

T H E
W I N E R Y

October Tasting *Fulham* 16.10.23

sparkling

Champagne Tradition Brut NV, Verrier (Champagne/France) 37.99

In the depths of a frigid February south of Reims and Epernay last year, we stumbled across a new Champagne. Étoges is a small village just south of the Côte des Blancs, with a rather grand Château - now a hotel, complete with brasserie and restaurant. That chilly night, only the brasserie was open. After some last minute cross-checking online before dinner, we ordered a bottle of Champagne Verrier Tradition Brut. It was good - very good - a blend of 75% Pinot Meunier, 5% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay. When we were next passing, we visited Emmanuel Verrier to taste the entire range.

We were in Champagne with our van 10 days ago and picked up our latest hit from Emmanuel & his wife Laurence.

white

Weisser Satz 2020, Jürgen von der Mark (Baden/Germany) ORGANIC 25.99

You'll find Jürgen von der Mark's place in Baden, south Germany, very close to the Swiss border. Jürgen's speciality is Pinot Noir but, being a consultant for a number of wineries and an MW (Master of Wine), he does like to experiment with other varieties. One of the whites that he has been tinkering with is a blend called Weisser Satz. It is based on a wine you find in Vienna called Gemischter Satz (Mixed Set), a blend of several grape varieties picked at the same time each at varying stages of ripeness. Jürgen wasn't allowed to call his wine Gemischter Satz so he settled on Weisser Satz. His 'mixed set' currently has 9 varietals: Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder and Chardonnay form 70-75%. The rest is made up of Gewürztraminer, Savagnin (not to be confused with Sauvignon), Auxerrois, Aligoté, Petit Manseng and Orleans (?).



Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling trocken 2022, Karl Erbes (Mosel/Germany) 18.99

Ürziger Würzgarten (*spice garden*) is a striking vineyard in the middle Mosel. It has a Hollywood-style sign high up in the vines and has probably the largest concentration of red slate in the Mosel. It owes its red colour to the iron oxide suspended in the slate which gives its Riesling an exotic, flamboyant overtone. We happened to be in the Mosel valley one weekend in June when the annual Mythos Mosel tasting festival was on. High point of the day was the only dry wine on Karl Erbes' table: Ürziger in der Kranklei Riesling Spätlese* trocken 2022. Exotic, herbal, viscous. So, we picked some up from Stefan Erbes (who runs the winery) when we were back there a couple of weeks later. Stefan intimated that he had a bunch of older Rieslings for us to taste when we next visited. Pranav and David duly dropped in to taste more of the range and tonight we are showing Stefan's 'entry-level' Urziger Wurzgarten dry Riesling 2022.

Estissa Malvasia 2020, Audarya (Sardinia/Italy) 29.99

During four days of extensive and thorough research in Cagliari before Covid, Audarya surfaced as our favourite Vermentino producer. Our former colleague Serena Costa's Sardinian friend Gianluca Putzolu recommended we go to Cucina.Eat and ask for Giuseppe Carrus. That was our first night and it turned out to be an excellent recommendation. Giuseppe gave us a vinous tour of Sardinia and orientation was completed in one sitting. Audarya appeared (and shone) in the line-up. We tried many a Vermentino over the following days and a trip to Oyster, Filippo Mundula's restaurant/wine bar in Cagliari, cemented Audarya as our favourite. Sardinia's best-known white is Vermentino but there are other local grape varieties. Here is their gently aromatic, fascinating dry white Malvasia di Cagliari.

red

Spätburgunder trocken 2021, Walter (Mosel/Germany) 15.99

Spätburgunder is German for Pinot Noir. Gerrit Walter was an intern with us in the summer of 2009 and went back home to help with the harvest before heading back to Geisenheim, the top Wine University in the country. Gerrit was clearly doing his homework at Uni and at his various internships: one sip and it's easy to understand why his parents were happy to give him free rein in the family cellar.

Gerrit's excellent dry Mosel Riesling has been a fixture on The Winery shelves for a decade. For many, it has been their introduction to the magic of dry Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from perilously steep, slate vineyards overlooking the river. Like many along the Mosel valley, although 95% of his wine is Riesling, Gerrit also makes some Spätburgunder. He has always been very interested in Pinot Noir and was particularly keen to taste as much red Burgundy as possible during his internship with us. He was so obsessed with Pinot that he asked for a new French oak barrel for his 19th birthday. It is fair to say that the wine he made with it back then was a teeny bit oaky. 13 years on, he has been making this silky, smoky Spätburgunder in big old 1,000 and 2,000 litre barrels with no discernible oak flavour. We had to wait months for the 2022 to be bottled. Here it is finally!

Vinsobres 'Claude' 2016, Vallot (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC 19.99

Vinsobres is one of the named Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages from the southern Rhône valley - like Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Cairanne - all satellites of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, where Grenache and Syrah vines are twisted and ravaged (rather than caressed) by the Mistral wind. It's a beautiful, warm, windswept setting with the jagged Dentelles de Montmirail and Mont Ventoux as a backdrop. Windy and hot in summer, windy and cold in winter. The heavily moustachioed François Vallot, a fourth-generation wine-maker, and his daughter Anaïs own one of the oldest wineries in the Côtes-du-Rhône, an area where much of the wine is still bottled by the big co-operatives. Organic since 2003, they have been fully biodynamic since 2007. (*Biodynamism is the extreme end of organic viticulture, where decisions are synchronised with the lunar calendar*).

Since the return of Anaïs a decade ago, following a career in hotel hospitality in north America and around Europe, further study in University and an internship at Yquem, the most famous Château in Sauternes, there have been changes in the day-to-day management of the winery and vineyards plus some subtle changes in presentation. Anaïs is now very much at the helm. The wines remain chunky and deep - packed with dark matter for the long haul. In Cuvée Claude the vines are 65 years-old - a blend of 70% Grenache with 30% Syrah. Gnarly windswept vines, butch wines.



Cannonau Riserva 2019, Alberto Loi (Sardinia/Italy) 29.99

It took a while, but our first shipment of our favourite Cannonau (aka Grenache) has just arrived. We'd been looking out for Alberto Loi's Cannonau on our research trip to Sardinia and spotted a bottle of the top-of-the-range Riserva shortly before stepping onto the plane home. It is exactly what we want from Sardinia's finest red wine. It's Old School – traditional, dense, bold, with layer upon layer of rich texture. The province of Ogliastra, the thinly populated eastern part of Sardinia, was badly hit by Phylloxera in the early 1900s. A group of Cannonau growers emerged in the commune of Jerzu, including Giovanni Loi and his son Alberto. Alberto set up his own winery at the end of the 1940s, a time when many co-operatives were also establishing themselves in the area. Alberto's children and grandchildren now run the winery.

It has long been believed that Grenache (aka Cannonau in Sardinia) came from Aragon in northern Spain and was brought to Sardinia when the Aragonese passed through in the 1300s. Some Italian researchers have recently uncovered evidence that suggests that Cannonau may have originated in Sardinia.

Another live topic is the fact that many Sardinians live to 90 or even 100 years old and that Cannonau, rich in antioxidants (proanthocyanins, procyanins and polyphenols), may have a large part to play. It may be 14.5% but the antioxidants seem to more than counteract the effect!

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

Our **following tasting**, which will be at **The Winery Maida Vale**, will be on **Wednesday 29th November**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings
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