

T H E
W I N E R Y

February Tasting 28.02.19
featuring Valentina Cubi

SPARKLING

SVIC Chardonnay Metodo Classico Brut NV, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy) 16.99

The little-known region of Oltrepó Pavese is a bump on the plain 60km 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. 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.

This 100% Chardonnay is a true *Methodo Champenoise*, fermented and aged for 18 months in bottle.

WHITE

Max Riesling trocken 2017, von Othegraven (Kanzem/Saar) 22.99

Terroir. It's a sense of place. It's the expression of the earth, of the geology. Here on the Saar, like the Mosel that it feeds, it's all about slate. The slate here sparkles with Quartz, which often gives the wine a dizzy, spicy, almost tropical character.

We always loved Dr Heidi Kegel, the charming former Head Anaesthetist from Cologne hospital, who was left the historic von Othegraven estate by a maiden aunt in the early 1990s. When we phoned she would say "what time would you like to come?" "How's 11.00h?" "Would you like to stay for lunch?" Lunch would often finish with something old and special from the cellar.

Unfortunately, Dr Heidi became ill and decided (at 70-something) it was probably time to sell. Enter Günther Jauch, generally held to be the most popular man in Germany. An unassuming man, he's a TV host and commentator - a national treasure. He is also a distant relative of earlier owners and has brought new energy (and finance) to his new acquisition. The same winemaking and vineyard team is onboard and continue to make exquisite wines, a world away from the searing acidity of the old-school Saar wines. Effortless. Max, named after Maximus von Othegraven, is from Kanzem Altenberg, the Grand Cru slope behind the von Othegraven house.



Riesling trocken 2017, Bischel (Rheinhessen/Germany) 16.99

The Runkel brothers, Christian and Mathias, took over Bischel, their Mum's winery, a decade ago and turned the place upside down, focusing entirely on quality. No expense is spared and everything is done by hand. Wild yeasts and long lees contact give their wines added texture. It's a challenging conversation to have with your parents, says Christian: "We are going to slash the yields but we're not going to be able to charge much more for the finished wine." You don't need an accountant to tell you how counter-intuitive that is. They have been making explosive dry Rieslings ever since, turning heads in Germany and here at The Winery, where they have become fixtures on our shelves for the past half-decade.

Although the richness and minerality would seem to contradict the lab stats, the wines are dry. Congratulations to Christian and Mathias – they have just been elevated to the VDP, German Wine's premier league.

Rioja Blanco Fermentado en Barrica 2017, Heredad Pangua Sodupe (Rioja/Spain) 18.99

Our latest shipment from Rioja arrived recently, including this impressive, scarce, white Rioja by Roberto Pangua of Heredad Pangua Sodupe. He's the guy that almost killed us with lunch when we last visited him in San Asensio in the Rioja Alta. After the tasting he grilled the entire contents of the local butcher's shop. We were four hours late for our following meeting and all we wanted to do was lie down. You only live once. It almost ended there and then.

He ferments his top white Rioja in barrel and, despite being 100% Viura, it often has a texture reminiscent of white Burgundy or top Californian Chardonnay.

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We welcome **Silvia Rama**, who works with Valentina Cubi in Valpolicella country, east of Verona.

RED

Iperico Valpolicella 2016, Valentina Cubi (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 16.99

It's twelve years since we first came across Valentina Cubi's wines in the wonderful Enoteca della Valpolicella in Fumane, just east of Lake Garda. It took another five years before they were on our shelves, since when they have been frequent visitors.

Winding back further - Valentina's father-in-law Federico Vasan was a big name in Negrar in the neighbouring valley until he sold his wine business in World War 2. In the 1970s, Valentina and her husband Giancarlo Vasan found and bought an old winery in Fumane, which produced and sold wine in bulk. They were trying to restore it, but the building fell down when a worker accidentally knocked down a supporting wall. A complete rebuild became necessary.

We have often experienced Valpolicella as a crunchy, breezy red to choke down with pizza and were surprised by the elegance and complexity of Valentina's wines. This is her basic Valpolicella "Iperico" - 75% Corvina with the remaining 25% split between Rondinella and Molinara.

Il Tabarro Valpolicella Classico Superiore 2014, Valentina Cubi (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 19.99

This is Valentina's Valpolicella Classico Superiore, named "Il Tabarro" after a sleeveless coat worn by farmers and a one-act opera by Puccini. The blend is 65% Corvina, 25% Rondinella and 10% Molinara. We love the pure, elegant nose and, although there is classic Valpolicella freshness in the mouth and finish, it has focus and structure.

Arusnatico Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso 2015, Valentina Cubi (Veneto) ORGANIC 24.99

Arusnatico is named after a tribe who lived in the region and refused to succumb to the Romans. It's a Ripasso - a wine which, once fermentation is complete, is "passed over" (*Ripasso*) the skins of the grapes that were pressed for Amarone. Amarone itself is made by drying the best grapes for 90 days before beginning the winemaking process. The grapes lose moisture becoming sweeter and more concentrated which explains why, once fermentation is complete, a typical Amarone can be 16-17% alcohol. A wonderful Ripasso like this will give a sense of Amarone without the higher alcohol.



SWEET

Meliloto Recioto della Valpolicella Classico 2000, Valentina Cubi (Veneto/Italy) 500ml - 36.99

This is the unique, sweet, red wine of the region. Hand-picked and hand-selected during harvest in late September and October. The best part of the bunches are selected and arranged on screens in a temperature and humidity controlled room. Once the grapes shrivel and dry, the winemaking process starts in February. There is so much sugar in the dried grapes that selected yeasts are used to start and continue the fermentation. The effect? A fascinating, deep, age-worthy red dessert wine.

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 **Fruit Day**.

Our following tasting here at The Winery will be on **Monday 18th March**.

A DATE FOR MUSIC LOVERS! Tomorrow evening, 1st March at 19.30h St-Saviour's Church.

The Mare's Tale by Mark Bowden for Actor and Chamber Ensemble.

We are keen supporters of the excellent Berkeley Ensemble, who run the Little Venice Music Festival and are based at St Saviour's Church just opposite Warwick Avenue Tube.

Recently arrived – Valentina Cubi, Casteggio from Lombardy, Terre a Mano Carmignano & Castelvechi Chianti from Tuscany, Bosco del Merlo Prosecco (& Traminer!). **Arriving today** – Bordeaux – Lavagnac, Callac, Clos des Menuts **Arriving soon** – Champagne Amyot, more Bordeaux, Burgundy, Pascal Chalon Petite & Grande Ourse from the Rhône, Schola Sarmenti from Puglia.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**

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