

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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## September Tasting *Maida Vale* 13.09.23

### *sparkling*

#### **Crémant de Bourgogne Brut NV, Domaine Denis (Burgundy/France)**

**23.99**

Burgundy was looking a bit thin on our shelves as summer romped on, so we made an urgent round trip early in August to top up with Denis and Clos des Poulettes. Denis' reds have almost gone already, so tonight we are opening with their Crémant.

The village of Pernand-Vergelesses nestles behind the hill of Corton, just north of Beaune. Winemaking has been challenging over the past half decade in Burgundy with output-decimating attacks by hail and frost increasing in frequency. As a result, Christophe and Valérie Denis don't make a Crémant every year and, even when they find they have enough suitable grapes, they don't make much. Those suitable grapes would be 70% Pinot Noir, 25% Chardonnay and 5% Aligoté, picked from the Bourgogne Rouge and Blanc parcels five days before the main harvest to keep the acidity high. As usual, it's delicious - fresh and balanced.

### *white*

#### **Côte de Nuits Villages Blanc 'En Beauregard' 2022, Clos des Poulettes (Burgundy/France)**

**29.99**

It's not often you come across a grower in Burgundy with 16 hectares in the Côte de Nuits that you haven't heard of before – let alone such elegant examples of Pinot Noir. It was a tip from our Germany-based English wine writer friend Stuart Pigott that piqued our interest.

Hélène Michaut returned from her IT career in London and Paris to take over the estate after the untimely death of her sister in 2009. The property can trace its history back to the era of Louis XIV. For the past six generations the domaine has passed down the female side of the family. Men have been involved, notably Hélène's grandfather and father. Hélène's grandfather, Lucien Audidier, was a big cheese in regional agriculture. When Hélène's father Francois Audidier took over in 1994, he planted some blocks of Chardonnay and modernised the cellar. Hélène has gradually been making changes: primarily a more gentle wine-making regime, including buying a new temperature-controlled cellar in 2015. Her super-elegant Côte de Nuits Villages 2017 grabbed our attention. No fewer than four Nuits-Saint-Georges kept us riveted. In March 2023 we were back to pick up lots more of the 2017 Côte de Nuits that flew following our first order. Hélène had made it clear that we had to taste some of the 2022s, particularly the whites. We could immediately see why she was excited. We were too, so we were keen to pick some up early in August, after bottling. The Beauregard is creamy, elegant and a touch herbal.



#### **Riesling trocken 2022, Sinss (Nahe/Germany) ORGANIC**

**17.99**

There is an eye-catching, stand-alone hill not far from the Autobahn in the Nahe. The village is Windesheim. We always thought that there must be someone making good wine there. Turns out the answer was right under our noses. We met Johannes Sinss at the same time we met Gerrit Walter, back in 2009, when they were both at Wine Uni in Geisenheim. Johannes did internships at Williams-Selyem in California and Wairau River in New Zealand before heading back to work in the family winery. Much more recent news is that one late wine-fuelled night it was decided that Johannes' brother Markus would come onboard. Seems to be working.

The Sinss brothers' Riesling trocken is a blend from parcels of vines on three different soils, a "chaos of soils" as he puts it. Red sandstone, slate/gravel spilt over from the Rhine valley and sand/loam. It's vinified in a split of large old oak barrels (classic German Stückfässer) and in steel tanks. It has a gently wild, yeasty nose and, at 12%, is at the lower end of alcohol levels and high in flavour - spicy and broad.

#### **Gehr 1er Lage Riesling trocken 2021, Kloster Eberbach (Rheingau/Germany)**

**25.99**

Head honcho at the impressive state-owned Rheingau estate Kloster Eberbach, Dieter Greiner, bumped into us at Zum Krug in early summer. One thing led to another: Pranav and David M visited, tasted and ordered enthusiastically. The relationship has been officially rekindled after a decade-long break and our van returned with some of their marvellous dry Rieslings and Spätburgunders.

