

T H E W I N E R Y

July Tasting *Fulham* 12.07.22

SPARKLING

Riesling Sekt Brut 2020, Steffens-Kess (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC

23.99

Harald Steffens of Steffens-Kess has made laser-focused, light, organic, dry Rieslings from the steep slate slopes overlooking the Mosel for decades. He also makes a sparkling Riesling Sekt Brut. Peppery nose, good entry, broad and gently herbal.

WHITE

Vermentino 2021, Audarya (Sardinia/Italy)

18.99

During four days of extensive and thorough research in Cagliari four years ago, Audarya surfaced as our favourite Vermentino producer. Our former colleague Serena Costa's Sardinian friend Gianluca Putzolu recommended we go to Cucina.Eat and ask for Giuseppe Carrus. That was our first night and it turned out to be an excellent recommendation. Giuseppe gave us a vinous tour of Sardinia and orientation was completed in one sitting. Audarya appeared (and shone) in the line-up. We tried many a Vermentino over the following days and a trip to Oyster, Filippo Mundula's restaurant/wine bar in Cagliari, confirmed that Audarya was our favourite. Four years later, we finally have Vermentino aplenty. This bottling was gently pressed and fermented in stainless steel to preserve its bright, clear, zesty, limey notes.



Reiler Goldlay Riesling Kabinett trocken 2021, Steffens-Kess (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC

19.99

Harald is friend and neighbour of Thorsten Melsheimer in the village of Reil on the Mosel. "I'm the one who filled out the forms and got Thorsten to sign up for Bio" he says. The Wendelstück (*spiral piece*) is the vineyard below Hahnenschrittchen (*roosters' little steps*) on the sun-favoured opposite bank to Reil. He makes his wines in a leaner, nervier style than most, with all the whiff and sense of slate that we love from the Mosel. "I want to make a wine that, when you finish one bottle, you want to open another...and another".

One time we visited Harald at the end of February and the then recent high water was a topic along the valley. "It was high this year, but not as high as 1993 when I put my boat in the cellar and gave rides to my kids and their friends. I was in waders in the freezing water. Brrrr. They still talk about it!"

Hallgartener Riesling trocken 2021, Fred Prinz (Rheingau/Germany) ORGANIC

21.99

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rüdesheim. 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. Evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim - the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. In contrast to wine made in historic castles and convents, Fred Prinz made his wine in the garage of the flats where he and his family live in the small village of Hallgarten. Having started as a hobby in 1991, demand became so great that he had to give up his day job and rent another cellar nearby, thereby freeing up space in his garage for a Mid-Life Harley motorbike.

We have been importing Fred's dry Rieslings since our first buying trip to Germany in 2002.

This Hallgartener is Fred's village level, made with early selections from his grander vineyards in Hallgarten: Schönhell and Jungfer.

RED**Cannonau 2021, Audarya (Sardinia/Italy)****20.99**

Audarya have four separate vineyards in different locations but the heart of the estate is 20 kms north of Cagliari. They have a fabulous spread of dry whites: Vermentino, Malvasia di Cagliari, Nuragus and Nasco. There is also a light sweet wine called Bisai (also made from Nasco), and three reds: Cannonau, Bovale and Monica.

Cannonau is Sardinian for Grenache. Audarya's Cannonau is made in stainless steel and cement in a fruit-driven lighter style.

Château Picampeau 2010 (Bordeaux/France)**19.99**

Jean-Pierre Rivière and his brother Philippe co-own Clos des Menuts, one of our favourite Saint-Émilion. They also individually own châteaux in Saint-Émilion's satellite appellations. Jean-Pierre has Château Picampeau (aka Haut-Piquat) in Lussac-Saint-Émilion and Philippe owns Château de Lavagnac in the Bordeaux Supérieur zone.

Picampeau's vines are beautifully situated and get plenty of sunshine. In the middle of the vineyard is a dolmen, a sacrificial stone, used by druids in 50 BC. There is evidence that there were vines from the 3rd century Gallo-Roman period. The blend is 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. 2010 was an excellent vintage.

Fuente de San Lazaro 2018, Demencia (Bierzo/Spain) ORGANIC- LOW INTERVENTION 27.99

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, powerful and serious. When we visited Nacho first, he showed us every one of his (then) 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 fertilisation. The vines are old and produce very low yields. Although not certified, our wines are organic since 2010."

Not one to stand still, Nacho has this new bottling called Fuente de San Lazaro from a single south-facing vineyard on a plateau at an altitude of 600m. The vines were planted in 1905 and are surrounded by peach, pear, apple, almond and cherry trees, as well as lavender and other aromatic plants.

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

Our **following tasting**, which will be at **The Winery Maida Vale**, will be on **Tuesday 26th July**. Why Tuesday again? No reason – just coincidence!

Arrivals have been coming **thick and fast** – Audarya from Sardinia, Verrier and Amyot from Champagne. Denis Père from Burgundy. Larmevaille, Lavagnac, Picampeau, Callac 2002 & 2004, Clos des Menuts from Bordeaux. Walter, Steffens-Kess from the Mosel, Prinz from the Rheingau. Sancerre by Raimbault from the Loire. Plenty of delicious Provençal Rosé from Mauvan.

Next week, we're picking up in Burgundy - Trapet-Rochelandet and Mosnier Chablis. Mega-scarce Champagne by Marie-Noëlle Ledru who retired a few years ago. Don't tell anyone!

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