

T H E
W I N E R Y

April Tasting 25.04.19
featuring Marta Alessandria

SPARKLING

Rosé Spumante Brut, Bosco del Merlo (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 15.99

AKA Prosecco Rosé. Strictly speaking, no-one is allowed to write that on the label yet, but it *is* in the regulatory pipeline. It will be, as it is here, Glera (a synonym for the Prosecco grape) with a splash of Pinot Noir.

Carlo and Milly Paladin have been making organic wines under their Bosco del Merlo label for many years including The Winery's top performing, favourite Prosecco for a decade and a half. They have a spread of vines over the flat plains at Annone Veneto northeast of Venice, with the Alps visible in the background. It's an area rich with Roman history - the old Roman road, the via Postumia runs right by the estate.

WHITE

Langhe Nascetta "Papalot" 2017, Osvaldo Viberti (Piedmont/Italy) 19.99

We were brought to Osvaldo's door by his fabulous Barolo Serra dei Turchi 2001. His house is in a small cluster of farm buildings on a small ridge between Alba and the hilltop village of La Morra called "Serra dei Turchi", where there was a Turkish encampment centuries ago. Over the last decade he and his family have added a vineyard in Serralunga - famous for its more macho Barolo. In 2010, a friend offered him some grapes from the legendary Cannubi vineyard from which he made a sensational Barolo Riserva. Another of his latest projects is a white wine. Nascetta is a grape variety that had all but died out in the Phylloxera epidemic in the late 1800s. Until very recently there were just five or six growers in the nearby village of Novello who still had a couple of rows. Now there are several more, including Osvaldo.



Rheinschiefer Riesling trocken 2017, Peter-Jakob Kühn (Rheingau/Germany) BIODYNAMIC 21.99

Despite seeming (at first) quite shy, Peter-Jakob Kühn is a highly visible figure on the German biodynamic wine scene. Peter-Jakob, his wife Angela, their son Peter-Bernhard and their burgeoning family are from Oestrich in the heart of the Rheingau.

Peter-Jakob had a complete change of direction in 1999, was certified organic in 2004 and then went the whole way to biodynamism - the extreme end of organic viticulture ruled by the lunar calendar.

So, how are the Kühns' wines? Their style is utterly distinctive - standing quite apart from other Rheingau wines. They can challenge our idea of how Riesling should taste. The aromas can evoke incense, orange peel and hedgerows. There's an oiliness without ever being cloying. Occasionally you might get a sense of tannin - something you expect in red wine but not in white. We often recommend putting their top Rieslings in a decanter several hours before serving. Rheinschiefer is a selection from the Grand Cru Hendelberg vineyard between Hallgarten and the Steinberg which, unusually for the Rheingau, has a high proportion of Devon Slate.

Riesling "von der Leyen" trocken 2010, Lubentiushof (Mosel/Germany) 15.99

The stunningly beautiful, winding river Mosel is, along with the Rheingau, the classical home of Riesling. The geology is all about slate - blue, grey and red, each of which imparts a different minerality in the wines. The ridiculously steep slopes are incredibly difficult to work but the results are often spectacular. Mosel Riesling is known for its lightness of touch, ethereal delicacy, raciness and terroir definition.

Andreas Barth was studying Law and Music before deciding, with the support of his interior designer wife Susanne, to teach himself to make wine. They bought the run-down cellar of Lubentiushof in 1994 and five hectares of steep parcels with old vines. With tiny yields and very late harvesting you can really taste the age of the vines. Bold, yeasty, oily and spicy, the volume is cranked up to eleven.

RED

Dolcetto d'Alba 2017, Gianfranco Alessandria (Piedmont/Italy) 15.99

We are delighted to be joined tonight by Marta Alessandria from Monforte d'Alba, a township in the Barolo zone southwest of Alba, Piedmont. Marta works with father Gianfranco, mother Bruna and sister Vittoria. Gianfranco is one of the brightest stars of the township, with a reputation forged in the early 1990s. With our not-very-fluent Italian, communication has usually relied on warm goodwill here. Vittoria, now 28, has been working alongside Gianfranco in the cellar for a few years and has been studying English. Marta, 23, who also speaks English, recently finished her wine studies at Alba University and is now also working in the family winery. The Alessandrias continue to use the traditional fermentation methods, punching down the cap in open-top fermentation vats. Having said that, the wines are far from traditional. Tiny quantities, low yield - they manage to combine raw power with silky finesse.

Dolcetto (*the little sweet one*) has no sweetness, it's just a term of endearment. The vines have distinctive purple leaves, ripen early and usually deliver light, charming, breezy wines. This, however, is surprisingly serious - anything but light and breezy. 2017 was a very hot vintage with no rain. Harvest began at the end of August, several weeks earlier than usual. The wines are very concentrated, rich, deep and round.

Barbera d'Alba 2017, Gianfranco Alessandria (Piedmont/Italy) 17.99

Visit any producer in the Barolo zone and you will taste a classic sequence of reds. Dolcetto followed by Barbera, followed by Nebbiolo and then onwards and upwards to Barolo. Barbera is the most widely-planted grape variety in Piedmont and, until the 1970s, was considered to be the king of Piedmontese wines. Barbera occupied the most favourable positions on the slopes. Although, Nebbiolo has since nudged it from its throne, Barbera is still widely appreciated - possibly thanks to its brambley, dark fruit and low tannins (the opposite end of the tannin spectrum from Nebbiolo).

In the past 20 years many growers have started taking Barbera more seriously again. It makes an excellent counterpoint, with its big flavour and low tannin, to the more tannic Nebbiolo. This Barbera oozes dark berried intensity with a velvet touch. If you like this, you will almost definitely enjoy the top-of-the-range "Vittoria" Barbera.



Langhe Nebbiolo 2017, Gianfranco Alessandria (Piedmont/Italy) (magnums 49.99) 21.99

Nebbiolo is the grape of Barolo, the grape which thrives in the foggy hills and dips of this northwest corner of Italy just south of Alba, an hour's drive (at full speed) south of Turin. As you look out across the valley, from the highest point, the hilltop town of La Morra, you can pick out the townships on their respective hills, evoking mediaeval times. There is enormous variety in styles from the different townships. Serralunga is stern and minerally, La Morra is elegant and perfumed, the wines from the town of Barolo itself are a balance of power and elegance. Monforte d'Alba is considered the bruiser, the most macho and powerful of them all. Usually punishing when young; tar and roses is the classic description of Barolo. Here, in its junior form - Langhe Nebbiolo - it is approachable much earlier.

OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie (Veneto/Italy) 500ml - 13.99

Milly and Carlo Paladin's latest Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Peppery, liquid gold.

Our following tasting here at The Winery will be on Wednesday 8th May.

New arrivals - from Piedmont: Barolo aplenty from Gianfranco Alessandria, Osvaldo Viberti and Pugnane. Schola Sarmenti from Puglia.

From Champagne: Vautrain-Paulet and Saint-Chamant (including some different Cuvées - Carte Or, Carte Crème & magnums of Cuvée Royale). From Burgundy: Paul Pernot & Guillemot. Pascal Chalon Petite & Grande Ourse from the Rhône. From Germany; Adeneuer from the Ahr valley, Lubentiushof from the Mosel, Reiner Flick's Rosé.

Speaking of Rosé, our next delivery of Mauvan should be arriving from Provence tomorrow!

**Join us for our Monthly Tastings
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