*continued*

## *white continued*

Tonight we are showing the Erste Lage (1er Cru) Gehr dry Riesling. Before agonising too much, it is pronounced *Gear-n* (*Gear* as in *Top Gear*, with an ‘n’ on the end). Easy, right? Now let’s try to pronounce Assmanshäuser Höllenberg Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs. Just joking.

We were very impressed with this dry Riesling from the legendary Rauenthaler Gehr vineyard: fabulous intensity, round, layers of texture and complexity with a very long finish. Classical German Riesling reductive winemaking (where you intentionally starve the wine of oxygen to avoid oxidation) will keep it fresh and with aging potential for decades. Pranav and David M had a bottle of the 2011 one night at Zum Krug – it was fresh as a daisy.

## *red*

**Frühburgunder/Pinot Noir Précoce trocken 2020, Rinke (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer/Germany) VEGAN 29.99**  
*Full name Wiltinger Braunfels Frühburgunder/Pinot Noir Précoce unfiltered trocken 2020*

Die Mosel, the super wine bar in Traben-Trarbach has provided fertile hunting ground for us for new growers. A stand-out red on a visit in June was from Rinke. Marion Rinke works as a lawyer in Luxembourg, lives in Trier with her husband Alex, who works in catering in Trier and who now makes the wine. Their cellar is in Oberemmel in the Saar and tasting room is in Mertesdorf on the Ruwer (right next to the river). It is difficult to keep up.

Their story seems familiar: a couple love wine and in 2006 decide to buy some vines and make wine. Simple, right? It never is that straightforward but following a steep learning curve they have prevailed.

We loved this Frühburgunder (aka Pinot Noir Précoce or Pinot Madeleine), an early ripening mutation of Pinot Noir. Hand-picked, matured in oak barrels for 18 months, organic, vegan, only 11% alcohol. Seems delicate at first then, with air and a little time, the haunting aroma emerges and the Pinot-esque persistence reveals itself. Yum.



**Windesheim Spätburgunder S trocken 2019, Sinss (Nahe/Germany) ORGANIC 24.99**

Over the past few years Johannes Sinss has eased off picking late to try to bring the alcohol levels down. “It’s all about tasting the grapes – looking for ripeness without over-ripeness”.

This Spätburgunder (*Spätburgunder* = *Pinot Noir*) comes from various vineyards around the village with a variety of clones from Burgundy and Germany. 18 months in oak, unfiltered and without fining (that’s the clarification process). “Bay leaf, pepper, strawberry, cherry tart, well-balanced, light in terms of body, long length, earthy and can be served slightly cool” - according to our colleague Pranav.

**Palpito Toscana Rosso 2019, La Colombina (Tuscany/Italy) 18.99**

Strangely, although we visited Fabrizio Pecciarini and his father Alamiro in early 2016 and have shipped their wines frequently ever since, we have no recollection of how we found their wine in the first place! Fabrizio has a voice so low (not in volume but in frequency) it is almost outside the audible range of modern telephony.

Alamiro started as an electrical engineer in Florence. An early adopter of microchips, he made the first self-service petrol pump. Then, after a stint in a brick-making company, he bought an agricultural supply shop in Montalcino. This morphed into winemaking supplies – tanks and barrels and so on. In parallel, Anna Maria (Fabrizio’s mother) and her side of the family had concentrated on olive oil until 1984, when there was a terrible frost which decimated their olive groves. Although that was the moment when Alamiro and Anna Maria decided to get into viticulture, it took them until 1997 to bottle their own wines as La Colombina. The family now has 5 hectares of vines around Castelnuovo dell’Abate in the southeastern part of the Brunello di Montalcino zone. The wines are delicious. Supple and sumptuous.

In addition to the serious Brunello and Rosso di Montalcino, Fabrizio and his father make this delightful red called Palpito – a blend of Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. It is broad and juicy – a junior Super-Tuscan, maybe?

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

Our following tasting will be at **The Winery Fulham** on **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October**.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**  
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