

T H E
W I N E R Y

April Tasting *Fulham* 12.04.23

sparkling

Vouvray Méthode Traditionelle Brut NV, d'Orfeuilles (Loire/France) ORGANIC 22.99

Given how much we like Chenin Blanc, it's alarming how infrequently we get to Tours or Angers in the Loire valley. From time to time the hankering for Chenin Blanc becomes overwhelming so, during the Pandemic, we dropped-in a couple of times on Arnaud Hérivault of Domaine d'Orfeuilles in Vouvray. 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

Hallgartener Reserve Riesling trocken 2020, Peter Jakob Kühn (Rheingau/Germany) BIODYNAMIC 29.99

The Kühn family makes striking biodynamic Rieslings in the Rheingau. Their wines are many things – lean, exotic, oily, peppery, salty, savoury and haunting, to name a few.

Peter Jakob Kühn had a complete change of direction in 1999, was certified organic in 2004 and then went the whole way to biodynamism. 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.

The Kühns' wines are utterly distinctive - standing quite apart from other Rheingau wines. They can even challenge our idea of how Riesling should taste. The aromas can evoke incense, orange peel and hedgerows. There's an oiliness without ever being cloying. Occasionally you might get a sense of tannin – something you expect in red wine but not in white. We often recommend putting their top Rieslings in a decanter several hours before serving.

This wine is an old vine selection from the shadier lower slopes of Grand Cru vineyard Hendelberg which, unusually for the Rheingau, has a high proportion of Devon Slate. Originally destined for the Alte Reben, one cask sometimes presents itself as something special and worth bottling separately. Honeysuckle, scented candle, lighter fuel (from a distance) rather than the petrol notes that some associate with Riesling?

Würzburger Stein Riesling trocken 2013, Juliusspital (Franken/Germany) 29.99

Bonkers about Bocksbeutel? Yes, we are. The Bocksbeutel (*aka goats' sack*) is the traditional bottle shape for wine from Franken. Although many growers have switched to more mainstream shapes, we adore the unique, distinctive traditional shape and seek it out.

After spotting (and drinking) a few on wine lists in Germany over the past decade, it's fair to say that we had become a bit fixated about Juliusspital wines. It was finally time to visit. Despite the contrast in our relative sizes (180 hectares, makes it the second largest producer in Germany), we were very warmly received. Our first pick-up in February included all the classics: Riesling, mature Riesling, Silvaner, mature Silvaner, All dry.

For a population of 130,000 Würzburg has a remarkably high density of historic buildings: cathedral, churches, palace, fort and wineries - many with histories going back centuries. Vineyards can be seen rising above the city in every direction. Julius Echter, Prince & Bishop, founded the Juliusspital in 1575 – a hospital for the poor, providing care, education, religious instruction and wine in the centre of Würzburg. It has continued with the same model to this day. The extensive wine cellars are below the hospital.

Gavi Regaldina 2018, Terre di Maté (Piedmont/Italy) NATURAL 19.99

One of our missions (which we chose to accept) while we were in Piedmont in 2021, was to find a new Gavi. By chance, our search took us to psychologist Stefania Correa's kitchen in a block of flats. The first mouthful of the first bottle was explosive: the most intense Gavi we have ever tasted. "Before tasting the rest," she asked, "would you like to see my vineyard before it gets dark and visit the cellar?"

"Yes, please!"

Stefania, a psychologist specialising in CBT (*Cognitive Behavioural Therapy*), came late to winemaking. Her father, Maté, who died in 2008, had a vineyard and would sell the grapes. He never made wine. Having inherited the beautiful Regaldina vineyard, named after a wood below the vines, she became increasingly curious about what it would be like to make her own wine. She rented a little space in the large Co-op in Gavi and, with some guidance from an oenologist called Gaspare Buscemi, started making her wine in 2013. Gaspare told Stefania that "the wine makes itself". We suspect it is slightly more involved than that.



*red***Merdingen Spätburgunder 2021, Jürgen von der Mark (Baden/Germany) ORGANIC 22.99**

Spätburgunder is German for Pinot Noir. It comes as a surprise to many that any red wine is produced in Germany. Germany is currently the world's third largest producer of Pinot Noir and bottles more still Pinot Noir than France. Most Pinot Noir in France is used for Champagne.

