

T H E
W I N E R Y

September Tasting 17.09.14

featuring Reiner Flick

Tonight is all about the Rheingau in sparkling, white and rosé forms and Italy for the reds. The clamour had been rising for Victoriaberg, Queen Victoria's favourite wine. Last Friday, in the Rheingau, we picked up Reiner Flick's latest release. On Saturday evening it was on our shelves. Tonight we are joined by Reiner himself, over from the Rheingau on his annual trip to London.

SPARKLING

Cuvée Vaux 2011, Schloss Vaux (Rheingau/Germany)

17.99

It was Claudia von der Papen, one of our talented interns from Geisenheim who brought us our first bottle of Schloss Vaux. We were very impressed. It turns out that Schloss Vaux is one of the top sparkling wine producers in Germany. Schloss Vaux originally started in Berlin in 1868 and in the 1880s had the opportunity to buy a winery in Metz, which became Chateau Vaux. Fifty years later it was time to move from Metz to Eltville where they focused on making sekt from top Rheingau sites. From the beginning it was based on the French Champagne House model. Until very recently they owned no vines, and always had longstanding grape contracts with top growers such as Kloster Eberbach and Langwerth von Simmern from which they produce startling sparkling versions of the legendary Steinberg and Erbacher Marcobrunn Rieslings and the red Assmannshäuser Höllenberg from Spätburgunder. When we visited last week, they were brimming with their news – they have bought a cellar in Geisenheim, and going forward will be making some of their base wine themselves. Cuvée Vaux, their calling card, is a blend of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir, with a splash of Riesling. One more thing – the Chairman of the Board is a real live Count, Nikolaus Graf von Plettenberg. Classy!



WHITE

Königin Victoriaberg Riesling trocken 2013, Flick (Rheingau/Germany)

16.99

Reiner Flick and his family live in a renovated 13th Century mill in the village of Wicker. It is part of the east end of the Rheingau next to Hochheim where the River Main meets the Rhine and from whose slopes you can watch the planes on final approach to Frankfurt airport. Reiner told us last week that the not particularly big road in front of their property was once the main route between Paris and Moscow, and that Napoleon passed their gates twice - once on his way to Russia and once on the way back, hotly pursued by the Prussian Army. It was then that the village of Wicker was burnt to the ground after a particularly nasty battle.

Although wine has been in the Flick family since 1775, it is only now, through the rising fortune of the Flicks, that Wicker has been put on the wine-lovers' map. Their vines are scattered across over 100 separate parcels in Wicker and Hochheim. Reiner spends much of his time in the vineyards, bringing the soil alive. No matter what the conditions of any vintage are, he always seems to pull a rabbit from the hat!

Reiner always seems to have a new project whenever we visit. We were really excited that from 2010 he managed to rent the vines in a small vineyard in Hochheim called Königin Victoriaberg (Queen Victoria's hill). This was Queen Victoria's favourite wine and where the name "Hock" comes from (the British struggled to pronounce Hochheim and eventually referred to all Rhine wine as Hock). She was so taken with the wine that, on a visit to Germany in 1845, she asked to see it. She observed it from her carriage and, shortly after, the vineyard was named after her and a monument was built to commemorate the visit.

We adore this wine and adore the historic label. Reiner phoned us to ask our opinion on whether he should keep the original label. "Yes, definitely!" we replied. Emphatically.

And the wine? We are loving the 2013. It may be tighter and understated when compared to his Nonnberg or Hölle, but it is elegant, persuasive and reeks (in a good way) of history and breeding.

W I N E R Y

WHITE (continued)

Hölle Riesling trocken 2012, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) 18.99

This is Reiner's Hochheimer Hölle, the epitome of classic Rheingau - opulent, perfumed and oily. A beautiful balance between floral and savoury, with almost herbal notes. It was recently named as one of the UK's Top 50 German wines. Here's what the judging panel said: "Gorgeous nose of jasmine and satsuma. Fresh, weighty and complex."

WHITE (FRUITY)

Königin Victoriaberg Riesling Kabinett 2013, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) 16.99

What happens if you use the same grapes and, at some point, stop the yeast from fermenting all the natural sweetness of the grapes into alcohol? This is the same vineyard, same vintage as the dry version but with a different outcome – a sweeter wine with lower alcohol. Playful, delicate, charming. A wine that can age for 30 years or more with ease.

Reiner and Kirsten have unfathomable energy; running the winery, making wine, running events in their venue down the road, barbecuing and cooking for 300 guests, hunting in the forests near Frankfurt, making wild boar sausages, experimenting with new grape varieties (Cabernet Blanc?!), making barrels from wood felled from their own land, building a new cellar with a vaulted ceiling, putting in a light display to demonstrate the effect of different coloured light on the taste of wine...and so on. Oh and then there's the family, complete with assorted animals: horses, dogs and we think we spotted chickens too.

ROSE

Spätburgunder Rosé 2013, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) 13.99

Since summer before last, Reiner's Rosé has been a runaway pink smash at The Winery. Made from the free-run juice of his Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir).

RED

De Ferrari 2012, Boscarelli (Tuscany/Italy) 17.99

It's fair to say that, despite tasting relentlessly, the charm of *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* had passed us by. Until one chilly night in January 2008 when we were sitting in "La Brocca d'Oro" the only Trattoria open in Chianciano Terme, Montepulciano's neighbour. We told our young host Leonardo that we had an appointment with Boscarelli the following morning and asked what should we drink tonight. He said "drink the Boscarelli. There's nothing better." Over the following 90 minutes we had what could best be described as an awakening – waves crashing on the beach, that kind of thing. Tonight we are tasting their entry-level De Ferrari (which is their family name) - less of the ocean breakers and more the lovely, lilting sound of gentle lapping on a shingly shore. 90% Prugnolo Gentile (which is the local Sangiovese), 5% Cannaiolo e 5% Merlot.



Nerio 2010, Schola Sarmanti (Puglia/Italy) 15.99

The Men in Black are the stuff of legends at The Winery. We had a Godfather moment when we were sniffing out new wines in Puglia some summers ago.

"We'll meet at 17.00h in the square."

"How will we recognise you?"

"Don't worry, we'll find you".

Men in black, following a black car along remote country roads, horses heads in beds, we experienced them all – (apart from the horses heads). Puglia's hot southernmost corner is known for its big, juicy reds. Nerio is a reserve wine made with 80% NegroAmaro and 20% Malvasia Nera Leccese.

OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Boscarelli (Tuscany/Italy) 500ml 24.99

Sensational, peppery, extra virgin olive oil from our favourite producer in Montepulciano.

LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a **Flower Day**.

Our next tasting here at The Winery is provisionally slated for **Tuesday 28th October**.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**

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