

T H E
W I N E R Y

February Tasting *Fulham* 13.02.23

sparkling

Prosecco Rosé Brut 2021, Bosco del Merlo (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 15.99

Finally legal since 2020 - *Prosecco Rosé*. Before then it was called Rosé Spumante. To qualify, it must be from the nine provinces in Veneto and Friuli and made from Glera (a synonym for the Prosecco grape) with 10-15% Pinot Noir.

Carlo and Milly Paladin have been making organic wines under their Bosco del Merlo label for many years including The Winery's top performing, favourite Prosecco for close to two decades. They have a spread of vines over the flat plains at Annone Veneto northeast of Venice, with the Alps visible in the background. It's an area rich with Roman history - the old Roman road, the via Postumia runs right by the estate.

white

Sancerre 2021, Didier Raimbault (Loire/France) 25.99

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. Both villages sit on a chalk formation that runs north through Chablis and Champagne up to the white cliffs of Dover to the North Downs in Surrey. Raimbaults have made wine here since the 1600s and today there are many Raimbaults dotted around the various wine-growing villages to the east of the town of Sancerre. Didier and Isabelle Raimbault are our favourites. They make three excellent Sancerre whites from two soil types; Caillottes (gravel and marl) and Terres Blanches (chalk).

Gently grassy, classy Sancerre picked from both soils, vinified separately and blended before bottling. Not over-blown. Clear, lean and refreshing - all melon, nettles and the merest hint of cut grass.



Hallgarten Alte Reben Riesling trocken 2021, Peter Jakob Kühn (Rheingau) BIODYNAMIC 26.99

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. Alte Reben (the wine formerly known as Rheinschiefer) is an old vine selection from the Grand Cru Hendelberg vineyard between Hallgarten and the Steinberg which, unusually for the Rheingau, has a high proportion of Devon Slate.

Nonnengarten Riesling trocken 2018, Clemens Busch (Mosel/Germany) BIODYNAMIC 32.99

The Mosel is a river, set in a stunningly beautiful, steep-sided valley, that loops from Luxembourg through Trier up to Koblenz where it joins the Rhine. The vineyards are punishingly steep, dangerous and time-consuming to work. Clemens Busch, who looks like Jesus, is something of a guru to his disciples, the New Wave German winemakers. In the late 1970s he was the first to show that, with meticulous work in the vineyards, 100% organic viticulture, and, if you pick late enough, you can make amazing dry Riesling on a river best known for its sweeter styles.

It's hard not to be impressed as you stand outside Clemens and Rita's 17th Century house on the riverside, looking up at the overwhelming wall of vines on the opposite bank. With three different coloured slates: grey, red and blue, each with their own unique mineral flavour profile, it's easy to get geeky with their Rieslings. Nonnengarten (*Nuns' Garden*) is the vineyard below and to the right of the former convent which crowns the slope. Blue slate on red sandstone. Expressive, ethereal, saline, a touch of oil and a touch of spice.

red

Saint-Amour Villa Violettes 2021, Cheveau (Burgundy/France)

21.99

In southern Burgundy, where the Mâconnais meets the Beaujolais, the primal presence of the two jagged rock faces of Vergisson and Solutré dominate the skyline above the tiny village of Pouilly, the village that time forgot. When we first visited 20 years ago, the whole Cheveau family, from grandparents to grandchildren, gathered in the doorway to watch the hot-shot wine merchants from London taste their wines. At that time, Nicolas & Aurélie Cheveau made Mâcon, St-Véran and Pouilly-Fuissé. Much has changed since then. There's a swanky new, much more accessible winery on the approach to the village. There are also multiple new bottlings; four Mâcon, one Bourgogne Blanc, one white Beaujolais, one St-Véran, no fewer than six separate Pouilly-Fuissé selections and five red Beaujolais.

Saint-Amour is one of the 10 named Crus Beaujolais. Thanks to its name, there are plentiful heart signs dotted around the village. Villa Violettes is a house associated with the Cheveau family dating from 1685. Although Gamay tends to be from the lighter, low-tannin end of the spectrum, this wine has plenty going on: blackcurrant, ample fruit, spice, fleshy texture.

Château Arnauton 2014 (Fronsac/Bordeaux/France)

17.99

Despite being part of the same geological formation as Pomerol on Bordeaux' right bank, Fronsac has generally been overlooked by the English. This may have something to do with old rivalries dating back to 1450 when the French King Charles VII managed to boot the English out of Bordeaux. Unlike the entire Médoc and the city of Bordeaux, Fronsac sided with the French King and was rewarded with his favour in the French Court.

As is often the case with Bordeaux Châteaux, Arnauton has changed hands over the past century from Belgian to Dutch and, in 2010, into French hands. The blend is mainly Merlot with some Cabernet Franc and Malbec. We are big fans of the 2014 vintage: more resolved than the 2015 and 2016. Approachable and supple but still with good structure.

Rendez-vous sous le Chêne Rouge 2020, Grand Jacquet (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC

16.99

The impressive and distinctive Mont Ventoux towers over the Ventoux region, as it does over the whole southern Rhône valley. Despite its steepness, the mountain seems to be a magnet for cyclists - like moths to the flame. Grand Jacquet has been on our radar for many years. Our former long-serving colleague Ben's family lives nearby and frequently picked up wine from them. The best-known restaurant in the area, Chez Serge in Carpentras, features their wines heavily. It was only a matter of time before we stopped circling and called-in. Patricia and Joël Jacquet started their winery in 2000, have been organic since 2002 and biodynamic since 2008. Like all biodynamic growers, they work with the lunar calendar. They acquired several small parcels of older vines around the village of Mazan, peaking at 15 hectares before reducing recently to a more manageable 10 hectares. "We are getting to a certain age" they say.

When we visited last year, we thoroughly enjoyed their gutsy reds with evocative names such as "Rendez-vous sous le Chêne" (*rendezvous under the oak tree*) and "Juste avant les Sangliers" (*just before the wild boars*). The "Rendez-vous sous le Chêne" is 90% Grenache, 10% Syrah, 100% destemmed, deep and rich, with hints of lavender and sweat (in a good way).



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

Our **following tasting**, which will be at **The Winery Maida Vale**, will be on **Wednesday 15th March** and hopefully feature Alessandra Toso of **Cascina Longoria** in Piedmont. She'll be showing her Barbera, Nebbiolo and (drum roll) Barbaresco.

New arrivals – **Tuscany**: Terre a Mano, **Piedmont**: Cascina Longoria Barbaresco, **Rheingau**: Schloss Schönborn, JB Becker, PJ Kühn, Zum Krug, Querbach, **Pfalz**: Pfirmann. **Rhône**: Pascal Chalon, Vallot, Grand Jacquet. **Burgundy**: Denis, Sirugue, Pertuzot, Cheveau, Paul Pernet, JN Gagnard, Caroline Lestimé, **Champagne**: Amyot, Stéphane Coquillette, Saint-Chamant, Sabine Godmé, François Secondé. **Rioja**: Longrande, **Ribera del Duero**: Alvides, **Rueda**: Reina de Castilla. **Bordeaux**: Calon, Corbin-Michotte, Lanscade, Arnauton, Verdignan.

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