

T H E
W I N E R Y

June Tasting

04.06.13

Ben and David were in Burgundy last week, filling the van up along the way. Burgundy has had a long winter and buckets of rain. So much so that three weeks ago there was flooding in Savigny-lès-Beaune, Nuits-St-Georges and even in Beaune. There has been a string of small crops. 2012 was 50% less for most and in some cases down 80% - ouch! Luckily (so far), our lovely growers have managed to set aside wine for us. It seems an appropriate moment to make Burgundy one of the themes for tonight's tasting. Three selections, all within sight of the hill of Corton.

SPARKLING

Crémant de Bourgogne NV, Denis Père et Fils (Burgundy/France) 16.99

We had been looking for good Pernand-Vergelesses (and Crémant) for years and finally we found them. A small family winery run by two brothers, the wife of one of the brothers and the son of their sister. Pernand-Vergelesses is sandwiched between the hill of Corton and the village of Savigny-lès-Beaune. The Denis family make a spread of Pernands in red and white at Village and 1er Cru level, some Corton Grand Cru and this delicious Crémant de Bourgogne made from 65% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay and 5% Aligoté.

WHITE

Bourgogne Chardonnay 2011, Denis Père et Fils (Burgundy/France) 17.99

Although the Denis family have vines in Savigny-lès-Beaune, they were relatively untouched by the deluge and flooding a month ago - not least because their winery is on the hill, at the top end of the village of Pernand-Vergelesses. Christophe and Valérie Denis were telling us horror stories of some of the larger Négociants' cellars losing 100 barrels in flooded cellars in Savigny. Cellars have been pumped out, feverish work in waterlogged vineyards is ongoing. The growing season is currently three weeks later than usual. No harm done so far but Burgundy now needs good weather and a good (if somewhat later) harvest. We were very taken with the Denis' new Bourgogne Blanc, now in its second vintage. The vines are from two parcels above Corton and Pernand. Classic white Burgundy - expressive, creamy Chardonnay with a touch of honey in the nose.



Grauschiefer Riesling trocken 2011, Schmitges (Mosel/Germany) 13.99

Mosel Riesling - minerality and piercing purity. We seem to spend more and more of our time on the Mosel. Not so strange. Aside from the stunning scenery, with its long, beautiful, looping river, high, dangerously steep slate slopes, picturesque villages and towns, its wines are known for their lightness of touch, ethereal delicacy, raciness and terroir definition. The Mosel river is so far north that growers often end up picking well into November. Andreas Schmitges is, in our opinion, the best grower in the village of Erden and this wine from grey slate (Grauschiefer) is classic, mineral-driven Mosel.

Vulkangestein Riesling trocken 2010, von Racknitz (Nahe/Germany) 17.99

This historic Nahe estate formerly belonged to a cloister whose history can be traced back to Hildegard of Bingen (the Saint, Composer and Mystic) back in the 1100s. Matthias Adams, former CFO of Tech company Infineon Germany wanted a career change, jacked-in his high-powered job and spent a year walking around the Black Forest. A friend at a large consultancy firm phoned him up and said, "there's a job come in, it's too small for us. Can you take a look at this winery, see if there's anything you can salvage?" What no-one could have foreseen was that Matthias and Luise von Racknitz would fall in love and that together they would turn the estate's fortunes around.

They have excellent vineyards with a spectrum of terroirs. Vulkangestein, from volcanic soil, is packed with surging minerality and all the raciness of the 2010 vintage.

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RED

Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2011, Guillemot (Burgundy/France)

16.99

The fabulous label led to a chance purchase in a fancy Delicatessen in Miami South Beach. The silky, pure, traditional style of its contents led to a phone call which led to a Burgundy visit (with an exhaustive, half day tasting), which led to us cramming several cases into our van immediately. We have ordered frequently ever since.

Three generations of the Guillemot family live in (or just off) the village square in Savigny-lès-Beaune just north of Beaune. When we visited them first, August before last, grandmother, mother and grandson were bottling and packing cases while father Pierre was scrambling here and there to prepare everything for the imminent, early harvest. Grandfather was having a lie-down. Grandson Philippe, fresh out of the local wine college, the Lycée Viticole in Beaune, took us through the entire line up. White Savigny, Bourgogne Rouge, Savigny at village level, multiple Premier Crus and their Grand Cru Corton. All in multiple vintages. Their style may seem elegant and silky and ethereal, but they all have classic Savigny structure – a tannic backbone that, coupled with the fresh Pinot acidity, gives all their reds enormous aging potential. A point amply demonstrated when Philippe hauled out a 1991 last week.

Savigny was the epicentre of the recent floods. The Guillemots were lucky that their cellar didn't get inundated, but there was much to do in the vineyards. The wines, as usual, were delicious and we brought some back, including this beautifully pure, unfiltered Bourgogne Rouge for tonight's tasting.

Barbera 2011, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy)

8.99

The little-known region of Oltrepó Pavese is a bump on the plain south of Milan. It's fair to say Cantina di Casteggio is bigger than any other winery we work with. Much bigger. A Co-op with 350 members and a massive facility, part run-down *fascista*-style, part space age. The Cantina is very switched-on and started a "quality project" with their best 50 growers, bringing in famous Italian consultant Riccardo Cotarella. Try as we might, we just couldn't resist the wines. Their Barbera is ripe and sleek, packed with autumn fruits and soft tannins.



Longrande Rioja Crianza 2008, Isabel Fernandez (La Rioja/Spain)

11.99

Our shelves have been stripped of all but the most top-shelf Rioja for months and it's a pleasure to have Isabel Fernandez's Longrande back in the shop. Fiery Isabel has been making the wine in her small family Bodega in the Rioja Alta since she was 25. She goes to great lengths to keep the whole process as natural as possible; treading the whole bunches by foot (she's bought and abandoned three modern presses, but always ends up treading the grapes), using gravity to avoid pumping, never filtering. She even hermetically seals her subterranean barrel room with masking tape and determines the bottling date biodynamically, according to the cycles of the moon. Her wines are fascinating - often boldly perfumed, with a beautiful purity of fruit and surprising body and structure.

OLIVE OIL

L'Arbaude Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Mas de Cadenet (Provence/France)

500ml 15.99

The Négrel family make peppery Extra Virgin Olive Oil overlooked by the Mont Sainte-Victoire.

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a Fruit Day.

There will be more than one Winery event in July as we will be taking part in the **31 Days Of Riesling** and kicking off with our **monthly tasting** at **The Winery** slated for **Tuesday 2nd July**.

Just arrived – Rioja by Roberto Pangua Sodupe and Isabel Fernandez. From Italy - **Cantina di Casteggio** from Lombardy and **Schola Sarmanti** – the Men in Black from Puglia. From Burgundy – Puligny-Montrachet and Beaune by **Paul Pernet**, Meursault and Chassagne-Montrachet from Vincent **Latour-Labille**, Savigny-lès-Beaune by **Guillemot**, Pernand-Vergelesses from the **Denis family** and those amazing fruit liqueurs by **Baccate** for making the perfect Kir.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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