

T H E
W I N E R Y

March Tasting 18.03.15

We have a bumper line-up tonight including two mini themes of Piedmont and the Nahe.

SPARKLING

Zum Krug Riesling Sekt Brut 2012, Josef Laufer (Hattenheim/Rheingau) 12.99

To get us in the Riesling mood, we are kicking off with Sekt from the Rheingau. Hotel Zum Krug in Hattenheim, is a magical place. The sort of place that may have existed in mediaeval Germany, atmospheric twists and turns in a wooden interior straight out of a fantasy grotto from ancient legend. Josef Laufer, owner and font of Rheingau knowledge, always gives us a warm welcome and we start with a glass of his brilliant dry Sekt made from top class Rheingau fruit just outside the village - a wake-up call to the senses in all its petrolly splendour.

WHITE

Roero Arneis 2014, Palladino (Piedmont/Italy) 13.99

Maurilio Palladino and his niece Veronica make a wonderful range of classic regional wines mainly from the chalk & clay soils of Serralunga d'Alba, one of Barolo's best-known townships. Dolcetto, Barbera, a Barbera Superiore "Bricco delle Olive" (which we are showing tonight), a Nebbiolo from the nearby township of Roddi and a growing spread of Barolos - Serralunga, Vigna Broglio and Riserva San Bernardo (a magnificent parcel rented from the church for decades) have recently been joined by two more Crus, Parafada and Ornato. They also make small amounts of Gavi (which almost entirely goes to Malta), a Moscato d'Asti, Barolo Chinato and this distinctive local white, Roero Arneis, which evokes acacia, honeysuckle and bitter almonds.



Schieferboden Riesling trocken 2011, von Racknitz (Nahe/Germany) 18.99

It was a tip from top Mosel growers Clemens and Rita Busch that took us to von Racknitz. Formerly belonging to a historic cloister, the estate has a long history traceable back to Hildegard of Bingen (the Saint, Composer and Mystic) back in the 1100s. There have been ups and downs through the centuries to the point where the winery was on the brink of collapse in 2002. Enter Matthias Adams, former CFO of tech company Infineon Germany. Then in his late 30s he decided he 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.

Matthias and Luise make three "Stone Wines" from different soils. Schieferboden (Slate), Vulkangestein (volcanic rock) and Kieselstein (pebbles over slate). Schieferboden is from Odernheimer Kloster Disibodenberg (the vineyard on the ridge by their home) and three vineyards in nearby Niederhausen - Hermannshöhle, Kertz and Rosenheck.

Schlossböckelheimer "KG" Riesling trocken 2013, Gut Hermannsberg (Nahe/Germany) 21.99

We are excited to be bringing in the wines of Gut Hermannsberg, the former Prussian State Wine Domain in one of the most picturesque, historic parts of the Nahe. Founded in 1902, the State Domain became one of the most highly-regarded estates in Germany. It was sold in 1998 to Erich Maurer, a multi-millionaire who made his fortune selling potatoes to supermarkets in Germany. He retired in 2009 and sold to Jens Riedel and Dr Christine Dinsel, a wine-loving couple from Hamburg. They have invested heavily in every area of the estate and snapped up a very talented young winemaker called Karsten Peter. The wines are bold. Schlossböckelheimer "KG" is their village-level dry Riesling from the sensational Kupfergrube (Copper Mine) vineyard. Wild yeasts, surging fresh 2013 acidity and deep, spicy minerality from the iron-rich red soil of the Kupfergrube.

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RED

Fleurie "L'Alchémiste" 2013, Anne-Sophie Dubois (Beaujolais/France) 18.99

Anne-Sophie Dubois comes from the Champagne region, 3 hours north of Beaujolais. Her parents have 3 hectares in Sézanne, halfway between Epernay and Troyes. They had two kids, wanted to expand and bought 8 hectares of vines in Fleurie. After internships at Roblet-Monnot in Volnay and various Champagne producers around Sézanne, Anne-Sophie took over the small Fleurie domaine in 2007. She makes three wines. A Bourgogne Rouge from Gamay and two Fleurie bottlings – L'Alchémiste and Clepsydre. Her winemaking style is very gentle, to emphasise the purity, fragrance and elegance of the fruit. Long maceration, wild yeasts, no new oak, no filtration or fining, no pumping – just gravity. It was difficult in the early days with hail decimating her crops, but whatever finds its way into bottle is very refined.

Barbera Superiore Bricco delle Olive 2011, Palladino (Piedmont/Italy) 15.99

The Barolo zone, in the northwest corner of Italy just south of Alba, an hour's drive (at full speed) south of Turin, is one of our favourite and most picturesque regions on the planet. As you look from the highest point, the hilltop town of La Morra, across the valley with its 3D ripples and contours, you can pick out the townships on their respective hills, evoking mediaeval times. There is enormous variety in styles of wines from the different townships. La Morra is elegant and perfumed, Barolo town is a balance of power and elegance, Monforte d'Alba is considered a macho bruiser. Serralunga is stern and minerally, Visit any producer in the Barolo zone and you will taste a classic sequence of reds. Dolcetto followed by Barbera, followed by Nebbiolo and then onwards and upwards to Barolo. Barbera is the most widely-planted grape variety in Piedmont and, until the 1970s, was held to be its best. Barbera occupied the most favourable positions on the slopes. Although Nebbiolo has since nudged it from its throne, Barbera is still widely appreciated - possibly thanks to its rich dark fruit and low tannins (the opposite end of the tannin spectrum from Nebbiolo).

Maurilio Palladino and his niece Veronica make two Barberas. Bricco delle Olive, from a small parcel between Serralunga and Monforte, is their top bottling.

Alongside their wonderful, classic Barolos and deep Barberas, we often snap up unexpected old vintages of their Dolcetto and Nebbiolo whenever we spot them. Old Dolcetto? Yes, really! To give an example, we were lucky enough to be having dinner at legendary Barolo maker Elio Altare's home and one of the most startling wines was a 15 year-old Dolcetto. Who would have thought it could age? We have just taken delivery of the last few bottles of Palladino's 2009 Dolcetto. Move quickly!



Valdetomé Reserva 2007, Manuel Piquer (Cariñena/Spain) 11.99

From a windy corner of northern Spain, Cariñena is a plateau close to the foothills of the Pyrenees, the Kingdom of Aragon. The wind comes roaring around the mountains, battering the gnarly, old Tempranillo and Grenache vines which can be relied on for their deep, dark fruit. A couple of years ago, Manuel visited The Winery in London with a posse of 14 family members. There may have been more of them, we lost count.

His Reserva, two levels up from "Lelia" (star performing red wine at last month's tasting), is an 80/20 blend of Tempranillo and Grenache, 16 months in American oak and then 24 months in bottle before release. Balsam, warm spices and leather.

OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie (Veneto/Italy) 500ml - 13.99

Extra Virgin Olive Oil from the Paladin family in Annone Veneto.

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

Diary date - our **following tasting** is scheduled for **Wednesday 29th April**, here at The Winery. We are hoping to be joined by Philip Nelles, the brilliant Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) producer from the Ahr valley near Bonn.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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