

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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December Tasting Fulham 13.12.22  
*featuring Pascal Chalon, La Grande Ourse*

*sparkling*

**Champagne Carte d'Or 1er Cru Brut, Stéphane Coquille (Champagne/France) 38.99**

We go way back with Stéphane Coquille. We had been working with his lovely (now late) father, Christian, whose Saint-Chamant Champagnes we have imported for two decades. Stéphane's daughter Diane was an intern in our shop 15 years ago. Shortly after we began with Saint-Chamant, Christian, the proud father, took us to visit his son's brand new winery in Chouilly, at the north end of the Côte des Blancs. That must have been in 2002. Stéphane and his wife Marie-Hélène started in 2001.

A contrasting style to his father, Stéphane makes contemporary, chic, dry Champagnes from Chardonnay vines in Chouilly & Cuis and Pinot Noir from Aÿ & Mareuil.

*white*

**Riesling trocken 2020, Becker-Landgraf (Rheinhessen/Germany) ORGANIC 15.99**

Lime blossom, limey entry, lime jelly, fresh limey finish. Yes, this is a zingy, bright, mouth-filling (did we say limey?) dry Riesling.

A Rheinhessen grower threw a party early last decade, hoping his daughter would catch Johannes Landgraf's eye. Unfortunately, it didn't quite go according to plan and Johannes made a bee-line for another winery's daughter, Julia Becker. So, in 2004, Becker-Landgraf was born and they embarked on their plan to make top-class, cool-climate, dry Riesling and silky Pinot Noir slap bang in the rural centre of the region. Their Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) has been our top-selling German red for a decade and a half. Johannes and Julia are fixated on quality, starting in the vineyards with specialist pruning and foliage techniques. They work with their soil tirelessly to encourage natural, living humus. No irrigation or artificial fertilisers are used. As a result, the roots of the vines grow deeper underground to seek water and nutrients which also gives their vines strength to withstand any climate extremes.

Their attention to detail finds its way into the bottle and, finally, your glass.

**Walkenberg Riesling Spätlese trocken 2011, JB Becker (Rheingau) BIODYNAMIC 29.99**

Our first visit to the Beckers almost two decades ago is etched in our memory. Like something out of Laurel and Hardy, Maria Becker sloshed some Riesling out of the window anointing a surprised postman. The picture was completed with an excitable dog and Maria's moustachioed brother Hans-Josef - a winemaker who looks suspiciously like a circus ringmaster. The Beckers make distinctive Riesling and Spätburgunder in their maze-like buildings and cellar by the Rhine at Walluf. Their wines are made in the traditional way, "the way our grandfather made wine", with long, slow fermentation in huge, old wooden barrels called Fuders in the darkest cold recesses of their damp cellar. The style is gloriously traditional, utterly distinctive and, other than being the first winery in the world to use cutting-edge glass stoppers from 2003, untouched by fashion.

**La Grande Ourse Blanc 2021, Pascal Chalon (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC 21.99**

Now to tonight's headliner. Drum roll..... It is fifteen years since we stumbled across Pascal Chalon making biodynamic Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages in his granny's garage not far from Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Well-known at The Winery for his big, fragrant, constellation-themed reds, Pascal's range has expanded over the past 15 years to include a couple of equally big white wines. First up from Pascal is a broad, nutty, oily, powerful white made from 45% Grenache Blanc, 45% Roussanne (a bit more than usual this year) and 10% Bourboulenc. Fermented using wild yeasts, then aged in parts: oak barrels, inox and a new egg-shaped cement tank. The vines are young, from an abandoned vineyard that Pascal replanted four years ago. Young, yes, and also vigorous.



