

T H E
W I N E R Y

January Tasting *Maida Vale* 24.01.23

sparkling

Zum Krug Riesling Sekt Brut 2021, Josef Laufer (Rheingau/Germany)

14.99

We start with Zum Krug Riesling Sekt Brut – a Winery Classic for the past twenty years. The legendary hotel/restaurant Zum Krug is a magical place: the embodiment of the Rheingau, a region thick with castles, convents and vineyards. Reminiscent of a gingerbread house, it's the sort of place that takes you back to mediaeval Germany with its atmospheric twists and turns, and a wooden interior straight out of a fantasy grotto from ancient legend.

Zum Krug was responsible for our initiation – baptism even - into the treasures of Rheingau Riesling and Spätburgunder. We have learnt so much from Josef Laufer Senior and Josef Junior over the decades. Their sparkling Riesling is a fixture on our shelves: a dry Sekt made with top class Riesling from the slopes overlooking the village - a wake-up call to the senses.

white

Chablis Vieilles Vignes 2020, Mosnier (Burgundy/France)

24.99

In 2007 Stéphanie Mosnier gave up her job in logistics in Lyon to come home and take over her father Sylvain's winery when he retired. Her husband, Christophe, who was working in a dynamite company, is a keen gastronome and was happy to support the move. Stéphanie makes top-class Chablis – tightly-wound, concentrated and crystal clear, a wonderful balance of fruit and fresh acidity. She makes Petit Chablis, Chablis, Chablis Vieilles Vignes and two 1er Crus, Beauroy and Côte de Lechet. This is Stéphanie's intense Vieilles Vignes bottling made from 50 year-old vines.



La Loca Verdejo 2021, Reina de Castilla (Rueda/Spain)

15.99

Let's go Loca! Two hours' drive northwest of Madrid, on the high, flat plains northwest of Segovia in the former Kingdom of Castille you find Rueda, one of Spain's finest white wine-producing regions. The area is known for its crisp, zippy whites: Sauvignon Blanc and the local speciality Verdejo, which is a bit like Sauvignon Blanc but different. We mistakenly believed that Verdejo is a synonym for Verdelho. It seems to be related to Savagnin (from Jura in eastern France) and Castellana Blanca (a grape which is hard to trace and, awkwardly, shares its name with a breed of sheep). There is even a suggestion Verdejo originated in North Africa.

Reina de Castilla is an excellent example of a newly modernised bodega, like many in Spain, originally a co-operative – a grouping of local wine-growers. They harvest in the cool of night and ferment in stainless steel tanks to maintain aroma and freshness. La Loca is a special cuvée of their older vines, lower yield, long lees contact partly in barrel, partly steel tanks.

Pfaffenberg Riesling Kabinett trocken 2011, Schloss Schönborn (Rheingau/Germany)

15.99

The van-load of mature dry Riesling from the deep cellars of Schloss Schönborn we brought back in autumn lasted a matter of days. It was a relief when our latest pallet arrived just before Christmas.

Schloss Schönborn was one of the grand old estates of the Rheingau, tracing its vineyard ownership back to 1349. Although Paul Graf von Schönborn and his family have another wine estate, a castle and agricultural land in Franken, we were somewhat disappointed that, at the end of 2020, the Graf decided to sell their Rheingau estate (with the exception of their large cellar) and rent out all their top-notch vineyards from one end of the Rheingau to the other (Rüdesheim to Hochheim) and everything between (Winkel, Hattenheim and Erbach). Many of you may recall that we have been visiting with increasing frequency to plunder their deep cellar of mature vintages and we will continue to do so until all the old stock has gone. The Graf's son Alexander opened the cellar for us late last summer and we picked out a selection going back to 2003. Tonight we are reintroducing the excellent 2011 Hattenheimer Pfaffenberg Riesling Kabinett trocken from the vineyard in front of the winery, overlooking the Rhine. It's a clear example of how beautifully Rheingau Riesling can age. We bought their last 300 bottles which are disappearing swiftly.

red

Spätburgunder 2021, Pfirmann (Pfalz/Germany) ORGANIC 17.99

Summer 2019. For no good reason a decade had passed since our previous visit to the Pfalz. It turned out to be a voyage of discovery. We came across a Pfirmann Spätburgunder in a restaurant in Neustadt-Gimmeldingen and headed over the next day.

