

T H E
W I N E R Y

November Tasting *Fulham* 17.11.22

sparkling

Vouvray Méthode Traditionelle Brut NV, d'Orfeuilles (Loire/France)

19.99

Chenin Blanc is something we hanker for from the moment we run out. Hanker no more – we are kicking off with sparkling Vouvray Brut which just arrived from Arnaud Herivault of Domaine d'Orfeuilles near Tours in the Loire valley. Arnaud makes the full, delicious spectrum of Chenin Blanc: dry, off-dry, sweet, very sweet and sparkling.

His vines are on flinty soil on the plateau above his frigid cellar, hewn out of the chalky rock. This Méthode Traditionelle is a blend of 2014/2015/2016, has 4 grammes of residual sugar (most champagnes have between 8-10). The nose is full-on Chenin Blanc - ethereal honeysuckle, quince, mandarin peel. Full, but not heavy in the mouth.

white

Château La Corne Blanc 2019 (Bordeaux/France) LOW INTERVENTION

19.99

"I am an old Winery staffer ('84-'86) who is now making his own natural wine here in Bordeaux." That got our attention. Steve Lawrence, originally from Buckinghamshire, came to see us in Spring 2022. He had worked at The Winery from 1984 and 1986 before heading to the States for a career in selling wine. There he met Diana Lucz, originally from Tucson Arizona, who was also working in wine. A long-term ambition emerged, to have their own winery. Napa, where they were living, was out of reach, as was California generally. They did however find a small estate in Bordeaux on high ground just across the river Garonne from Langon, not far from Sauternes and Barsac. It's very small, but 2.5 hectares of old vines planted in 1945, 1955 and 1981 is enough for them to farm and vinify themselves, with extreme care. They make around 3,000 bottles a year from their 9,000 vines.

The blend for the white varies depending on the conditions. 2019 was 55% Semillon, 45% Sauvignon Blanc, so has a wonderful, oily, nutty, honeysuckle nose and broad mouthfeel.



Just Riesling trocken 2020, Gut Hermannsberg (Nahe/Germany)

19.99

Gut Hermannsberg is a notable estate in the Nahe, built with the land-modifying help of convict labour and lots of dynamite in 1902 by the Prussian State (hence the Prussian eagle on the label). The domain sits in its own GG (Grand Cru) vineyard in Niederhausen and overlooks the magnificent Schlossböckelheimer Kupfergrube (*Copper Mine*).

It was Forester Hoepf who persuaded the reluctant Prussian State to build a new wine domain in the Nahe at the beginning of the 1900s. The region's vital fruit and oak sales had collapsed and Hoepf, who was a strong supporter of 'Naturwein' (a new concept of wine as a natural product), believed that winemaking should be encouraged. He proposed that the new domain should be operated as a "model vineyard", aiming by example to improve the quality of winemaking in the area and raise the reputation of German wine internationally. Odd, in some ways, given that top German Rieslings were often more expensive than Bordeaux at that time. Hoepf was convinced that the location and geology were perfect for vines. Subsequent decades proved him to be correct.

After a long golden era the estate's fortunes went south in the 1980s and 90s until it was bought in 1998 by the Maurer family, who had made their fortune selling potatoes to German supermarkets. The estate was on the up again but Erich and Tilly Maurer decided to retire and sold in 2009.

The new owners, Dr Christine Dinsel and Jens Riedel, a wealthy, wine-loving couple from Hamburg with a background in banking, have invested generously in every area of the estate. They have an excellent young winemaker plucked from the Pfalz, called Karsten Peter.

Here is their bold, everyday dry Riesling from vines in the nearby spa town of Bad Kreuznach, fizzing with minerality and freshness.

white continued

Nonnberg Riesling trocken 2014, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) ORGANIC/VEGAN 17.99

We just had to scoop up some 2014 Nonnberg (*Nuns' Hill*) from Reiner Flick, one of our favourite growers in the Rheingau, best known as the guy who makes Victoriaberg – Queen Victoria's favourite wine.

