

T H E W I N E R Y

January Tasting *Maida Vale* 22.01.25 *featuring Jonas Müllen*

sparkling

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

19.99

Good Cava had been on our wish-list for more than a decade, so our Cava Quest was the first priority when we landed in Barcelona in spring 2023. To our taste we find some Cavas rather hard and metallic. Not so with Xavier Bolet's bottlings which are broader, deeper, more complex. The blend in his classic Cava is 50% Xarel·lo, 40% Macabeo (aka Viura, the grape of white Rioja), 10% Parellada. To qualify as Reserva, a Cava must be aged for 18 months. This Reserva has been aged for 40 months (!), which may explain its fascinating texture and complexity. Honeysuckle, lanolin, nuts and flowers crowd the nose. There's a wonderful sense of aged fruit, structure and depth in the mouth. The finish is long and yeasty.

white

Riesling Revival trocken 2021, Martin Müllen (Mosel/Germany)

24.99

Martin Müllen and his son Jonas make thrilling dry Riesling in Traben-Trarbach in a very traditional style and remain the only winery on the Mosel who still vinify their entire range of Rieslings in large old wooden barrels rather than stainless steel. Having worked for decades in extremely cramped conditions in their tiny cellar below their house in the centre of Traben, in 2021 they moved into a larger old cellar in Trarbach on the other side of the river. Their beautiful label is taken from a vineyard map of the Mosel from 1897, originally made for tax purposes, which subsequently helped to inform the classification and hierarchy of the vineyards along the Mosel. With the single vineyard wines the location is highlighted in gold and GPS coordinates are provided. Revival is a blend from various vineyards in Traben-Trarbach and Kröv, so several vineyards are illuminated. A gently herbal nose, a helter-skelter ride of freshness and fruit in the mouth and an exhilarating finish.



Kröver Letterlay Riesling Spätlese trocken 2022, Martin Müllen (Mosel/Germany)

27.99

How did it start? Quietly determined Martin Müllen had a falling-out of almost biblical proportions with his father, ending up with Martin going his own way and effectively building up his vineyard holdings from scratch. Martin and his wife Susanne started their winery in 1986. It began as a hobby but quickly became full-time. We had been watching his wines for a while. Shallow as it may sound, we were originally put off by a kitsch bird motif on one of his labels. But then the wines haunted us, we got over the labels and revelled in the beautiful, poised, focused wines of finesse and polish. Martin and Susanne's son Jonas joined the family Weingut (winery) in 2018 after studying in Geisenheim, Germany's top wine college, and internships, including one at Egon Müller, the renowned producer of classic, fruity Scharzhofberg Rieslings on the Saar. Broad in the nose, a touch oily even. Peach and apricot stone. Full-bodied. Everything in balance.

Kröver Paradies Riesling Spätlese trocken 2020, Martin Müllen (Mosel/Germany)**

29.99

The success of the village of Kröv was largely built on the bawdy image of the Kröver 'Nacktarsch' (Naked Bottom), an inexpensive regional wine widely exported in the 1960s and 70s, but Martin almost single-handedly raised the reputation of its finest, steepest vineyards 'Paradies' and 'Letterlay' in the late 1990s and early 2000s with his distinctive, ethereal, crystalline wines. Here's a note from when we first started working with the Müllens twenty years ago: *Wearing his trademark blue overalls and always softly-spoken, bearded Martin Müllen looks like he's just walked out of the woods. Mild-mannered, seemingly shy and yet quietly confident. "The thing about Martin" said Thorsten Melsheimer (another well-known Mosel grower), "is that he loves all his wines as if they were his children." You need to have plenty of time if you taste with him. An efficient hour-long visit will simply not happen. "Oh you must taste the Paradies Kabinett trocken in 2003" "Oh, you really have to taste the Letterlay Spätlese one star trocken in 2006" and then the two star...and then the 2004 and then the 2007. And so on. He's fascinated by his wines - and so are we!*

A richer nose, orange marmalade/lemon curd notes, lots going on. Plenty of freshness. Balanced and long.

red

Bourgogne Côte d'Or La Corvée au Prêtre 2022, Clos des Poulettes (Burgundy/France) 25.99

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 a few years ago 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: introducing a gentler wine-making regime, a new temperature-controlled cellar in 2015 which she has extended. Her super-elegant Côte de Nuits Villages 2017 grabbed our attention. No fewer than four Nuits-Saint-Georges kept us riveted. We have been back several times to pick up more. Hélène is very happy with her 2022s. She showed us her Corvée au Prêtre 2022, from a named Bourgogne Cote d'Or vineyard at the north end of Vosne-Romanée. Fabulous. With red Burgundy from the Côte de Nuits frequently catapulted into three figures, it's a joy to find a bottle like this. It sold briskly. Fortunately we had reserved a second hit for winter.

BTW it's also worth checking out the Côte de Nuits Villages 2019. Just saying.

Langhe Nebbiolo 2022, Cascina Le Doti (Piedmont/Italy) 25.99

We were spending an afternoon and a night in Monforte d'Alba on an emergency Barolo run in summer 2022. We have started many evenings at Le Case della Saracca with antipasti and bubbles but this was the first time we stayed for dinner and overnights in one of their amazing rooms. It's an incredible place, built into the side of the hill, a labyrinthine repurposing of old buildings and a chapel. Giulio is a wonderful host and he knows his wine list inside out. We were chatting and told him that we had been looking for a traditional Barbaresco – something that had eluded us recently. "Try this". It was Barbaresco Bordini 2018 by Cascina Longoria (now Le Doti): delicious, exciting Nebbiolo, a combination of elegance and controlled power, and, as if that wasn't enough, we love the label! Shortly afterwards, as if by magic, Pietro Giovannini arrived. "I'm Alessandra Toso's boyfriend and I do some tastings and events with her. Here are her contact details – she's around tomorrow, if you want to meet." The following day, this beautiful bottle brought us to the township of Neive, where we met Alessandra Toso and her father Carlo who make old school Barbaresco, the Queen of Nebbiolo. Carlo, 63, finished his studies 44 years ago and has made the wine ever since. Alessandra is 5th generation and does the vineyard work with her cousin Davide.

This Langhe Nebbiolo is a junior Barbaresco, aged for a year in 1,000 litre Botti, the classic Piedmontese oak casks. It is serious, the equal of many a Barbaresco, and at 14.5% Alcohol certainly no lightweight either.



Château Guibeu 2021 (Bordeaux/France) ORGANIC 23.99

We were sitting in Château Bellevue in Saint-Émilion last March, for a tasting and lunch with Axel de Lavaux and Angélique Merlet, whose family's wines we have imported for many years: Château Martinet and Fort Pontus, to name just two. Angélique introduced us to Justine Destouet, one of Bellevue's team members, and said, "You should taste Justine's family's wines too – they're very good." Justine duly popped out to Château Guibeu in Puisseguin-Saint-Émilion, one of Saint-Émilion's 'satellite appellations,' to fetch some bottles.

In 1936, Justine's great-grandfather bought Guibeu, which has now passed down to her mother, Brigitte. Her father, Eric, previously a tennis instructor, takes care of the vineyards and cellar under the watchful eye of high-profile oenologist Michel Rolland's group, which may explain why the wine is so shiny. It's a blend of 80% Merlot with 20% Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Bright, vibrant fruit. Silky Bordeaux in the modern style.

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

Our next tasting will be at **The Winery Fulham** on **Wednesday 12th February**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings
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