

T H E
W I N E R Y

May Tasting 07.05.14

Our big news this month is that 9 of our wines are in the German Top 50 - woohoo! The announcement was made last Friday and, to celebrate, we have two of the winners in tonight's line-up. Gerrit Walter's dry Riesling and Becker-Landgraf's Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder.

SPARKLING

Spumante Brut, Fontanassa (Piedmont/Italy) 18.99

Gavi, made from a grape called Cortese, is considered one of the finest white wines of Italy and evokes wet straw, white flowers, honeysuckle and bitter almonds.

The town of Gavi, north of Genoa, has an imposing citadel, some fantastic almond biscuits and, surprisingly, no vines. The best Gavi is called Gavi di Gavi and comes from a small village called Rovereto on the gently undulating plateau above Gavi and its gorge. Marco Gemme, who runs Fontanassa with his brother Roberto, is possibly one of the most bearded men we have ever met. When we last visited Marco showed us his new project – a sparkling wine from the 2010 vintage. He was planning to age it for at least 3 years. Effectively it's a sparkling Gavi, although he can't call it that as there is no such appellation.

WHITE

Bergerac Blanc Sec 2012, Le Tap (Bergerac/France) ORGANIC 10.99

We all loved Didier Roches' sweaty red Pécharmant a few months ago. Didier's brother Olivier also makes wine nearby, outside the Pécharmant zone, in the surrounding Bergerac appellation. He produces a delicious sweet Saussignac and - our selection for tonight - a dry Bergerac Blanc made from Sauvignon Blanc/Sémillon with a splash of Muscadelle - all mint leaf, melon and lime.



Riesling trocken 2012, Walter (Mosel/Germany) 9.99

One of the winners of the UK German Top 50, Gerrit Walter's Riesling trocken has long been a winner on our shelves.

Gerrit was an intern with us for twelve weeks in the summer of 2009 and went back home to help with the harvest before heading back to Geisenheim (the top wine college in the country), to finish his studies. He also spent a year working at Jochen Dreissigacker's winery in Rheinhessen. Jochen is one of the new stars in German wine. Gerrit has clearly been doing his homework - one sip and it's easy to understand why his Dad has given him free rein in the family cellar. Modern Mosel Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from the perilously steep, slate vineyards of the small village of Briedel between Pünderich and Zell. Here's what the Top 50 judges said: "Clean, modern, lively and vibrant with great fruit and balance."

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

Riffel's basic trocken is also in the Top 50. We will be picking some up in the next couple of months. In the meantime, we thought we'd open their marvellous Quarzit Riesling trocken 2011.

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 may explain why their wines have an element of Rheingau opulence. 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 Quarzit, their Spätlese trocken. They are fully organic and, when we visited at the end of March, Erik was telling us about their aim to become biodynamic (the extreme end of organic viticulture where decisions are aligned with the Lunar Calendar). He showed us the Camomile and Yarrow which are used to make infusions to spray in the vineyard in homeopathic concentrations. How can such small concentrations have any effect? Somewhat incredulously, he says, they seem to work.

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RED

Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder 2012, Becker-Landgraf (Rheinhessen/Germany) 17.99

Another Winery classic – Becker-Landgraf’s latest Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder is another Top 50 winner.

A Rheinhessen grower threw a party early last decade, hoping his daughter would catch Johannes Landgraf’s eye. Unfortunately it didn’t go according to plan and Johannes made a bee-line for another winery’s daughter, Julia Becker. So, in 2004, Becker-Landgraf was born and they embarked on their plan to make top-class, cool-climate, dry Riesling and silky Pinot Noir slap bang in the rural centre of the region.

Johannes and Julia outgrew the basement below their house, where they would scuttle around with bended heads, checking their gleaming tanks and a handful of barrels. Space was so tight that, when we first rocked-up at their door during the 2009 harvest, they were pressing and fermenting their harvest in a tent! Their new cellar has been built and was finished just days before last year’s harvest began.

This fabulous, autumnal, smoky Spätburgunder comes from old parcels of vines planted by Julia’s Great Grandfather on the Petersberg, the only hill for miles around, just outside the rural village of Gau-Odernheim.

Château La Fleur Poitou 2011 (Lussac-Saint-Emilion/Bordeaux/France) 14.99

This is one of our favourites from a 30-bottle tasting at Horeau-Beylot during our visit to Bordeaux late last year. Château La Fleur Poitou, owned by the highly-regarded Pomerol estate Certan de May, is from Lussac-Saint-Emilion - one of the satellite appellations of Saint-Emilion, which shares similar geologies with its more famous neighbor.

A blend of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, the slightly higher proportion of Cabernet Franc balances the soft, supple Merlot with an extra sense of structure and purpose.

Côtes-du-Rhône 2012, Coriançon (Rhône/France) ORGANIC 12.99

Also just in is our latest hit from the warm, wind-ravaged southern Rhone valley. The heavily moustachioed François Vallot is a fourth-generation wine-maker and owns one of the oldest wineries in the Côtes-du-Rhône, an area where much of the wine is bottled by the big co-operatives. Since the 2007 vintage he has been fully biodynamic. Biodynamism is the extreme end of organic viticulture, where many decisions are synchronised with the lunar calendar. His winery is in Vinsobres, one of the named Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages, like Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Cairanne, all satellites of Chateauneuf-du-Pape. It’s a beautiful, warm, windswept setting with the jagged Dentelles de Montmirail and Mont Ventoux as a backdrop. His Grenache and Syrah vines are twisted and ravaged (rather than caressed) by the Mistral wind.



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 in Annone Veneto.

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a Fruit Day.

Our **following tasting**, also at The Winery, will be on **Tuesday 3rd June** from 17.00-21.00h and will feature Bosco del Merlo’s Carlo and Milly Paladin, who make our favourite organic Prosecco.

We have been travelling extensively recently - around Germany (Ahr, Rheinhessen, Mosel, Saar) and Italy (Tuscany, Lombardy and Piedmont). Next week we are off to Burgundy. Some of the fruits of our trips should be arriving over the coming weeks.

Just arrived – Mauvan, our Rosé from Provence, Pascal Chalon and Coriançon from the southern Rhône. From the Nahe, von Racknitz (including the last of that crazy 2005 Pinot Meunier), Scarpa (Piedmont) - already running out.

On their way – Schola Sarmenti (Puglia), Boscarelli (Montepulciano) and La Colombina (Montalcino), Casteggio (Lombardy), Longrande (Rioja), Horeau-Beylot (Bordeaux) – including the 1999 La Croix-de-Saint-Georges that simply can’t stay on the shelves.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings
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