*Biodynamic? Biodynamism is organic viticulture taken to the extreme, ruled by the lunar calendar - man, moon and earth in perfect harmony - a self-sustaining, self-nourishing system. Its roots can be traced through Maria Thun back to Rudolf Steiner and much further back to Hildegard of Bingen, the mystic nun and composer (1098-1179).*

*The Lunar Calendar? Depending on the position of the moon and planets, the lunar month is divided into four types of days. Fruit, Flower, Leaf and Root.*

*Biodynamism captures the imagination with its strange-sounding rituals, such as dynamising rainwater or burying a cow horn filled with cow manure through the winter, and its widespread use of yarrow, nettle, and dandelion.*

## red

### **La Petite Ourse 2020, Pascal Chalon (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC 18.99**

To recap, we discovered Pascal Chalon in 2007 when he was making his wines in his granny's garage in the hot and windy southern Rhône valley. We had to clamber over apples and a dusty old Renault to get to his few barrels. As soon as we had tasted his entire range, which consisted of two wines, 'La Petite Ourse' and 'La Grande Ourse', we were quick to back the van up and load the last cases he had.

In the meantime, Pascal has built his own, larger winery and extended his range to include Ursa Major, a couple of whites and, very recently, some specific new bottlings from Visan and Suze La Rousse. The wines are always pure, biodynamic Rhône heaven. Fragrant and gutsy.

La Petite Ourse is a rich blend of 60% Syrah and 40% Grenache from vines caressed (some might say ravaged) by the Mistral wind. The 2020 seemed to have bright raspberry and floral notes when we visited last month. A sense of tannin without being tough.

### **La Grande Ourse 2020, Pascal Chalon (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC 20.99**

*Full name: La Grande Ourse Rouge Suze La Rousse Côtes du Rhône villages 2020, La Grande Ourse*

This year's Grande Ourse is a deep, meaty blend of 55% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre, 10% Syrah and 5% Terret Noir. Terret Noir is one of the lesser-known varieties allowed in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, also in Corbières and Languedoc. Pascal raised the wine in amphora and some oak barrels from Burgundy.

We always love the dark richness and herbal flavours of the Grande Ourse, evocative of the lavender and thyme-laden local landscape. This year, we also had a sense of blackcurrant pastille and blackberry. High-toned and herbal.



### **Le Peyron 2020, Pascal Chalon (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC 20.99**

*Full name: Le Peyron X 191-2 Suze La Rousse Côtes du Rhône villages 2020, La Grande Ourse*

Le Peyron is a blend of Grenache and Mourvèdre from two parcels in Tulette, Pascal's home village. The Grenache is from vines planted in 1913. The Mourvèdre, at over 50 years-old, is not exactly young either! X 191-2 refers to the vineyard parcel numbers in the official register.

Concentrated and structured.

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

Our **following tasting**, which will be at **The Winery Maida Vale**, will be on **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**New arrivals - Burgundy** Paul Pernot (Puligny-Montrachet), Caroline Lestimé/Jean-Noël Gagnard (Chassagne-Montrachet), Cheveau (Pouilly-Fuissé), Mosnier (Chablis), Denis (Pernand-Vergelesses), introducing Clos des Poulettes Nuits-Saint-Georges. **Bordeaux** Château Calon (2006 & 2010), Corbin-Michotte (2009 & 2014), Lanscade, Arnauton, Verdignac, Bonnange. **Rhône** Pascal Chalon, Château de la Gardine, Chatagnier, Grand Jacquet. **Champagne** Amyot, François Secondé, Stéphane Coquillet, Saint-Chamant (2011), Sabine Godmé. Loire d'Orfeuilles Vouvray, Clos des Quarterons St-Nicolas de Bourgueil.

**Ribera del Duero** Alvides **Rueda** Reina de Castilla **Rioja** Longrande. **Mosel** Walter, Wegeler **Rheingau** JB Becker, Querbach (2008, 2002, 2007), Zum Krug Sekt, Flick Victoriaberg. **Rheinhessen** Becker-Landgraf.

**Arriving any moment - Pfalz** Pfirmann **Rheingau** Schloss Schönborn (more 2011, 2013, 2003), **Loire** Raimbault Sancerre.

**Holding our breath for our Italians** - Cascina Longoria **Barbaresco**, Terre a Mano **Carmignano**, Casteggio

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