Before taking over from his father Otto in 2000, Jürgen Pfirmann studied at Neustadt and Bad Kreuznach. He went to school with Karsten Peter, the young star winemaker at Gut Hermannsberg in the Nahe. Jürgen isn't doing a bad job either! He and his wife Sabine are based in the village of Wollmesheim, just outside Landau, and make Spätburgunder/Pinot Noirs and a range of aromatic whites. This Spätburgunder is from 15 year-old vines, a combination of Mariafeld M1 and Freiburg clones, giving it an intrinsically German flavour profile. Picked early for freshness, it spends 10 days on its skins and is raised in 3-8 year-old barrels. The charming nose reminded us of the bright, crunchy, cherry fruit of a very good Bourgogne Rouge but with a little more intensity and sappiness in the mouth.

Château Calon 2006 (Bordeaux/France) 23.99

Want to taste some old Bordeaux? Of course we do!

Jean-Noël Boidron can trace his family's roots in wine back to 1760 and has two key Châteaux. Corbin-Michotte in Saint-Émilion and Château Calon (where he lives), which straddles two of Saint-Émilion's satellite appellations: Saint-Georges-Saint-Émilion and Montagne-Saint-Émilion. Jean-Noël, a gentleman of a certain age, was Professor in Oenology and Wine Chemistry (with a particular specialism in Aroma) at Bordeaux. He is obsessed with aroma. Unlike most of the shiny cellars in Bordeaux, there is no new equipment to be seen. His cellar is a time capsule. He uses cement tanks (and why not?) and old barrels two levels underground, like the Bat Cave, where it is perpetually cool. All very traditional and Old School. We are particularly fond of the Calon from the Saint-Georges-Saint-Émilion appellation. Packed with aroma, a fascinating balance of sternness and lushness.

Carmignano 2019, Terre a Mano (Tuscany) BIODYNAMIC 32.99

A former colleague first told us about Terre a Mano after doing a harvest in the region. One thing led to another and we have been bringing in Rossella Bencini's fabulous Carmignano ever since. When we visited Rossella and her winemaker Marco Vannucci, we lobbied her heavily to let us buy some of her mad dry white wine Sassocarlo, her sweet Vin Santo, some olive oil and as much of this fabulous, fleshy Carmignano as possible. Rossella inherited the beautiful estate high up in the hills and woods above Prato, 40 kms west of Florence, from her grandfather. The farm previously formed part of a much larger estate belonging to the Medici family which was used for hunting parties.

Although Carmignano was recognised as one of the first *Super-Tuscans* in 1975, the locals argue that its DOC (*Denominazione d'Origine Controllata* or *Appellation*) dates back 300 years to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III de' Medici who proclaimed that Carmignano, Chianti, Pomino and Valdarno were superior quality and granted them legal protections.

Carmignano is allowed to blend a percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon into their Sangiovese. Rossella is keen to point out that Cabernet was not new to the area – Catherine de Medici married into French royalty and the grape was brought to the area and known locally as Uva Francesca.

Biodynamic since 2001, Rossella's blend is 75% Sangiovese with a 15% splash of sunshine-soaked Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Canaiolo (which, along with Sangiovese, is one of the grapes used for Chianti). Supple, high-class, high-toned, juice-saturated Tuscan red.

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

Our following tasting will be on **Monday 13th February** at **The Winery Fulham**.

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 Pernot, JN Gagnard, Caroline Lestimé, **Champagne**: Amyot, Stéphane Coquille, 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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