

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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December Tasting *Fulham* 13.12.23  
*featuring Swen Klinger von Othegraven*

Tonight we are featuring the wines of von Othegraven, the legendary Riesling estate on the Saar, a tributary of the Mosel. Joining us tonight is Swen Klinger, who, originally hired as vineyard manager and cellar master, has also taken on the wine-making role. Prizes and gongs abound.

*sparkling*

**Riesling Sekt Brut NV, von Othegraven (Mosel-Saar/Germany)**

**23.99**

The rather grand von Othegraven estate can trace its history back to the 1500s. We can trace our history with von Othegraven back to 2004 when Swen Klinger and Andreas Barth (of Lubentiushof) were hired and the quality went from strength to strength.

The estate only has Grand Cru vineyards on the Saar. Kanzemer Altenberg (the magnificent steep slope behind the von Othegraven house), Wiltingen Kupp, Wawerner Herrenberg and Ockfener Bockstein. The base wine for this fabulous Sekt is a blend of 2019 and 2020 from all of their Grand Cru vineyards and spent 9 months on the lees of the yeast to add texture. Broad, round, lovely.



*white*

**Max Riesling trocken 2021, von Othegraven (Mosel-Saar/Germany)**

**19.99**

We always loved Dr Heidi Kegel, the charming former head anaesthetist from Cologne hospital, who was left the historic von Othegraven estate by a maiden aunt in the early 1990s. When we phoned she would say “what time would you like to come?” “How’s 11.00h?” “Would you like to stay for lunch?” “Yes, please!” We have many memories of lunch with her, her geologist husband and Andreas Barth (whose Lubentiushof wines we also adore). There would always be a moment when she would say, Andreas, can you bring up something old from the cellar? Always a treat.

She named their ‘entry-level’ Riesling Max, after Maximus von Othegraven. It’s an early picking from Kanzemer Altenberg, the Grand Cru slope behind the house. This is a late release, with 8 months extra aging in tank and old casks and 6 months in bottle. Refreshingly low in alcohol (only 11.5%) yet full in slatey flavour.

**Kanzemer Riesling trocken 2022, von Othegraven (Mosel-Saar/Germany)**

**27.99**

Unfortunately Dr Heidi became ill and in 2009 decided it was probably time to sell. Enter Günther Jauch, generally held to be the most popular man in Germany. An unassuming man, he’s a TV host and commentator, a national treasure, a kind of David Attenborough figure (without the nature programmes). Günther is a distant relative of earlier owners and brought a new energy to his new acquisition. Same team of Swen and Andreas but new labels, more visibility, higher prices, more prizes.

The Kanzemer is the village level wine, another selection from the magnificent Altenberg vineyard. Always expressive: wild yeast in the nose, surging freshness, fruit and minerals. Electric!

**Altenberg Riesling GG 2021, von Othegraven (Mosel-Saar/Germany)**

**49.99**

Terroir. It’s a sense of place. It’s the expression of the earth, of the geology. Here on the Saar, like the Mosel that it feeds, it’s all about slate. The slate here sparkles with Quartz, which often gives the wine a dizzy, spicy, almost tropical character. Top of the dry Riesling pyramid of quality is the GG (GG = Grosses Gewächs = Grand Cru). It has concentration, power and elegance. Tightly-wound, it can drunk now but can develop with ease for 20-30 years.

*off-dry/fruity*

**Altenberg Riesling Kabinett 2022, von Othegraven (Mosel-Saar/Germany)**

**28.99**

Before the trend for dry wines took off in the 1990s, the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer was well-known for its off-dry and sweet wines. Von Othegraven have always made outstanding sweet wines, wines that can last for 50 years or more. This Kabinett is another expression of the Altenberg. It has all the intensity and minerality of the dry wines but with a succulent sweetness and a lift in fresh acidity that makes the wine alarmingly drinkable.

*red*

**Rosso di Valtellina La Malpaga 2022, Ca'Bianche (Lombardy/Italy)**

**27.99**

Our trip to northern Italy a few weeks ago took us up into the Alps, a few metres from the Swiss border. Nebbiolo is best known as the grape of Barolo and Barbaresco but up in the mountains they make a wine called Valtellina. There's a small family winery called Ca' Bianche, high above the valley floor. Davide Bana, his wife Stefania, their two children, with some additional tractor help from his father Bruno. The first vintage was 2011. We were very taken with every Valtellina they make: 100% Nebbiolo, very cool, pure and silky. This is their Rosso, the entry point. Crimson colour, lovely perfume, elegant fruit. Bright, cherry fruit. We are delighted that our first pallet arrived last Thursday. Welcome to The Winery shelves.

**Maranges Vieilles Vignes 2022, Maurice Charleux (Burgundy/France)**

**29.99**

On our way back from Italy, we stopped off in Burgundy, in Maranges, the southernmost village of the Côte de Beaune to taste Vincent Charleux's wines. We came across them first in Dublin. We are always on the lookout, wherever we are. Lucky for us Vincent was no longer represented in the UK. Vincent makes Maranges and a little Santenay in white and red. Yum. Loved them all, so we picked some up when we were in Burgundy last week.

This bottling comes from two parcels of vines, one planted in 1937, the other in 1976. We find it bold and smoky, concentrated and vigorous.



**Ripasso Superiore 2020, Le Ragose (Veneto/Italy)**

**28.99**

It has taken a couple of years of circling but we now have our first pallet of Valpolicella and Amarone from Le Ragose, the estate built in 1969 at the highest elevation in the area. The road is twisty and narrow and our clutch took a beating. How on earth did they get all the winemaking tanks and large casks up there? How on earth will a lorry get up there to pick up our wine? The answer is that it doesn't. They had to send a smaller vehicle to bring it down. The wines made the climb worthwhile, as did the warm welcome of Paolo Galli and his daughter Marta. When Marta's grandparents, Arnaldo and Marta, started the estate there were 18 growers in the area, today there are 400!

A quick history of Amarone, which is much shorter than Recioto, its associated dessert wine. The first bottle of Amarone was made in 1938 but it wasn't until 1953 that it became a recognised style. Recioto, on the other hand, can trace its history back to the 2nd century BC, when it was first mentioned as Retica, a full-flavoured red wine from the hills north of Verona. The rumoured invention of Amarone may have been a forgotten barrel of sweet Recioto which continued to ferment until dry.

Amarone is made by laying bunches of ripe grapes directly in crates during the harvest. The crates are then kept in a well-ventilated drying room for around 120 days, during which time they lose up to 50% of their volume and concentrating the sugars - which explains the high alcohol levels (and high prices) of the finished wines. In January the grapes are pressed and fermented as normal.

The Ripasso is related but different. The light, breezy Valpolicella harvested in September/October is refermented in January on the lees of the Amarone. It absorbs 10-20% of the Amarone and produces a wine with some of the components of Amarone but with a lighter, fresher mouthfeel. Delicious.

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

Our following tasting will be at **The Winery Maida Vale** on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January** when we will be joined by Laurent Rochelandet of Trapet-Rochelandet in Gevrey-Chambertin, Burgundy.

**Join us for our Monthly Tastings**

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