

T H E

W I N E R Y

February Tasting *Fulham* 12.02.25

sparkling

Champagne Rosé Sec, Amyot (Champagne/France)

37.99

Champagne is vast. The northern sections fan out from Épernay; north across the chalky Montagne de Reims towards the city of Reims, west along the Marne Valley towards Paris, then due southwards, the Chardonnay slopes called the Côte des Blancs. Continue south and you find the Aube, also known as the Côte des Bar. Here, off the beaten track, the tiny village of Loches-sur-Ource is the very rural home of Champagne Amyot. They speak an impenetrable local dialect: it took us the best part of a decade to understand what we were saying to each other. Their entry-level champagne Carte Or (*gold label*) has been our biggest selling item in The Winery for the past 27 years. Their Rosé is 80% Pinot Noir with 20% Pinot Blanc grown on Kimmeridgian clay-limestone soil. The limestone is thick with fossilised seashells. Around 10% of the blend is a Pinot Noir still wine known as Côteaux Champenois which they make in riper years. It's a mouthfilling, generous, gently fruit-driven Rosé evocative of soft red fruits.

white

Cuvée Blanc par La Haye 2023, Château La Haye (Bordeaux/France) ORGANIC

13.99

Chris Cardon is the owner of a veterinary pharmaceutical company with headquarters in the outskirts of Bruges, Belgium. He took part in the Médoc Marathon a few years ago – an unusual, messy form of marathon that involves wine at every waypoint – with runners often reduced to crawling. *It's not the winning – it's the taking part that counts.* Chris fell in love with the region and decided he wanted to buy an estate. In 2012 he became the owner of Château La Haye.

The Château, one of the oldest in Saint-Estèphe, and where vines were first planted in 1557, was originally a hunting lodge used by Henry II of France and his mistress (also governess) Diane of Poitiers. Their monogram, H and C intertwined, feature on La Haye's labels today.

We visited Château La Haye on our trip to Bordeaux last year. The reds were classy, of course. New since our previous visit is this elegant, organic white from the Entre-Deux-Mers. It's a refreshing Sauvignon Blanc/Sauvignon Gris blend with hints of melon and cucumber.

Iphöfer Kronsberg Riesling trocken 2023, Juliusspital (Franken/Germany)

27.99

Bonkers about Bocksbeutel? Yes, we are. The Bocksbeutel (*aka goats' sack*) is the traditional bottle shape for wine from Franken, a region east of Frankfurt. Although many growers have switched to more mainstream shapes, we adore the unique, distinctive traditional shape and seek it out.

After spotting (and drinking) a few on wine lists in Germany over the past decade, it's fair to say that we had become a bit fixated about Juliusspital wines. It was finally time to visit. Despite the contrast in our relative sizes (with 180 hectares it makes Juliusspital the second largest producer in Germany), we were very warmly received. Our first pick-up in 2023 included all the classics: Riesling, mature Riesling, Silvaner, mature Silvaner, All dry. We missed them when they were gone and headed back for more last December.

For a population of 130,000 Würzburg has a remarkably high density of historic buildings: cathedral, churches, palace, fort and wineries - many with histories going back centuries. Vineyards can be seen rising above the city in every direction. Julius Echter, Prince & Bishop, founded the Juliusspital in 1575 as a hospital for the poor, providing care, education, religious instruction and wine in the centre of Würzburg. It has continued with the same model to this day. The extensive wine cellars are below the hospital.

Kanzemer Riesling trocken 2022, von Othegraven (Mosel-Saar/Germany)

27.99

Terroir. It's a sense of place. It's the expression of the earth, of the geology. Here on the Saar, like the Mosel that it feeds, it's all about slate. The slate here sparkles with Quartz, which often gives the wine a dizzy, spicy, almost tropical character.



continued

white - von Othegraven Kanzemer continued

We always adored Dr Heidi Kegel, the charming former head anaesthetist at Cologne hospital, who was left the historic von Othegraven estate by a maiden aunt in the early 1990s. When we phoned she would say “what time would you like to come?” How’s 11.00h? “Would you like to stay for lunch?” Yes, please! We have many memories of lunch with her, her geologist husband and winemaker Andreas Barth (whose Lubentiushof wines we also rate highly). There would always be a moment when she would say, Andreas, can you bring up something old from the cellar? 1959 Auslese? Yes, please. Always a treat.

Dr Heidi became ill and in 2009 decided it was time to sell. Enter Günther Jauch, generally held to be the most popular man in Germany. An unassuming man, he’s a TV host and commentator, a national treasure. Günther is a distant relative of earlier owners and brought a new energy to his acquisition.

The Kanzemer is the village level wine, a selection from the magnificent Altenberg vineyard. Now made by Swen Klinger who has been at von Othegraven for 20 years. The Kanzemer is always expressive: wild yeast in the nose, surging freshness, fruit and minerals.

*red***Chorey-lès-Beaune 2022, Domaine Denis (Burgundy/France)****35.99**

Burgundy is the spiritual home of Pinot Noir. Fickle and difficult to grow, it tends to thrive in the marginal, cold climate of this corner of France, south of Dijon and fascinates wine geeks as it ages. Winemaking has been challenging over the past decade in Burgundy with frequent output-decimating attacks by hail and frost. The village of Pernand-Vergelesses nestles behind the hill of Corton, just north of Beaune. This is where, almost 20 years ago, we found a family winery run by Christophe Denis and his wife Valérie. Their reds are pure, elegant Pinot fruit, mercifully free from any dominance of new oak, occasionally with some gentle, autumnal notes in the background. Their Chorey-lès-Beaune has a charming fruit-laced nose, plump mouthfeel and good freshness.

**Pécharmant 2020, Didier Roches Haut-Pécharmant (Southwest France)****17.99**

One night, on a trip to Bordeaux a dozen years ago, after a long day in the Médoc, we found ourselves in the quirky Au Petit Bois wine bar - the one with a living tree inside the bar. The wine of the evening was, surprisingly, not a Bordeaux. It was a wild, sweaty Pécharmant from Bergerac. The dangerous scent of undergrowth, the animal sweat of this uncompromising, untamed red wine got us excited. So excited that we re-organised our timetable to drive east to meet Didier Roches of the Domaine du Haut Pécharmant, the winery at the top of the slope that is Pécharmant, northeast of the city of Bergerac.

Didier’s Pécharmant is Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc with some Merlot and Malbec. Proper regional French wine from the Southwest.

Cirò Rosso 2019, Cote di Franze (Calabria/Italy) ORGANIC**19.99**

Final stop tonight is Calabria in Italy’s deep south. If Puglia is the heel of Italy, Cirò in Calabria is the instep. Cirò has the cooked fruit of the south with the tannic presence of Barolo or Taurasi.

It is one of the oldest named wines in the world - Milo of Croton, a famous 6th Century BC Greek wrestler was said to drink 10 litres of Cirò a day and Pliny the Elder, the 1st Century Roman, wrote it in his list of quality wines of the time.

Francesco and Vincenzo Scilanga's Cote di Franze is close to the sea on a plateau called Piana di Franza. They trace their family's winemaking history back to 1701 when their ancestor, another Vincenzo, was born. The soil is clay. Their Cirò is 100% Gaglioppo which they farm organically without fertilisers and ferment with wild yeasts. It’s another wild wine, as Cirò should be, untamed and unruly. Come on, if you think you’re hard enough...

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

Our next tasting will be on **Wednesday 12th March** at **The Winery Maida Vale**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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