

T H E W I N E R Y

November Tasting *Maida Vale* 19.11.25

about us

A wine shop for over 100 years, sited in a former Victorian pharmacy in Clifton Road. We import our entire range ourselves from small family-run wineries across France, Italy, Spain and California - wines and champagnes you won't find anywhere else in the country. We are also well-known for our wide selection of New Wave dry wines from Germany - the largest range in the UK. In 2020 we opened a second branch in Fulham. We hold free monthly tastings open to all.

sparkling

Champagne Cuvée Réservee Brut, Amyot (Champagne/France) SUSTAINABLE

34.99

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 towards Burgundy 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 the Amyot family. Their Champagne house was started in 1930 by Roland Amyot and run today by two brothers, Roland's grandchildren, Vincent and Bertrand, and Vincent's wife Annick (known to us as Madame Amyot for the first 17 years). It's an excellent example of *Grower Champagne*: Amyot are much smaller than the big name Champagne houses and make their own Champagnes from their own vineyards dotted around their village and others nearby.



Their Champagne Carte Or (gold label) has been The Winery's biggest seller for the past 29 years. This time, let's taste the Cuvée Réservee – like the Carte Or, a blend of 2018 and 2017 - but it also includes some older reserves from 2016. And a splash of Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay.

white

Chablis 2024, Mosnier (Burgundy/France)

(halves 14.99) **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'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!

Quarzit Riesling trocken 2023, PJ Kühn (Rheingau/Germany) BIODYNAMIC (magnum 64.99) 28.99

The Kühn family makes striking biodynamic Rieslings in the Rheingau. Peter Jakob Kühn made a complete change of direction in 1999, was certified organic in 2004 and then went the whole way to biodynamism. (*Biodynamism is the extreme end of organic viticulture, where decisions are synchronised with the lunar calendar*). His son Peter-Bernhard and daughter-in-law Victoria have recently taken over wine-making duties. The Kühns' wines are utterly distinctive - standing quite apart from other Rheingau wines. They can even challenge our idea of how Riesling should taste. The aromas can evoke incense, orange peel and hedgerows. 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 top Rieslings in a decanter several hours before serving (ideally 10-24 hours). Although the grapes are from the exalted Grand Cru vineyards of Doosberg, Klosterberg and Lenchen this wine is classified as their village wine from Oestrich. The chalky, silty loess soil sparkles with quartz which, through the medium of Riesling, expresses itself as notes of orange zest, cinnamon, with some flesh and a rounded finish.

Riesling sur lie 2008, Querbach (Rheingau/Germany)**20.99**

This is the second of two remarkably contrasting dry Rieslings from the Rheingau. Not only from the same region but the same village - Oestrich.

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. Our latest pallet from Peter Querbach has just arrived packed with goodies; dry Rieslings from 2010, 2008, and 2002, a sweet 1994 and his 2007 Pinot Noir. 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. Peter likes to age his Rieslings (and his Pinot Noirs btw) and that pleases us. Whatever you are doing, Peter, keep doing it!

*red***Dolcetto d'Alba 2024, Pugnane (Piedmont/Italy)****19.99**

Pugnane is a family winery, owned by two brothers, Enrico & Franco Sordo. Enrico does pretty much everything as Franco works in a salami factory nearby. Enrico's young cousin Matteo (an avid motorbike racer) works with him full-time and his elderly parents are still in attendance. His mother works in the vines daily and his father, Giovanni, a man with an unfeasibly low, movie presenter style voice, will usually be found under the bonnets of their various tractors and other vineyard machinery.

Enrico's grandfather started the Azienda in 1950 with two hectares of vines. They now have just under twelve hectares. Enrico joined as soon as he left school. Winemaking is totally traditional, using wild yeasts, and spending three years in the classic, big *Botti* (Slovenian oak casks). Wines also rest in concrete vats. The jewel in the crown is their Barolo, which all comes from Villero, the stunning vineyard which rises up above their house. "Every day I wake up, I feel so lucky to be right here," says Enrico. We love their wines, which are unmessed-with, authentic, a true balance of elegance and power. Dolcetto (literally translated as 'the little sweet one') is not sweet, it's just a term of endearment. The vines have distinctive purple leaves, ripen early and usually deliver charming, cheeky, breezy wines. There was a prominent Rose perfume when we tasted it in April. Light, delightful, delicate yet mouth-filling.

**Côte de Nuits Villages Vierville 2022, Clos des Poulettes (Burgundy/France)****31.99**

We just got back last week with a van-load from a very autumnal Burgundy. We picked-up from Sirugue in Vosne-Romanée, Guillemot in Savigny-les-Beaune and Clos des Poulettes in Corgoloin, whose Côte de Nuits Villages Vierville we'll have open on Wednesday. It's a crunchy cherry succulent Pinot.

Burgundy is the spiritual home of Pinot Noir, a place and a grape that makes some wine-lovers go weak at the knees. Established by Benedictine and Cistercian monks, Pinot Noir was first mentioned in 1375.

In 2009 Hélène Michaut returned from her IT career in London and Paris to take over Clos des Poulettes, her family's winery. She makes super-elegant Pinot, pure and perfumed just south of Nuits-Saint-Georges. With red Burgundy from the Côte de Nuits frequently catapulted into three figures, it's a joy to find a bottle like this.

La Petite Ourse 2023, Pascal Chalon La Grande Ourse (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC**23.99**

In 2007 we came across a young man not far from Châteauneuf-du-Pape called Pascal Chalon, making biodynamic Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages in his Granny's garage. *Biodynamic = the extreme end of organic, ruled by the lunar calendar.* We clambered around said garage, among the tools and apples, squeezing by her beaten-up Renault and, as soon as we had tasted his two wines, 'La Petite Ourse' and 'La Grande Ourse', were quick to back the van up and load the last nine cases he had.

Since then, Pascal has built his own, larger winery and extended his range to include Ursa Major, a couple of whites and, recently, new bottlings from Visan and Suze La Rousse. The wines are always pure, biodynamic Rhône heaven. Fragrant and gutsy. La Petite Ourse is a rich blend of 60% Grenache and 40% Syrah from vines in Visan caressed (some might say ravaged) by the Mistral wind. All Pascal's reds evoke the *garrigue*: the aromatic, warm, bushy scrubland which dominates the region, thick with wild lavender, juniper, thyme, sage and rosemary. The 2023 has bright, ripe, saturated fruit and floral notes and supple tannins.

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today (from 16.00h) is a **Flower Day**.

Our next tasting will be on **Tuesday 9th December** at **The Winery Fulham**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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