

T H E
W I N E R Y

April Tasting 16.04.13

SPARKLING

Prosecco NV, Bosco del Merlo (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 12.99

The Paladin family have been making organic wines under their Bosco del Merlo label for many years. They have a spread of vines over the flat plains at Annone Veneto northeast of Venice, the Alps visible in the background. It's an area rich with Roman history - the old Roman road, the via Postumia runs right by the estate. This, their top Prosecco, is crisp, lean and fresh. A perennial Winery favourite.

WHITE

Weissburgunder 2012, Rottensteiner (Alto Adige/Italy) 12.99

Weissburgunder = Pinot Bianco = Pinot Blanc.

We were in northern Italy again a few weeks ago and it was a surprise bottle at our lunch in Trentino that made us drive further north into Alto Adige rather than south. Hannes Rottensteiner makes an excellent range of dry mountain whites and lighter reds in the outskirts of Bolzano, close to the Brenner Pass. Borders here are blurry. Hannes sounds Austrian, speaks German but, being as Bolzano is in Italy, is Italian. He studied Oenology locally at San Michele, then Geisenheim in the Rheingau in Germany, then Udine in Friuli and now makes a wide range of wines. Weissburgunder, Pinot Grigio, Müller-Thurgau (the most impressive we have yet tasted), dry Gewürztraminer and Goldmuskateller form the range of whites. In reds he offers Edelvernatsch (also known as Schiava in Italian and Trollinger in German), Blauburgunder (Pinot Noir), Lagrein and a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenière. The biggest influence on the wine is the red porphyry rock that the vines grow on, which bring an exotic spiciness. It's an impressive range and half of their output gets no further than the Bolzano city limits. The rest is sold to visitors, some restaurants around Italy and now us.



Easter brought a flurry of fresh, dry, 2011 Rieslings from Germany. Tonight's picks are by Thorsten Melsheimer from the Mosel and Fred Prinz from the Rheingau.

Riesling trocken 2011, Thorsten Melsheimer (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC 14.99

"I'm the only one stupid enough to work the crazily steep vines in Reil" says Thorsten Melsheimer, the perfect picture of a Saxon in rude health. Certified Ecovin (Organic) since 1997, Thorsten has been nursing old vines back to life, rebuilding walls in the remotest, least accessible part of the Mullay-Hofberg vineyard.

"When I get really hot working in the vines, I jump into the Mosel for a quick swim to cool off." How does Thorsten achieve his trademark style? By picking really late - the grapes for this wine were picked during late October.

Riesling trocken 2011, Fred Prinz (Rheingau/Germany) 13.99

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rudesheim. The south-facing slope on the north bank between the two is the Rheingau, thick with castles, convents and vineyards. This is the classical home of Riesling. Evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim - the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. In contrast to wine made in historic castles and convents, Fred Prinz made his wine in the garage of the flats where he and his family live in the small village of Hallgarten. Having started as a hobby, demand was so great he had to give up his day job and rent some more cellar space nearby. Fred must be going through some kind of life change at the moment - he recently bought a Harley.

RED**Valpolicella Classico “Iperico” 2011, Valentina Cubi (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 14.99**

Everyone loved Valentina Cubi’s pure, elegant Valpolicella and succulent Amarone when we had them first a year ago. She was one of our priorities on our latest trip and we tasted through every vintage she had available in her cellar. Winding back - we first came across Valentina Cubi’s wines in the wonderful Enoteca della Valpolicella in Fumane, just east of Lake Garda, six years ago. It took another five years before they were on our shelves. Their appearance was short-lived and, surprisingly, Valentina’s top shelf Amarone “Morar” was one of the big hits.

Winding back further - Valentina’s father-in-law Federico Vasan was a big name in Negrar in the neighbouring valley until he sold his wine business in World War 2. In the 1970s, Valentina and her husband Giancarlo Vasan found and bought an old winery in Fumane which produced and sold wine in bulk. They were trying to restore it but the building fell down when a worker accidentally knocked down a supporting wall. A complete rebuild was necessary.

We often experience Valpolicella as a crunchy, simple, harsh red to choke down with pizza and were surprised by the elegance and complexity of Valentina’s wines. This is her basic Valpolicella Classico “Iperico” - 75% Corvina with 25% Rondinella - which from 2011 is fully organic.

La Tour Cordouan 2009 (Bordeaux/France) 13.99

Our latest shipment from Bordeaux has also just arrived. Brand new to our shelves is the excellent Chateau Laujac from the Médoc. It was our local Art-dealer friend Charles Asprey who pointed Vanessa Dubosq of Chateau Laujac towards us. It was timely – we are always on the lookout for Left Bank growers as our range tends to be weighted more towards the Right Bank. La Tour Cordouan is Laujac’s junior bottling, a classic Left Bank blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot - young vines grown on gravelly soil with a hint of clay and 6 months in oak. We were delighted when Vanessa offered us some 2009. Don’t miss the fabulous 2005 and 2006 Chateau Laujac – they are disappearing fast.

**Freisa Secco “La Selva di Moirano” 2009, Scarpa (Piedmont/Italy) ORGANIC 25.99**

Why were we back in northern Italy so soon? It was a jaw-dropping bottle of 1999 Barolo by Scarpa that we tasted in a restaurant in La Morra in October that made us hurry back in January. Scarpa is a very unusual estate. It is the only winery in Piedmont allowed to vinify its Barolo outside the Barolo boundaries. Scarpa pre-dates all the new wine laws and has had the same winemaker for the last 50 years. The style is old-fashioned, unreconstructed, built to age, leaning towards austerity and made to accompany food. Being based in Nizza Monferrato, it is natural that they should be known for their three different bottlings of Barbera d’Asti. There are also several local oddities – varietals you don’t see outside their zone. Dolcetto d’Acqui, Brachetto Secco, Freisa Secco and Rouchet (an unusual, alcoholic red with a marked floral perfume). Scarpa have vintages in each varietal going back at least one decade and often two or more. Tonight we are introducing Scarpa’s Freisa Secco, a wild relative of Nebbiolo.

OLIVE OIL**Il Mercante di Delizie Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Paladin (Veneto/Italy) 1 litre - 17.99**

Extra Virgin Olive Oil from the Paladin family, makers of tonight’s Prosecco.

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a Flower Day.

On another topic, Anne Kriebiehl came to visit us some years ago when we were in Liberty. Originally from Baden, she was working in the City for Deutsche Bank (if we remember rightly). Since then she has successfully switched careers from banking into writing about wine. Anne is an engaging speaker and is currently running some courses in German wine at the Goethe Institute. You can find links through our webpage <http://www.thewineryuk.com/latest-tasting/>

Our following tasting will be at **The Winery** and is slated for **Wednesday 8th May**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings
The Winery, 4 Clifton Road, London W9

mailinglist@thewineryuk.com
020 7286 6475

www.thewineryuk.com

info@thewineryuk.com