

T H E
W I N E R Y

November Tasting *Maida Vale* 29.11.23
featuring Guasti Clemente from Piedmont

sparkling

Alta Langa 'Clemente' Brut 2019, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy)

34.99

Tonight, we are joined by Enrico Piantato and his wife Maria Sole from Nizza Monferrato in Piedmont. Enrico recently took over Guasti Clemente, the estate that his grandfather began in 1946. Although the estate centres around their unique, ageworthy Barbera d'Asti, the range embraces many other local wines including Arneis, Timorasso, Grignolino, Brachetto and even Asti Spumante (a wonderful nostalgic throwback that our colleagues David Smith and David Motion have a soft spot for).

Enrico has introduced this smart new Alta Langa - Piedmont's small sparkling wine appellation that is becoming increasingly visible. 75% Pinot Noir, 25% Chardonnay, from vines in the village of Mango between Nizza and Alba, over 400m above sea level. A sense of orchard fruit, pears and apples, round but with freshness. Delightful.

white

Roero Arneis 2022, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy)

19.99

A local Piedmontese white, this Arneis comes from the small towns and villages of Canale, Cornegliano, Santo Stefano Roero and Vezza d'Alba set in the hilly Roero region west of Nizza Monferrato. It's a wine that can evoke acacia, honeysuckle and bitter almonds. For us, the 2022 also has a limey component: lime zest and jelly. Those familiar with previous vintages will spot the new label, part of Enrico's crispening-up of the packaging.



Riesling trocken 2022, Fred Prinz (Rheingau/Germany) BIODYNAMIC

16.99

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rudesheim. The south-facing slope on the north bank between the two is the Rheingau, thick with castles, convents and vineyards. This is the classical home of Riesling. Evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim - the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. In contrast to wine made in historic castles and convents, Fred Prinz made his wine in the garage of the flats where he and his family live in the small village of Hallgarten. Having started as a hobby in 1991, demand became so great that he had to give up his day job and rent another cellar nearby, thereby freeing up space in his garage for a mid-life Harley motorbike.

We have been importing Fred's dry Rieslings since our first buying trip to Germany in 2002, watched him outgrow his garage and have seen his vineyard holdings grow from 1.5 to over 10 hectares. His wife Sabine has always been involved and they have now joined by their son Florian who has been experimenting with some hardcore Natural cuvées. This 'entry-level' dry Riesling is classic Rheingau Riesling: yellow fruits, opulent and expressive - a blend from three different soils: sandy loess, slate and quartzite.

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

33.99

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 at that time for its sweeter styles.

continued

white continued

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

Beaujolais-Leynes 'Le Bouteau' 2021, Cheveau (Beaujolais/France) 23.99

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 25 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 nine separate Pouilly-Fuissé selections (three village level, six of the recently elevated 1er Crus) and five red Beaujolais.

Leynes is a Beaujolais-Villages, at the northern end of the region, just down the hill from Fuissé. Forget everything you thought you knew about the Gamay, the grape of Beaujolais. Although Gamay tends to be from the lighter, low-tannin end of the spectrum, this wine has more weight and more succulence than you might expect. Ample dark fruit, spice and dense texture.



Barbera d'Asti 'Boschetto Vecchio' 2019, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy) mags 49.99 26.99

We were in Le Due Lanterne restaurant in Nizza Monferrato one night a decade ago. We were wading through a bottle of delicious, mature Barbaresco by Scarpa when we asked the restaurant owner if he could recommend something else from his winelist in a similarly traditional vein. He thought for a moment and said, "there is just one wine I can think of". He disappeared and came back with a bottle of Barbera d'Asti Boschetto Vecchio by Guasti Clemente. It was excellent. Plump, deep, dark, autumnal fruit with a whisper of truffles and distant bonfire. The following day, we went to meet the Guasti brothers, Alessandro and Andrea and were dazzled by the wines and Andrea's hand gestures.

Boschetto Vecchio is Enrico's grandfather Clemente's original Barbera vineyard, when he started in 1946.

Barbera d'Asti Superiore Nizza 'Barcarato' 2001, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy) 38.99

In the hierarchy of Piedmontese red wines, Barolo and Barbaresco are at the top of the pyramid today. It was a different story 70 years ago. Nebbiolo (the grape of Barolo and Barbaresco) – you almost couldn't give it away. Merchants would give away tanks of Nebbiolo free with orders of Barbera or Dolcetto. 70-100 years ago, Barbera was at the top of the pyramid. It was the finest wine of Piedmont, grown on the most favourable slopes. Little known fact: the best Barbera can age effortlessly. The aged Guasti Clemente 'Barcarato' Barberas are stunning. We will continue to import the 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2004 until Enrico runs out. It's always a treat to drink mature wines in good condition.

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

Our **following tasting** will be at **The Winery Fulham** on **Wednesday 13th December** and feature Swen Klinger from **von Othegraven**, the historic Riesling estate on the Saar, a tributary of the Mosel.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**
The Winery, 4 Clifton Road, London W9
www.thewineryuk.com

mailinglist@thewineryuk.com
The Winery, 797 Fulham Road SW6 5HD
info@thewineryuk.com