The entire Wickerer Nonnberg belongs to Reiner. Nonnberg is on the hill at the edge of the village and overlooks his home and winery. There's a sandstone statue of a nun in one corner, the original Abbess of the monastery which owned the vineyard in the late 1200s. Reiner has worked hard with the chalky, clay soil and has introduced mixed flowers, grasses and herbs between the rows of vines. His Nonnberg always produces impressive Riesling with explosive minerals, depth and concentration and, with age, morphs gradually into this graceful, tingly, fascinating liquid.

red

Château La Corne Rouge 2019 (Bordeaux/France) LOW INTERVENTION 23.99

Steve Lawrence, who worked at The Winery in the 1980s, brought their entire range to show us. Two vintages of white, two of their classic red, plus their top red. We bought all of them. The red is usually 40% Cabernet, 40% Merlot, 10% Cab Franc and 10% Malbec & Carménère. The 2019 is savoury and dry with hints of coffee bean and violets.

We must also bring your attention to Steve & Diana's top red, called Côte Sud; their best barrel of Cabernet Sauvignon – deep, dense, supple and impressive.

Ribera del Duero Roble 2019, Alvides (Ribera del Duero/Spain) 14.99

Alvides is a small family bodega in the dusty Duero valley two hours drive north of Madrid. The Casado family's grandfather Eutimio founded the Co-operative in Aranda del Duero in 1962. In 2001, Eutimio's sons Ildefonso and Delfin Casado - the next generation - set-up their own small winery with the help of Emmanuel Ivar, a young French oenologist who studied winemaking in the Loire and had moved to Ribera del Duero.

Alvides now have 25 ha of vines, all Tempranillo, with an average age of 40-50 years old. Harvesting is always by hand. Every level of wine from Roble, Crianza up to the Vendimia Seleccionada (formerly Reserva) and the Tercera Generación (*Third Generation* - tiny production from 75 year-old vines and only in the greatest years) are treated to some time in French oak with much stirring of the lees.

The results are excellent: we find a high, dark fruit content in the nose (with a touch of vanilla – from the oak) and a fabulous suppleness in the mouth.

Two decades ago, when we first visited Alvides the kids were very young. Héctor, one of those kids, is now making the wines. All three generations work in the vineyards.

We tasted and loved the Roble 2019 earlier this year but had to wait for the extreme heat to pass before it could be picked-up.

Vinsobres 'François' 2016, Vallot (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC 17.99

Vinsobres is one of the named Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages from the southern Rhône valley - like Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Cairanne - all satellites of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, where Grenache and Syrah vines are twisted and ravaged (rather than caressed) by the Mistral wind. It's a beautiful, warm, windswept setting with the jagged Dentelles de Montmirail and Mont Ventoux as a backdrop.

The heavily moustachioed François Vallot, a fourth-generation wine-maker, and his daughter Anaïs own one of the oldest wineries in the Côtes-du-Rhône, an area where much of the wine is still bottled by the big co-operatives. They have been fully biodynamic since 2004 (Biodynamism is the extreme end of organic viticulture, where decisions are synchronised with the lunar calendar).

Since the return of Anaïs following a career in hotel hospitality in North America and Europe, further study in University and an internship at Yquem, the most famous Château in Sauternes, there have been changes in the day-to-day management of the winery and vineyards plus some subtle changes in presentation; an overhaul of the website and new labels. The wines remain butch, chunky and deep - packed with dark matter for the long haul. We were delighted to get hold of this parcel of slightly older wines.

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

Our **following tasting**, which will be at **The Winery Maida Vale**, will be the **Clifton Road Christmas Event** on **Wednesday 30th November** featuring a visit by the Lord Mayor of Westminster and a heavenly choir from St Joseph's School.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**
The Winery, 4 Clifton Road, London W9

www.thewineryuk.com

mailinglist@thewineryuk.com

The Winery, 797 Fulham Road SW6 5HD

info@thewineryuk.com

