

T H E

W I N E R Y

January Tasting *Maida Vale* 24.01.24

sparkling

Cava Brut Classic, Bolet (Penedès/Spain) ORGANIC/VEGAN

16.99

Cava had been on our wish-list for more than a decade, so our Cava Quest was first priority when we landed in Barcelona last spring. To our taste we find some Cavas rather hard and metallic. Not so with Xavier Bolet's bottlings which are broader, deeper and more complex. The blend in his classic Cava is 50% Macabeo (*aka Viura*, the grape of white Rioja), 40% Xarel-lo, 10% Parellada. It has been aged for 15 months. Gently fruity nose, bright, well-made and balanced. Not remotely hard or metallic. Lovely core of fruit and a clear finish. If you like this, you'll also enjoy the Reserva and Gran Reserva, with their added depth and long aging.

white

Desconcierto Rías Baixas Albariño 2022, Cambados Urban Winery (Galicia/Spain)

24.99

It was super-hot and extremely dry everywhere we went in Spain last April, until we arrived in Galicia. There's a reason why it's so green there: it rains frequently, some might say constantly. We went to visit Antonio Galiñanes of CUW, Cambados Urban Winery, in the heart of Rías Baixas, the spiritual home of Albariño. Antonio showed us three of his small parcels of vines, all very close to the water. One directly on the sea front, another directly on the estuary. He currently has just 2.2 hectares with another 0.7 plot on the way. The first vintage of his wine, Desconcierto Rías Baixas, was 2015. Our first shipment, the 2022, has notes of citrus zest and a whisper of sea air.



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

19.99

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning northwest 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. His wife Sabine has always helped in the vineyards and now his son Florian, who recently finished at Geisenheim (the top Wine University in Germany) has also joined the family winery. This Hallgartener is Prinz's village level Riesling, made with early selections from his GG (Grand Cru) vineyards in Hallgarten: Schönhell and Jungfer.

Riesling trocken 2015, Lubentiushof (Mosel/Germany)

17.99

"We don't suppose you have any of that dry 2015 Riesling tucked-away?" we asked Andreas Barth of Lubentiushof. "As a matter of fact, I do." Excellent. We have now cleared him out.

We find ourselves on the Lower Mosel, close to Koblenz, where the stunningly beautiful, winding river joins the Rhine and the slate vineyards are dizzyingly steep - terraced to squeeze out every last bit of late autumn sunshine. Andreas Barth studied Law and Music but decided, with the support of his interior designer wife Susanne, to turn to wine-making. Almost entirely self-taught, Andreas bought the run-down cellar of Lubentiushof in 1994 and five hectares of steep parcels with old vines. A great newspaper review got him the winemaking job at the historic von Othegraven estate in the Saar, whose Rieslings we featured in Fulham last month. Andreas has just finished his 18-year stint there and is refocusing his attention on his own winery.

2015 was a ripe vintage with relatively low acidity. Bold, yeasty, oily and spicy - the volume is cranked up to eleven. As it ages you may notice those fabled petrolly notes emerging.

red

Dolcetto d'Alba 2022, Gianfranco Alessandria (Piedmont/Italy) 17.99

Gianfranco and Bruna Alessandria's daughters Vittoria and Marta have been working in the vines and making the wines for several years at their family winery in Monforte d'Alba, a township in the Barolo zone southwest of Alba, Piedmont. Gianfranco is one of the brightest stars of the township, with a reputation forged in the early 1990s. With our not-very-fluent Italian, communication has usually relied on warm goodwill here. Vittoria, now 32, has been working alongside Gianfranco in the cellar for several years and has been studying English. Marta, 27, who also speaks English, recently finished her wine studies at Alba University and is now also working in the family winery. The Alessandrias continue to use the traditional fermentation methods, punching down the cap in open-top fermentation vats. Having said that, the wines are far from traditional. Tiny quantities, low yield - they manage to combine raw power with silky finesse.

Dolcetto (the little sweet one) has no sweetness, it's just a term of endearment. The vines have distinctive purple leaves, ripen early and usually deliver light, charming, breezy wines. We were blown away by their latest Dolcetto d'Alba. Dolcetto is generally fruity but with a crunchy freshness. There is nothing crunchy about this wine with its deep violet and saturated red fruit. Our number one Dolcetto this year!

Maranges 1er Cru Clos Roussots 2021, Maurice Charleux (Burgundy/France) 34.99

On our way back from Italy in early November, 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. Luckily for us Vincent was no longer represented in the UK. Vincent makes Maranges and a little Santenay in white and red. Yum. We loved them all, so we picked some up when we were in Burgundy in December.

The vineyard is on fertile blue-tinged clay/marl. Lovely bright fruit, silky smoky texture and a savoury middle.



Ribera del Duero Crianza 2019, Alvides (Ribera del Duero/Spain) 19.99

Alvides is a small family bodega in the dusty Duero valley two hours drive north of Madrid. The Casado family's grandfather Eutimio founded the Co-operative in Aranda del Duero in 1962. In 2001, Eutimio's sons Ildefonso and Delfin Casado - the next generation - set-up their own small winery with the help of Emmanuel Ivar, a young French oenologist who studied winemaking in the Loire and had moved to Ribera del Duero. Alvides now have 25 ha of vines, all Tempranillo, with an average age of 50-60 years old. Harvesting is always by hand. Every level of wine from Roble, Crianza up to the Vendimia Seleccionada (formerly Reserva) and the Tercera Generación (Third Generation - tiny production from 75 year-old vines and only in the greatest years) are treated to some time in French oak with much stirring of the lees. The results are excellent: we find a high, dark fruit content in the nose (with a touch of vanilla - from the oak) and a fabulous suppleness in the mouth.

Two decades ago, when we first visited Alvides the kids were young. Héctor, one of those kids, is now making the wines. All three generations work in the vineyards. When we visited in April, Héctor & niece Sara showed us the modern cellar, the freezing cold original family cellar deep underground, their beautiful vineyards and their current releases. The Crianza is deep and gently sweaty (just how we like it). Long finish.

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

Our **following tasting**, which will be at **The Winery Fulham**, will be on **Tuesday 13th February** and will feature **Jérôme Gros Lambert** of **Champagne François Secondé** pouring several of his delicious Grand Cru Champagnes. Tell everyone. On second thoughts, tell no-one!

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