Arnaud lost 80% of his crop. Ouch.

Tonight, we are showing his dry Vouvray Silex, named after the flinty soil of his vineyard on the plateau above his frigid cellar, hewn out of the chalky rock.



**Vom Bundsandstein Riesling trocken 2020, Borell Diehl (Pfalz/Germany) VEGAN 13.99**

Immediately south of Rheinhessen, the Pfalz (aka Palatinate) is sheltered by the forests of the northern Vosges on its western flank. The region is warm and fertile. Fruit and vegetables grow easily here – as do vines. Growers tend to have a very wide range of varieties to satisfy as many visitors' palates as possible. We are fixated on dry Riesling, so, as long as they have some to offer, that'll get us through the door!

We met Daniel Nett, who has a guesthouse in the outskirts of Neustadt an der Weinstrasse in the Pfalz, when he came to a Winery tasting with Johannes Landgraf of Becker-Landgraf. When the call to visit the Pfalz again after a decade became impossible to ignore, it was obvious we would have to base ourselves at Daniel's. He told us we should check out Borell Diehl. Good call.

The Borell Diehl family have multiple dry Riesling bottlings from different soils; a zesty, limey entry-level in litre bottles, Muschelkalk (chalk, thick with fossil deposits), Schiefer (slate) and vom Bundsandstein (*from the colourful sandstone*), which we always find exuberantly grapey.

**Estate Riesling trocken 2019, Schloss Schönborn (Rheingau/Germany) 15.99**

Schloss Schönborn is one of the grand old estates of the Rheingau, tracing its vineyard ownership back to 1349. We were somewhat disappointed that at the end of 2020, the current owner, Paul Graf von Schönborn decided to sell their Rheingau cellar and rent out all their top-notch vineyards from one end of the Rheingau to the other (Rüdesheim to Hochheim) and everything between (Winkel, Hattenheim and Erbach). Of course that means much will be redistributed to other growers (Fred Prinz has signed up for some Grand Cru Erbacher Marcobrunn) but it is a terrible shame that Schönborn's distinctive style and their ageworthy wines will disappear. Many of you know that we have been visiting with increasing frequency to plunder their deep cellar of mature vintages. We will continue to do so until all the old stock has gone. We recently picked up the minty, herbal Wisselbrunnen 2011 the regal Pfaffenberg Erstes Gewächs 2003 and this evening's classic Rheingau dry Riesling.

The Graf and his family have another wine estate, a castle and agricultural land in Franken (check out the *Bocksbeutel* bottles of Silvaner on our shelves).

**RED****St Nicolas de Bourgueil 'Les Gravitices' 2017, Clos des Quarterons (Loire) BIODYNAMIC 19.99**

While we were in the Loire valley we also visited Xavier and Agnès Amirault of Clos des Quarterons in St-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil, the village where the Touraine meets the Anjou. This part of the Loire is pretty much Cabernet Franc Central – another grape we often hanker for. The Amirault family's Clos des Quarterons is a story about Cabernet Franc on multiple terroirs on a flood plain reclaimed by engineers in the 1800s.

In the olden days, Loire Cab Franc would struggle to get ripe, producing bracing, hard reds with a signature green pepper nose. They could often be found in Parisian Brasseries served chilled in summer.

The tireless Xavier has steered the domaine through its biodynamic conversion. Biodynamic farming and winemaking have settled-in and the wines are fabulous: deep, textured, with wonderful balance. Raspberry, green peppers and pencil shavings?

Les Gravitices refers to the deep gravel soil of the former flood plain which enjoys excellent drainage.

**Ruber Spätburgunder 2018, Nelles (Ahr/Germany)****19.99**

Everyone was horrified to see the flood devastation in the Ahr valley in July. Lives were lost and there was damage on an unimaginable scale. Many wineries lost two vintages. Growers from other regions have scrambled to help in the vineyards and the cellars. Funds were quickly set up which benefit all growers in the valley. Like many, we donated via our friend Marc Adeneuer, whose winery was also badly affected, and via the VDP.

It seems fitting to show an excellent Spätburgunder from Nelles, another of our favourite growers in the valley. Philip Nelles and his father Thomas name their top wine 'B52' and ferment their wines in traditional, huge, old oak Fuders. Founded in 1479, the Nelles family has been making wine for generations and own some of the best vineyard sites for red wine in Germany. 'Ruber' is from the steep-sloped Landskrone vineyard in Heimersheim, clearly visible from the Nelles' house and winery. 'Ruber' is always supple and velvety - bursting with layers of smoke, autumn leaves and forest fruits with good acidity and remarkably soft, almost slippery, tannins. How can they make Pinot Noir this good, this far north?

**Laderas de Sedella Ánfora 2017, Sedella (Málaga/Spain) NATURAL****23.99**

Our final red in the line-up is quite unusual. A cooler red from southern Spain? Surprising. Raised in Amphorae? Yes. It's made by Lauren Rosillo, an oenologue who has been making the wine for Familia Martinez Bujanda at their estates in Rioja (including the highly-regarded Finca Valpiedra), Rueda and La Mancha for almost 20 years. He also writes papers and teaches at Albacete Agronomists Technical High School. We met through Nacho Leon, who makes Demencia, Pyjama and Taruguin – long term fixtures in our Spanish range.

Lauren started his solo project in 2006 on a much smaller scale, with a tiny 2.5 hectares of vines up in the cool slate hills inland from Málaga, and made in a more "Natural" vein. He uses traditional techniques such as a Roman-style plough pulled by horse. He makes a skin contact-style white and two age-worthy reds; the big, dense Sedella and this newer bottling made from old bush vines planted in 1940 with native grape varieties Romé tinta, Garnacha tinta, Jaén tinta and loose strains of other local varieties. They are then vinified in clay, oak and amphorae to produce this impressive, multi-layered and, given how far south its origin is, surprisingly cool red.

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

**Our following tasting** will be at our shop at 797 Fulham Road, SW6 5HD on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September**.  
**Next tasting in Clifton Road** is slated for **12<sup>th</sup> October**.

**New arrivals** – Fleurie by Anne-Sophie Dubois, Champagne from Stéphane Coquillette, Gérard Dubois, Saint-Chamant and Marie-Noëlle Ledru (*sorry, all gone already!*), Vouvray from d'Orfeuilles, Chablis by Stéphanie Mosnier, more Burgundy from Denis Père, Lafarge & Mugnier. From Germany – Pfirmann (Pfalz), Josef Walter (Franken), Zum Krug Sekt, Querbach, Flick & Schloss Schönborn (Rheingau).

**Join us for our Monthly Tastings**

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