

# T H E W I N E R Y

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## April Tasting *Fulham*

14.04.25

### *sparkling*

#### **Crémant de Bordeaux Cuvée Noble, Ballarin (Bordeaux/France)**

17.99

Crémant from Bordeaux? Bubbly Bordeaux? That can't be right. And yet...

Célène have been making sparkling wines in Bordeaux since 1947 (who knew?!) and their Ballarin Cuvée Noble is an intriguing blend of Sémillon, Muscadelle and Cabernet Franc. The current driving force at Célène is Célène Lannoye. She owns Châteaux in and around Saint-Emilion including Lanbersac (we have the 2016 on our shelves) and Château Ambe Tour Pourret.

### *white*

#### **Chablis 2023, Mosnier (Burgundy/France)**

25.99

Chablis is the name of a town and the name of the wine grown around it. The grape is Chardonnay and the soil is Kimmeridgian clay-limestone marl rich in fossilised crustaceans from when the area was a seabed. That's a long time ago but it may explain why Chablis goes so well with oysters. The climate is very cool in this northeastern corner of Burgundy. Late frost and hail make it a winemaking nightmare.

Stéphanie Mosnier makes excellent Chablis. When we first tasted her wines fifteen or so years ago, they struck us as classic: pure, tightly wound and crystal clear but with just the right amount of generosity in the middle - a wonderful balance of fruit and fresh acidity. In 2007 Stéphanie gave up her job in logistics in Lyon to come home and take over her father Sylvain's winery when he retired. She makes Petit Chablis, Chablis, Chablis Vieilles Vignes and two 1er Crus, Beuroy and Côte de Lechet. Her husband, Christophe, who was working in a dynamite company, is a keen gastronome and was happy to support the move. More recently, Christophe left his job in explosives to help in the cellar and vineyards. They're still intact!



#### **Jacobus Riesling trocken 2023, Peter Jakob Kühn (Rheingau/Germany) BIODYNAMIC**

23.99

The Kühn family make striking biodynamic Rieslings in the Rheingau, the south-facing strip overlooking the Rhine as it flows westwards from Wiesbaden to just beyond Rüdesheim where it turns north again. Peter Jakob Kühn had a complete change of direction in 1999, was certified organic in 2004 and then went the whole way to biodynamism. His son Peter-Bernhard and daughter-in-law Victoria have taken over wine-making duties. Biodynamism is the extreme end of organic viticulture, based on the teachings of Maria Thun and Rudolf Steiner which are traceable back to Hildegard of Bingen, the 12th century mystic nun. Decisions are synchronised with the lunar calendar and, instead of herbicides and pesticides, vineyard treatments involve cow horn, yarrow and nettles.

Their wines are many things – lean, exotic, oily, peppery, salty, savoury and haunting, to name a few. They can even challenge our idea of how Riesling should taste. There's an oiliness without ever being cloying. Occasionally you might get a sense of tannin – something you expect in red wine but not in white. We often recommend putting their Rieslings in a decanter several hours before serving.

Jacobus is named after their founding forefather, eleven generations and 230-something years ago, this is a wonderful 2023 – lean, laser-focused, with tightly-coiled fruit. Whatever it is that they are doing, we don't want them to stop.

#### **Edition Riesling 2010, Querbach (Rheingau/Germany)**

23.99

How does Riesling age? Effortlessly. Some say that the acidity of Riesling gives it longevity. We often drink old Rieslings at Zum Krug (our favourite Hotel and Restaurant in the Rheingau). We have drunk amply from the 1970s, less frequently 1959, 1949 and, most recently, a 1917. All alive. Maybe it is the acidity. Back by popular demand and scooped up on a recent trip late, we have another batch of Peter Querbach's 2010.

*continued*

*white – Querbach 2010 continued*

Peter was a long-time member of the VDP (the Premier League of German growers). He eventually found the rules too restrictive and handed his membership back: a big step – like a chef handing back Michelin stars. So, the Rheingau ‘Bad Boy’ is now free to do what he pleases. Peter likes to age his Rieslings (and his Pinot Noirs btw) and that pleases us. Again, whatever it is that he is doing, we don’t want him to stop.

*red***Dolcetto d'Alba Vigna Scot 2023, Cavallotto (Piedmont/Italy) ORGANIC 27.99**

Our reds begin in the rippled Piedmontese landscape just south of Alba, an hour’s drive south of Turin. As you look across the breath-taking landscape from the highest point, the hilltop town of La Morra, you can pick out the townships on their respective hills, including Castiglione Falletto, home of the Cavallotto family. Cavallotto make top Barolo - with a price tag to match. They also make top quality (and more affordable) Dolcetto.

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. Dolcetto is generally fruity but with a crunchy freshness. There is nothing crunchy about this wine – a wine that, if you forgot about the odd bottle, could age for 10-20 years.

**Ruber Spätburgunder 2022, Nelles (Ahr/Germany)***magnum 45.99 23.99*

Spätburgunder = Pinot Noir.

The tiny Ahr valley near Bonn is one of the northernmost winemaking regions of Europe. Romans planted vines here. Locals claim that the sheltered valley has an almost Mediterranean micro-climate. We wouldn't go quite that far, but there is little doubt that some of Germany's finest Pinot Noir comes from here. Philip Nelles and his father Thomas name their top wine ‘B52’ and ferment their wines in traditional, huge, old oak Fuders. Founded in 1479, the Nelles family has been making wine for generations and own some of the best vineyard sites for red wine in Germany. One of our pickups last month, ‘Ruber’ is from the steep-sloped Landskrone vineyard in Heimersheim, clearly visible from the Nelles’ house and winery. Always supple and velvety – it’s bursting with layers of smoke, autumn leaves and forest fruits with good acidity and remarkably soft, almost slippery, tannins. How can they make Pinot Noir this good, this far north?

**Château Noaillac 2018 (Bordeaux/France)****19.99**

In addition to running the family sparkling wine business and Châteaux in and around Saint-Emilion on Bordeaux's Right Bank, as is common in Bordeaux, Célène Lannoye has a négociant business selling her friends' wines. Château Noaillac is a well-known Cru Bourgeois in the Médoc on the Left Bank. You forget how big the Left Bank is – Noaillac is 80kms from the centre of Bordeaux, way beyond Pauillac and Saint-Estèphe. The Pagès family bought the modest Château in 1983 and, with their experience at Château La Tour de By and under the guidance of Professor Émile Peynaud, the first of the modern œnologists, have built its reputation. The blend is 55% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Petit Verdot.

Sage, eucalyptus, horse box and pine forest may sound like word salad but, if you add thick compact fruit and dry present tannins, it does sound more like an orthodox tasting note.

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

Our next tasting will be on **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May** at **The Winery Maida Vale** when we will be joined by **Anaïs Vallot**, biodynamic grower from the hot and windswept southern Rhône Valley.

**Just arrived** – Bordeaux (lots), white Burgundy by Cheveau, Jean-Noël Gagnard & Caroline Lestimé, Rhône by Vallot. From Germany - Zum Krug, Peter Jakob Kühn, Nelles. **Arriving at any moment** – Raimbault Sancerre...and more.

**Join us for our Monthly Tastings**

**The Winery, 4 Clifton Road, London W9**

**www.thewineryuk.com**

**[mailinglist@thewineryuk.com](mailto:mailinglist@thewineryuk.com)**

**The Winery, 797 Fulham Road SW6 5HD**

**[info@thewineryuk.com](mailto:info@thewineryuk.com)**