

T H E
W I N E R Y

October Tasting *Maida Vale* 20.10.22

sparkling

Champagne Blanc de Blancs Brut, Amyot (Champagne/France)

33.99

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 Carte Or (gold label) has been our biggest selling item in The Winery for 25 years. Given that we will be out of the Carte Or for four weeks, we find ourselves climbing the Amyot ladder with this fresh, lively, mouth-filling Blanc de Blancs, 100% Chardonnay. Who knows, some people may be celebrating today.

white

Château Larmevaille Entre-Deux-Mers 2020 (Bordeaux/France)

11.99

Why Entre-Deux-Mers? There is a triangle of lush, rolling, green countryside carpeted with vines, between the city of Bordeaux on the Garonne and the town of Libourne on the Dordogne – *Entre-Deux-Mers* – between two seas. Poetic licence – they are big rivers, not quite seas.

This zingy white, which we get from the Rivière brothers, is made mainly from Sauvignon Blanc, with a splash of Sémillon and Muscadelle. It's all about melon, lime and fresh cut grass.



Weisenstein Riesling trocken 2019, Bastgen (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC

22.99

Imagine a big loop in a beautiful river, so loopy that the next loop round almost meets the previous one in the middle. Now imagine a saddle-like hill brow at the top. Now imagine you built a beautiful house of wood and glass right there. That's where Armin Vogel and his wife Mona Bastgen live. They named the winery after her surname, partly because their family was known in the village of Monzel – as butcher, baker and candlestick maker. But mainly because Armin didn't want their wine to be called "Bird", which is what his name means. They make nervy, slate-infused, dry Rieslings from the steep, slate slopes of Kesten and Brauneberg here on the Middle Mosel. Weisenstein is a full south-facing vineyard close to the river on the road towards Bernkastel-Kues. The deep soil and late evening sun give the wine power and a softer acidity. Made in a big old 1,000-litre fuder (cask), it has a touch of wild yeast on the nose and a lovely, wide mouth-feel.

Gewürztraminer trocken 2021, Julius Treis (Mosel/Germany)

17.99

Gewürztraminer? Sometimes nothing else will do. It has been increasingly difficult to find a dry Gewürztraminer over the last two decades of global warming. In the summer of '22 we found a beautiful, balanced, dry one with all the *pot pourri* and exotic aromas you could hope for in Reil on the Mosel of all places! Tobias Treis can trace his family's wine-making history back to 1684. With just five hectares, 90% in the steep slate slopes overlooking the river Mosel, clearly Riesling is the main theme.

A friendship formed almost 20 years ago has influenced the direction. Tobias met Ivan Giovanett at Geisenheim – Germany's leading Wine University. Ivan's family winery is Castelfeder in the South Tyrol. You can sense the high-altitude middle-European influence in Tobias' non-Riesling whites. In fact, it was Ivan who suggested that Tobias might consider planting some Gewürztraminer.

red

Pinot Nero 2019, Sansaluto (Lombardy/Italy)

10.99

We pride ourselves on working with small growers. There is, however, one exception. It's in Lombardy. Our first visit to Oltrepò Pavese, a bump on the plain 60kms south of Milan, might have been over 15 years ago and that's where we found a very switched-on co-op, the Cantina di Casteggio. At that time it was a co-op with 350 members and a massive facility, part run-down *fascista*-style, part Space Age. Try as we might, despite the size of the Cantina, we just couldn't resist the wines.

The Cantina had started a 'quality project' in the early 2000s with their best 50 growers, bringing in high-profile consultant Riccardo Cotarella. They must have been looking over his shoulder during his visits as the entire range went from strength to strength.

Although it was already the biggest winery we had worked with it didn't stop there. They 'merged' with another Cantina in Broni, the next town and, more recently, 'absorbed' La Versa, a century-old Cantina Sociale, specialising in sparkling wine. The combined group now has 700 members spread across 28 villages, 90% of them in the hills (where the quality is finer). There is nobody else to absorb or merge with for miles around! This is their dainty, sleek Pinot Noir with their new Sansaluto label.

Château Bonnage 2017 (Bordeaux/France)

21.99

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 Bonnage to taste his wines and theirs. The short version is, we tasted without a price list and the Bonnage 2017 was a revelation. If you had told us it was a swanky Pomerol well north of €80, we would not have baulked. It turned out to be substantially less. Our third shipment arrived last Friday – we scooped up the last two pallets of sumptuous 2017 that we have all been loving this year. Amazing depth and concentration from low yields (25 hl/ha). 90% Merlot/10% Cabernet Sauvignon.



Sedella Mediterranean Mountain Wine 2017, Sedella (Málaga/Spain) NATURAL

29.99

If you think of southern Spain, you tend to think of baking heat. It came as a surprise to find a cooler climate red made by oenologist Lauren Rosillo from old vine indigenous varieties, high up in the slate mountains at his Sedella winery. He calls it Mediterranean Mountain Wine.

Lauren Rosillo is an oenologue who has been making the wine for Familia Martinez Bujanda at their estates in Rioja (including the highly-regarded Finca Valpiedra), Rueda and La Mancha for almost 20 years. He also writes papers and teaches at Albacete Agronomists Technical High School. We met through Nacho Leon, who makes Demencia, Pyjama and Taruguin – long term fixtures in our Spanish range.

Lauren started his solo project in 2006 on a much smaller scale, with a tiny 2.5 hectares of very old vines up in the cool slate hills inland from Málaga, made in a low-intervention 'natural' vein. He uses traditional methods such as a Roman-style plough pulled by horse. He makes a skin contact-style white and two age-worthy reds; the big, dense Sedella and a different selection raised in Amphorae called Laderas de Sedella. Sedella is made from old bush vines planted in 1940 with native grape varieties Romé tinta, Garnacha tinta, Jaén tinta and loose strains of other unheard-of local varieties. They are then vinified in oak and cement tanks to produce this impressive, multi-layered and surprisingly cool red.

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

Our following tasting will be on **Thursday 17th November** at **The Winery Fulham**.

Just arrived – Mosel; **Clemens Busch** biodynamic Rieslings; dry Gewürztraminer from **Tobias Treis**. Spain; **Alvides** Ribera del Duero; Verdejo by **Reina de Castilla** Rueda. Bordeaux; more **Château Larmevaille** Entre-Deux-Mers and our third hit of **Château Bonnage**.

Incoming – **Stéphanie Mosnier**'s Chablis; sparkling and still Vouvray by **Domaine d'Orfeuilles**. Spain; Isabel Fernandez's **Longrande** Rioja. Italy; the Paladin family's **Bosco del Merlo** Prosecco and Veneto whites.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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