

T H E W I N E R Y

March Tasting *Maida Vale* 12.03.25

sparkling

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

23.99

The village of Pernand-Vergelesses nestles behind the hill of Corton, just north of Beaune. Winemaking has been challenging over the past 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

Mâcon-Davayé 'Les Belouzes' 2023, Cheveau (Burgundy/France) IN CONVERSION

21.99

In southern Burgundy, near Mâcon, the primal presence of the two jagged rock faces of Vergisson and Solutré dominate the skyline above the tiny village of Pouilly, a village that time forgot. When we first visited over 20 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 Cheveau made Mâcon, St-Véran and Pouilly-Fuissé. Joined by his wife Aurélie, much has changed. There's a swanky, much more accessible winery on the approach to the village. There are also multiple new bottlings; three Mâcon, one Bourgogne Blanc, one St-Véran, no fewer than eight separate Pouilly-Fuissé bottlings (five of them 1er Cru) three red and one white Beaujolais. 'Les Belouzes' is where Davayé meets Pouilly. Young-ish Chardonnay vines, aged in tank. No oak. Round, vibrant and punching above its weight. *In conversion?* They will be fully organic from the 2024 vintage onwards.



Riesling trocken 2023, Clemens Busch (Mosel/Germany) BIODYNAMIC

22.99

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 very late picking, you can make amazing dry Riesling on a river best known at that time for its sweeter styles. He has been talking about retiring for a decade. We even went to his party in summer to celebrate his retirement and the official handover to son Johannes who has already been working in the family winery for a dozen years. What might retirement look like, Clemens? "I'll still be here but working for 60 hours a week instead of 80."

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. This is their 'entry-level' dry Riesling, an introduction to the 2023 vintage: clean, clear, refreshing, with slatey minerality. Charming.

Gewürztraminer trocken 2023, Julius Treis (Mosel/Germany)

21.99

Gewürztraminer? Sometimes nothing else will do. It has been increasingly difficult to find a dry Gewürztraminer over the last two decades of global warming. We found what we were looking for a couple of years ago, somewhere you wouldn't expect to: in Reil, in the heart of the Mosel Valley, where Riesling reigns supreme. Tobias Treis can trace his family's wine-making history back to 1684. It was a friendship formed 20 years ago at Germany's leading Wine University that has most influenced his direction.

continued

white – Treis Gewürztraminer continued

Tobias and Ivan Giovanett met at Geisenheim Wine Uni. Ivan is a winemaker from Alto Adige in northern Italy. You can sense Ivan's high-altitude middle-European influence in Tobias' non-Riesling whites. In fact, it was Ivan who suggested that Tobias might consider planting some Gewürztraminer. Good call. It's a beautiful, balanced and properly dry Gewürztraminer, with all the dizzy *pot pourri* and spicy exotic aromas you could hope for.

*red***Juliéna Bessay 2022, Sylvain Martel (Beaujolais/France) ORGANIC****27.99**

When we last visited Anne-Sophie Dubois in Fleurie, Beaujolais, we admired the new cellar being built. She also mentioned that her partner, Sylvain Martel, had made some Juliéna and would we like to taste it? Yes, please.

After spending a decade and a half in the Rhône Valley, Sylvain moved up to Beaujolais and in 2016 moved in with Anne-Sophie. They work together. In 2018, he decided to buy a small parcel of old vines in Juliéna, one of Beaujolais' Cru villages, like Fleurie. The vineyard is protected by woods on two sides. Juliéna has a different geology to other parts of the region where granite prevails – distinctive blue stones with some clay. He uses whole bunch fermentation, ages for nine months in used barrels and at least three months in bottle. The wines are chunky and structured.

Rosso di Montalcino 2023, La Colombina (Tuscany/Italy)**23.99**

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) that 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. The 2023 Rosso is breezy Sangiovese elegance. If you want to trade up, check out their outstanding 2019 Brunello.

**Cirò Rosso Riserva 2016, Cote di Franze (Calabria/Italy) ORGANIC****28.99**

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 ten 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 a wild wine, as Cirò should be, untamed and unruly.

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

Our next tasting will be on **Monday 14th April** at **The Winery Fulham**.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**

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