We were in Germany in February and headed to Baden, all the way south to the Swiss border to taste Jürgen von der Mark's latest Spätburgunders. Jürgen is a flying winemaker - meaning he consults about winemaking for several other wineries in Germany and beyond - as far as South Africa. His wines have a distinctive, savoury, smoky, often autumnal style, with pure red fruits and a silky mouth-feel.

He makes excellent Spätburgunders/Pinot Noirs, including his top-of-the-range Song Wines, named after songs he particularly likes and, this time, we were particularly impressed by the Merdingen.

Merdingen is the village on the Tuniberg, a limestone hill twisted by volcanic movements, jutting out of the surrounding flat land like a huge stone south of the Kaiserstuhl.

Rosso di Montepulciano 2021, Il Macchione (Tuscany/Italy) ORGANIC 24.99

Elegant, succulent Sangiovese from southern Tuscany made organically with intense care by Simone Abram, his partner Michela and brother Leonardo. Owing to frost they only produced 3,333 bottles of this wine. It is bright, with tightly wound fruit. "Worth decanting" says Simone.

Il Macchione was a chance discovery in spring 2016 at Osteria La Porta in Montichiello between Montepulciano and Montalcino. We phoned Il Macchione at the crack of dawn. "May we visit you? We are really sorry we only have one hour to cram a meeting in before heading to Montalcino." "OK." Minutes later, we arrived at Il Macchione to be met by Simone Abram, a young bearded man with bags of energy and bags of quotes.

Quote #1 - "We're not from Tuscany, our family is from Trentino. We were driving around for 5 or 6 years looking for the right spot."

#2 - "I didn't choose Sangiovese - I chose this land".

#3 - "It's just me, my girlfriend, my brother and a gypsy. A real gypsy. One of the family. Totally committed."

#4 - "100% Sangiovese - not cut with Cabernet or Merlot or other stuff."

#5 - "When people are tasting, everyone talks about acidity and dark fruits and tannins and stuff - I taste with my body."

Not certified but totally organic, we would describe Il Macchione as *beyond* organic. This is where we first saw *favino* plants (Broad Bean/Field Beans) between the rows - an effective natural fertiliser, used to fix nitrogen in the soil.

We listened, loved the attitude, tasted with our bodies and were very impressed. One hour morphed into two, but it was definitely worth it - the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

Chianti Rufina 2020, Dreolino (Tuscany/Italy) 14.99

Chianti is a broad subject, more complex than many imagine. From edgy pizza wine to the heights of some Chianti Classico. Even at the highest level, the wines can be bracing and hard work: always best with food. One night at Trattoria Tre Soldi in Florence, we stumbled across a Chianti Rufina by Dreolino. Neither harsh nor edgy, no-nonsense, mouth-filling Sangiovese with a splash of Colorino - breezy strawberries/raspberries on the palate and yet savoury, with weight and texture: a welcome relief after too much overhyped, overpriced Chianti Classico. Sabrina Tanini and her family make Chianti, Chianti Rufina and Rufina Riserva. She also bottles some Chianti in the Old School straw-covered flask shaped bottles. Her daughter Francesca is currently working remotely from Fulham - unfortunately she is flying back from Italy this evening. Next time!

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS - today is a Fruit Day.

Our following tasting, which will be at **The Winery Maida Vale**, is slated for **Tuesday 23rd May**.

Just arrived - many featured tonight. **Dreolino** and **Il Macchione** from Tuscany. Gavi by Stefania Correa of **Terre di Maté** in Piedmont. From Germany: **Juliuspital** in Franken, **Gerrit Walter's** dry Mosel Rieslings, Spätburgunders by **Nelles** from the Ahr Valley and **Jürgen von der Mark** in Baden.

We picked up Burgundy from **Clos des Pouettes** and **Guillemot**, Champagne from **André Fays** in the Côte des Bar and **Gérard Dubois** from the Côte des Blancs. Sparkling Vouvray from the Loire Valley from **Domaine d'Orfeuilles**. Arrived yesterday, Rioja by **Bodegas Alvia**, a new find. **Bordeaux** arriving on Friday.

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

