

T H E
W I N E R Y

August Tasting *Fulham* 23.08.22

gently sparkling

Positivo Cortese *frizzante*, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy)

15.99

We drove to Italy and back the week before last to pick-up a van-load from Piedmont. The three essential reds; Barolo, Barbera and Dolcetto, plus a handful of whites.

Cortese is best known as the grape of Gavi but it does also grow elsewhere in Piedmont. Guasti Clemente make this Cortese (Positivo) from vineyards in the communes of Nizza Monferrato and Mombaruzzo which sometimes turns out still, other times *frizzante* (gently sparkling or pétillant). When bottling *frizzante* no vintage is allowed on the label.

white

Roero Arneis 2021, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy)

18.99

One of the highlights of a trip to northern Italy in 2013 was stumbling across an impressive Barbera d'Asti in Le Due Lanterne, a restaurant in Nizza Monferrato in Piedmont. The following day, we hotfooted it around to meet Andrea and Alessandro Guasti and to be dazzled by Andrea's incredibly mobile and expressive hand gestures - and the wines.

Here is a local white, Arneis from the Roero west of Nizza, a wine that can evoke acacia, honeysuckle and bitter almonds. Those familiar with previous vintages will spot the new label, courtesy of Enrico Piantato, the nephew who has recently taken over the historic winery from his two uncles.



Jacobus Riesling trocken 2020, Peter Jakob Kühn (Rheingau/Germany) BIODYNAMIC

19.99

The Kühn family make striking biodynamic Rieslings in the Rheingau, the south-facing strip overlooking the Rhine as it flows westwards from Wiesbaden to just beyond Rudesheim where it turns north again.

Their wines are many things – lean, exotic, oily, peppery, salty, savoury and haunting, to name a few. Organic since 2004, biodynamic soon after. Biodynamism is the extreme end of organic viticulture, where decisions are made according to the lunar calendar, based on the teachings of Maria Thun, Rudolf Steiner and traceable back to Hildegard of Bingen, the 12th century mystic nun.

Jacobus is named after their founding forefather, eleven generations and 230-something years ago, this is a wonderful 2020 – lean, laser-focused, with tightly-coiled fruit.

Briedeler Riesling trocken 2020, Walter (Mosel/Germany)

(magnum 42.99) 17.99

Gerrit Walter, who did an internship at The Winery back in 2009, has made our best-selling dry Riesling for over 12 years. Tonight we're stepping up to the village-level Briedeler Riesling trocken made from the dizzyingly steep, slate slopes of the winding Mosel valley.

Germany is Riesling's spiritual home. Within Germany (unless you are from the Rheingau) the Mosel is considered 'Riesling Central' - a stunningly beautiful, steep-sided river valley that loops from Luxembourg through Trier up to Koblenz where it joins the Rhine.

Riesling is something of a helter-skelter ride in your mouth. The play of ripeness with the exhilarating lift of fresh acidity is something that can't be found in other wines. It's the definition of minerality (the sense of the geology the vines are grown on expressing itself in the finished wine – stony, slaty, almost salty). The Briedeler (formerly called Spätlese trocken) is from older vines, harvested later. The grapes have a longer maceration time before fermentation with wild yeasts and longer lees contact before bottling. All this adds up to a fuller, broader, more complex wine.

red

Dogliani San Luigi 2020, Cascina Corte (Piedmont/Italy) NATURAL 22.99

Alessandro (Sandro) Barosi makes (among other things) wonderful Dogliani – very fancy Dolcetto. We have been eyeing up his wines since we first met eight years ago at a biodynamic wine tasting in Paris. His Dolcettos are impressive – possibly the finest we have tasted. That said, special mention must also be made of a 1992 Dolcetto d’Alba that Elio Altare served with a dinner of fresh porcini, but that’s another story.

Sandro makes three Dogliani; San Luigi – floral, silky, round, charming; Dogliani Superiore Pirochetta Vecchie Vigne – great depth from vines planted in 1946, almost peachy notes and thrilling freshness; and the same Pirochetta but raised in amphora – with a touch of leather and game. He also makes Nascetta, Riesling (50/50 Italicco and Renato), Barbera, Nebbiolo, Pinot Nero, a blend of Barbera, Nebbiolo & Dolcetto called Banedol. Latest addition is the fragrant, little-known Freisa, a close relative of Nebbiolo. Beppe Rinaldi, local Barolo legend, suggested to Sandro that he should plant some. First vintage is 2021.

Barbera d’Asti Boschetto Vecchio 2017, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy) 24.99

Back to Le Due Lanterne restaurant in Nizza Monferrato in 2013. We were wading through a bottle of delicious Barbaresco 1999 when we asked the restaurant owner if he could recommend something else from his winelist in a traditional vein. He thought for a moment and said, “there is just one wine I can think of”. He disappeared and came back with a bottle of Barbera d’Asti Fonda San Nicolao by Guasti Clemente. It was excellent. Plump, deep, dark, autumnal fruit with a whisper of truffles and distant bonfire. The following day, as mentioned earlier, we went to meet the Guasti brothers, Alessandro and Andrea and were dazzled by the hand gestures and the wines.

Fonda San Nicolao and Boschetto Vecchio are adjacent vineyards and often hard to tell apart. San Nicolao has been replanted in the meantime.

Little known fact: Barbera can age effortlessly. We brought back more of their Barbera d’Asti Superiore Barcarato 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2004.



St Nicolas de Bourgueil ‘Le Fondis’ 2017, Clos des Quarterons (Loire) BIODYNAMIC 26.99

One of our lockdown trips in 2020 was to the Loire valley. We were there to reconnect with 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 all about Cabernet Franc, a 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?

Le Fondis is a single vineyard of 65 year-old vines in a favoured spot on the deep gravel soil of the former flood plain which enjoys excellent drainage. It is probably worth mentioning that our colleague Nelly is bonkers about these wines.

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

Our following tasting, which will be at **The Winery Maida Vale**, will be on **Monday 19th September**.

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