

T H E
W I N E R Y

May Tasting

21.05.15

We were back in the Loire valley last week on a search and scoop-up mission and arrived back late on Friday evening with our van filled from the axles to the rafters with Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc. Tonight we introduce three growers from three different parts of the Loire to our shelves.

SPARKLING

Vouvray Méthode Traditionnelle Brut 2010, Domaine d'Orfeuilles (Loire/France) 15.99

This was a tip from Nick Rogers and Carole Lamond ex of Clay Hill Vineyard in Kent. They were travelling in the Touraine and stuffed a clutch of cards into our hands. Wineries, Restaurants, Hotels. This one looked very interesting.

We arrived in Vouvray an hour early and thought we might catch a bite for lunch. It was 13.50h. It was soon made very clear to us that lunch in France is definitely over at 14.00h. We took to the streets and eventually found a charming one woman operation who offered to rustle up a spinach salad with rillettes and bread. Phew.

An hour later we were visiting Arnaud Herivault at Domaine d'Orfeuilles (*golden leaves*). First the flinty vineyards on the rolling plateau above their hamlet, then the chilly cellar hacked out of the white rock cliff below the vines. Then the wines. Chenin Blanc in all its guises – sparkling, dry, medium, sweet, very sweet. Yum. Can we buy some? When? Right now. Err, OK. We just need to change the labels and capsules for export. I may need to get my Dad to help. Poor Dad thought he had retired a few years ago.



WHITE

Pouilly-Fumé 2014, Domaine du Bouchot (Loire/France) 17.99

So, we were methodically following leads around Pouilly-sur-Loire. Some dead ends, some were out of town but keen, another just went to the fax line. While we were driving around trying to locate another grower we had been tipped about, we saw an intriguing sign at the end of a lane. Domaine du Bouchot, AB organic. So we phoned them. Can we come and see you? When would you like to come? In 5 minutes? OK.

Rachel and Pascal Kerbiquet started their winery 28 years ago. They were first in the area to go organic. That was in the mid 1990s. Since 2012 they have gone one step further and are now biodynamic. They make very stylish Pouilly-Fumés, the embodiment of Sauvignon Blanc in three different bottlings. This is their classic - their calling card. Next one up is called "Regain", a particular vineyard which they revived in 1997 using herbs and grasses. Finally "Prestige", which unsurprisingly is their top-of-the-range bottling. A special selection of grapes, 40 hours of maceration and extended lees contact.

We came back the next day to cram what little space was left in the van with their wines.

Hallgartener Riesling Kabinett trocken 2013, Fred Prinz (Rheingau/Germany) 16.99

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rudesheim. The south-facing slope on the north bank between the two is the Rheingau, thick with castles, convents and vineyards. This is the classical home of Riesling. Evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim - the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. In contrast to wine made in historic castles and convents, for 20 years Fred Prinz made his wine in the garage of the flats where he and his family live in the small village of Hallgarten. Having started as a hobby, demand became so great he had to give up his day job and rent a slightly bigger cellar in a neighbouring village.

There is an increasing trend to make Kabinett trocken that are dry equivalents to the fruity Kabinetts – fresh acidity, slightly lower alcohol, elegant, delicate and racy.

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WHITE (cont)

Nonnberg Riesling trocken 2013, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) - TOP 50 14.99

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 recently 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 inexhaustible energy and rising fortune of Reiner, that Wicker has been put on the wine-lovers' map. The entire Wickerer Nonnberg belongs to Reiner. Nonnberg (Nun's hill) is on the hill at the edge of the village and overlooks their home and winery. There's a sandstone statue of a nun in one corner, the original Abbess of the monastery which owned the vineyard in the late 1200s. Reiner has worked hard with the chalky, clay soil and has been introducing some mixed flowers, grasses and herbs between the rows of vines. His Nonnberg always produces impressive, spicy Riesling with depth and concentration.

This was recently announced as one of the UK German Top 50 winners. Well done, Reiner!

RED

Anjou Villages "Spilite" 2010, Chateau Pierre-Bise (Loire/France) 17.99

Joëlle Papin-Chevalier and her son René make benchmark Anjou in Beaulieu-sur-Layon, west of Angers. They make three sensational Savennières, certainly one of the Loire's finest appellations for Chenin Blanc. They make Anjou Villages from two different soils. This is Spilite, a volcanic soil. The grape is Cabernet Franc. These wines age magnificently. We recently had a 1995 of their Clos de Coulaïne and a 1999 of Spilite. Both were still fresh with plenty of life ahead of them. If you can bear to hide a couple of bottles away for 10-20 years, you won't be disappointed. Or just drink them now - in which case it might be worth putting them in a decanter for an hour before drinking.

We should just mention their sweet wines. They are on the Layon, after all. The Layon is a tributary of the Loire which traps moisture and mist in autumn - a breeding ground for botrytis, the noble rot. In the right hands (the Papin-Chevaliers for example), late-harvested, botrytised Chenin Blanc makes magical sweet wines.



Chateau Haut-Piquat, Lussac-Saint-Emilion 2012 (Bordeaux/France) HALVES 375ml 9.99

You may be surprised to see another half bottle in tonight's line-up. We were asked to arrange a special bottling in halves with screwcaps for Kate Bush's concert run at Hammersmith last autumn. They were to be served at the VIP dinners before each concert. Kate and her people chose a couple of Bordeaux which the Rivière brothers of Saint-Emilion bottled specially for us. Last month we tasted the Callac Graves white, this month we are showing the supple Haut-Piquat, the chateau owned by Philippe's brother Jean-Pierre.

Viñahonda Monastrell 2013, Silvano Garcia (Jumilla/Spain) 9.99

Completing tonight's line-up of reds is the welcome return of Silvano Garcia's Monastrell from Jumilla, deep in the scorched landscape between Valencia and Murcia in southeast Spain. Monastrell is Spanish for Mourvèdre and with all that sunshine comes even more ripeness and even more alcohol. Silvano has somehow managed to attenuate the power slightly, so hopefully we will all still be standing after a thimbleful.

OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie (Veneto/Italy) 500ml - 11.99

Here is the Paladins' latest (and scarce) Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Peppery, liquid gold!

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

Diary date - our following tasting is scheduled for **Wednesday 17th June**, here at The Winery.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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