

T H E
W I N E R Y

July Tasting *Maida Vale* 26.07.22

sparkling

Cuvée Réserve Brut, Amyot (Champagne/France)

31.99

Champagne is vast. The northern sections fan out from Épernay; north across the chalky Montagne de Reims towards the city of Reims, west along the Marne Valley towards Paris, then due southwards, the Chardonnay slopes called the Côte des Blancs. Continue south and you find the Aube, also known as the Côte des Bar. Here, off the beaten track, the tiny village of Loches-sur-Ource is the very rural home of Champagne Amyot. They speak an impenetrable local dialect: it took us the best part of a decade to understand what we were saying to each other. Their entry-level champagne has been our biggest selling item in The Winery for 25 years. Their Reserve is a blend of 80% Pinot Noir, 10% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Blanc from three vintages, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

white

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

Litre - 18.99

Harald Steffens has made laser-focused, light, organic, dry Rieslings from the steep slate slopes overlooking the Mosel for decades. Here's his Litre Riesling – big bottle, big impact.

Harald is a 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. He has three key vineyards; Wendelstück (*spiral piece*) is the vineyard below Hahnenschrittchen (*roosters' little steps*) on the sun-favoured opposite bank to Reil just along from the Goldlay (*golden site*). 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!"

Camminera Vermentino 2020, Audarya (Sardinia/Italy)

22.99

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, cemented Audarya as our favourite.

Four years later, we finally have Vermentino aplenty. Tonight we are premiering their highest level Vermentino 'Camminera', named after the tracks that run alongside the vineyards. It's a selection from their best vineyards. We love it for its mouth-filling texture, depth and quivering limey-ness.

rosé

Sancerre Rosé 2021, Roger & Didier Rimbault (Loire/France) (halves 2019/2020 - 12.99) 22.99

Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé, at the eastern end of the Loire valley, are the neighbouring spiritual homes of Sauvignon Blanc. Sancerre is on the Left Bank of the river, Pouilly-sur-Loire on the Right. Sancerre sits on a chalk formation that runs north through Chablis and Champagne up through the white cliffs of Dover to the North Downs in Surrey. Rimbaults have made wine here since the 1600s and today there are many Rimbaults dotted around the various wine-growing villages to the east of the town of Sancerre. Didier and Isabelle Rimbault are our favourites.

Sancerre is famous for its Sauvignon Blanc but many growers also produce a small quantity of red and rosé from Pinot Noir. The Rimbault Rosé is all about strawberries and raspberries with good freshness.



red

Spätburgunder trocken 2021, Walter (Mosel/Germany)

14.99

Spätburgunder is German for Pinot Noir.

Gerrit Walter was an intern with us in the summer of 2009 and went back home to help with the harvest before heading back to Geisenheim, the top Wine Uni in the country. Gerrit was clearly doing his homework at Uni and at his various internships: one sip and it's easy to understand why his parents were happy to give him free rein in the family cellar.

Gerrit's excellent dry Mosel Riesling has been a fixture on The Winery shelves for a decade. For many, it has been their introduction to the magic of dry Riesling. Benchmark crisp, racy Mosel Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from perilously steep, slate vineyards overlooking the river.

Like many along the Mosel valley, although 95% of his wine is Riesling, Gerrit also makes a small amount of Spätburgunder. He has always been very interested in Pinot Noir and was particularly keen to taste as much red Burgundy as possible during his internship with us. He was so obsessed with Pinot that he asked for a new French oak barrel for his 19th birthday. It is fair to say that the wine he made with it back then was a teeny bit oaky. 13 years on, he has been making this silky, smoky Spätburgunder in big old 1,000 and 2,000 litre barrels with no discernible oak flavour.

Malbec 2021, Château Bonnange (Bordeaux/France) UNDER CONVERSION

18.99

Bordeaux. November 2021. We had an appointment in Blaye (the westernmost appellation on Bordeaux's right bank) with Pascal Montaut of Château Les Jonqueyres. What he hadn't told us before was that he had just retired and sold his vineyards. "Come with me and meet the new owners," he said.

We drove to Château Bonnange to taste his wines and then theirs. The short version is, we tasted without a price list and were very pleasantly surprised when they came in substantially lower than expected.

The Château Bonnange 2017 is sensational. Tonight we are showing their latest Malbec, previously known as Le Cot (the old name for the grape in this southwestern corner of France). Although rarely used, Malbec has always been one of the authorised grapes in the Bordeaux blend. During our visit, we learnt that, a century ago at this western end of the Right Bank, Malbec was used in equal thirds with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Malbec is enjoying a revival locally, to the point that Château Bonnange has two Malbec-only bottlings. This one is harvested by hand and raised in Amphora. Intense, expressive fruit - powerful, yet silky.



Syrah 2020, Aurélien Chatagnier (Rhône/France) ORGANIC

19.99

We stumbled upon Aurélien Chatagnier's wines a decade ago in Ampuis, the small town at the base of the Côte-Rôtie. Aurélien says he was "bad at school". When he was 16, his mother said he should probably knock it on the head and get a job. He went to work for a couple of famous winegrowers, Jamet and François Villard. He loved it – and especially enjoyed working in the vines. In 2002, after a gentle, encouraging nudge from Villard, he set up on his own, starting with just a single hectare. Although he now has 7.5 hectares, he still doesn't make much and it took over two years to claw some bottles from his grip.

Aurélien's cellar is up on a plateau above the broad Rhône valley in a remote, draughty, lawless part of the elongated St Joseph zone. Back in March 2016, thieves broke into his remote winery and made off with most of his wine, including cases earmarked for us. Alarming, this is a frequent occurrence in the region. The good news is that, since then, we have had seven hits of Aurélien's pure, modern wines to "make it out of Dodge" to The Winery intact.

In terms of its red wines, the northern Rhône – from Côte Rôtie to Cornas - is all about Syrah. Depending on the winemaking style, Syrah can evoke violets or, in contrast, wild animal notes and grilled meats. Regardless of style, it is usually a powerful, structured wine with great ageing potential. Like all Aurélien's wines, this straight Syrah is silky, deep and modern, without being oaky.

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

Our following tasting, which will be at **The Winery Fulham**, will be on **Tuesday, 23rd August**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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