

T H E
W I N E R Y

August Tasting 21.08.13

SPARKLING

Cruasé Metodo Classico Rosato NV, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy) 13.99

The little known region of Oltrepó Pavese is a bump on the plain 60kms south of Milan. There is one major player in town. 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. Try as we might, we just couldn't resist the wines. The Cantina is very switched-on and started a "quality project" with their best 50 growers, bringing in high-profile consultant Riccardo Cotarella. 100% Pinot Noir, Cruasé is a true *Methodo Champenoise*, fermented and aged for 18 months in bottle.

WHITE

Malvasia 2012, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy) 10.99

The aromatic grape Malvasia is thought to have come to Italy from Greece in the 17th Century. The Venetians became prolific traders of Malvasia and wine shops in Venice were known as *Malvasie*. Today Malvasia is grown in Croatia, Slovenia, Portugal, Madeira and in Italy. In Lazio it is the main element in Frascati. On the volcanic island of Lipari, just off the north coast of Sicily, it is used to make an unctuous dessert wine. Here in Lombardy we see it in its wonderfully spicy, dry form.



We were visited last month by **Jancis Robinson**, the Queen of Wine Writers. She came to taste a wide selection of our German Rieslings and has just published the piece on her site. To celebrate, we thought we'd open a couple from Rheinhessen that she particularly enjoyed.

Riesling trocken 2012, Becker-Landgraf (Rheinhessen/Germany) 12.99

From the ashes of Rheinhessen rises the twin-headed phoenix of modern dry Riesling and Pinot Noir. A local grower threw a party early last decade, hoping his daughter would catch Johannes Landgraf's eye. Johannes made a bee-line for another winery's daughter, Julia Becker, and so in 2004, Becker-Landgraf was born. Among other things (Pinot Blanc, Rivaner, Dornfelder and so on) they were determined to make top-class, cool-climate, dry Riesling and silky Pinot Noir, slap bang in the rural centre of the region. This is their limey, almost oily, mineral-driven dry Riesling.

Binger Quarzit Riesling trocken 2011, Riffel (Rheinhessen/Germany) ORGANIC 16.99

Bingen is on a massive corner on the Rhine, opposite Rudesheim. It is at the north-western edge of the region where four wine-growing regions meet. Rheinhessen Nahe, Mittelrhein and the Rheingau. Carolin and Erik Riffel have vines in the full south-facing Bingen Scharlachberg vineyard. Millions of years ago the Rhine looped below it, which explains why the wines are more Rheingau in style than Rheinhessen. The Riffels make electric, dry, modern Riesling which express the steep, quartz-infused, fossil-laden slate it is grown on and the very late October harvesting which extracts maximum ripeness. This is their Spätlese level trocken, now named Quarzit. We owe thanks to the German Food Writer Ursula Heinzelmann for the tip. She was researching a piece about the wines Goethe drank and heard about the Scharlachberg.

W I N E R Y

RED

Spätburgunder trocken 2010, Adolf Schreiner (Ahr/Germany) 15.99

Pinot Noir from the Ahr Valley while highly-prized in Germany, is seldom seen abroad. The Ahr is a sheltered, meandering valley near Bonn, short and narrow, which locals say has an almost Mediterranean micro-climate. We wouldn't go quite that far, but certainly the Romans were the first to spot its potential 2000 years ago. Today it is the most highly-regarded Spätburgunder region in Germany - its wines display the haunting autumnal layers of flavour and texture that Pinot fanatics crave. It was a tip from a Stonemason at Lincoln Cathedral, who happens to come from Bonn, that brought us to Schreiner's door. Adolf Schreiner makes unreconstructed, old-school Ahr Spätburgunder in the teeny-weeny village of Rech. Musky, smoky, Pinot Noir reeking of Autumn.

Cuvée Classique 2011, Domaine de Mauvan (Provence/France) 13.99

We were looking for another Rosé in Provence in the wilting 40C heat of summer. Much of our shortlisting work was done in the thankfully cool Côtes-de-Provence-Sainte-Victoire Vinothèque in the town of Trets. Our clear winner was Mauvan. 30 minutes later, with the stunning long ridge-like Mont Sainte-Victoire as backdrop, we were tasting the full range with Martin Massot, Gaëlle Maclou's long-term boyfriend and co-worker. Gaëlle's Grandfather started the Domaine in the 1950s. It was mixed farming. Mainly cereal, fruit and some vines. Gaëlle, a qualified Oenologist, took over the Domaine 22 years ago, stripped out the cereal production and has concentrated on wine ever since. The wines are terrific. A refreshing white, two levels of Rosé and three reds. Classique is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. All their reds age beautifully.

**Côtes-du-Rhône 2006, Domaine de la Garance (Rhône/France) 11.99**

André and Jos Liataud's Domaine de la Garance (named after a climbing plant with small yellow flowers *Eng. Madder/Rubia*) is in Rasteau. Rasteau is one of the named Côtes-du-Rhône Villages, the villages that fan out across the striking landscape of the southern Rhone valley between Chateauneuf-du-Pape and the hills and mountains to the east - the jagged Dentelles de Monmirail and the imposing Mont Ventoux. It's a windy place - a hot, dusty wind in summer turns bone-chilling in winter. The wind has a name; Le Mistral. The vines are weather-beaten and gnarly - the wines are muscular and deep. André and Jos have vines in Rasteau and nearby Séguret. This Côtes-du-Rhône really grabbed our attention. It's rare to stumble across a mature Côtes-du-Rhône. 100% Grenache from Séguret's gravelly soil - butch and chewy.

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 Flower Day.

Our **next tasting** will be at **The Winery on Wednesday 18th September**. We are delighted to be joined by **Reiner Flick** from the Rheingau. He's the one who makes the Victoriaberg, Queen Victoria's favourite wine.

Many of you have asked about our **events** at **Clifton Nurseries**. We now have some good news. On **Wednesday 30th October** we will be holding a **three course wine dinner** in The Quince Tree at Clifton Nurseries. Tickets will be £60 per person.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**
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