

T H E
W I N E R Y

June Tasting

17.06.15

SPARKLING

Crémant de Loire Brut NV, Clos des Quarterons (Loire/France)

15.99

We were back in the Loire valley a few weeks ago and a visit to St-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil near Saumur was essential to taste some of Xavier Amirault's delicious Cabernet Franc, Chenin Blanc and Crémant. Crémant de Loire is the sparkling wine of the region and is often 100% Chenin Blanc. Xavier's is different and made from 60% Chenin Blanc grown on gravelly soil, 30% Chardonnay and (here's the twist) 10% Cabernet Franc, which provides the drier finish.

WHITE

Macon-Bussières 2014, Thierry Drouin (Burgundy/France)

15.99

If you find yourself on the Autoroute des Anglais, the Autoroute that becomes the Autoroute du Soleil, driving towards Lyon or further south, and you look right as you pass Macon, you will spot two magnificent cliff-shaped rocks; the Roche de Vergisson and the Roche de Solutré. It is difficult not to be impressed by their primal presence. La Roche de Solutré is a protected, pre-historic site used by human civilisations from 35,000-10,000 BC. Pre-historic humans used the rock for hunting, driving herds of wild horses over the edge of the cliff. Lovely. Its profile was raised in the 1980s by France's then President, Francois Mitterand, who would make an annual ritual ascent to the peak.

Less than 2kms away, as the crow (or pterodactyl) flies is La Roche de Vergisson, a rock with a friendlier history. Between the two is an amphitheatre-like bowl which cradles the Pouilly-Fuissé vineyards. Slap bang in the middle of the bowl with a view of both rocks is the Drouin family's home and winery.

Thierry Drouin's son Charles has taken over much of the workload recently and is doing an excellent job. In addition to the Macon-Bussières we are tasting tonight, they make a Saint-Véran and a spread of Pouilly-Fuissé bottlings. Oak is used very carefully and never dominates. The wines are refined and, at the top end, the Vieille Vigne du Bois d'Ayer (from a half hectare parcel of 65 year-old vines) and the single vineyard En Buland (from the slope below the Roche de Solutré) are exquisite.



Vom Rotliegenden Riesling trocken 2013, Fritz Ekkehard Huff (Rheinhessen/Germany)

14.99

We had been on the lookout for a great Nierstein ever since our beloved St Antony winery changed hands in 2005. A dinner at the excellent Schloss Sörgenloch restaurant deep in the Rheinhessen countryside ended in intense conversation with the owner, Thomas. Nierstein? Try this Fritz Ekkehard Huff. Yum. When we phoned shortly afterwards, the daughter Christine said, "that's amazing, I only dropped a single sample bottle off at Sörgenloch!" Fate. Christine was fresh out of Geisenheim, the top German wine college and making bright, minerally dry Riesling from the iron-rich red cliffs overlooking the Rhine at Nierstein.

There have been developments since we first visited. Jeremy Bird, a New Zealander, came to the Huffs to do a harvest in 2009. One thing led to another and he never left - Christine and Jeremy got married summer 2013 and their baby girl was born in January.

Hölle Riesling trocken 2012, Himmel (Rheingau/Germany)

19.99

It was a tip from Angela Kühn that brought us to the door of heaven in Hochheim. Himmel is German for heaven, and yes, we think Annette and Emmerich Himmel's dry Rieslings are heavenly. Hochheim Riesling was Queen Victoria's favourite wine - and where the word "Hock" comes from, back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. As you'd expect from the Rheingau, their Rieslings are a geological extravaganza in your mouth. Perfumed, blackcurrant leaf, petrol, peach and spice, surging with racy freshness. Their wines are fascinating and the higher up the ladder you go, the more extravagant the perfume and texture.

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RED

Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder 2013, Becker-Landgraf (Rheinhessen/Germany) 16.99

Another Winery classic – Becker-Landgraf’s latest Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder is a UK Top 50 German winner for the second year running. Woohoo!

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.

St-Nicolas-de Bourgueil “Les Gravitices” 2011, Clos des Quarterons (Loire) 16.99

Xavier Amirault was frothing with excitement when we visited a few weeks ago. Since our previous visit they have been certified fully organic and also, since the 2013 vintage, they now have biodynamic certification. With full, vigorous and expansive use of hands and arms, Xavier told us about the in-depth research they had been doing in the vineyards. They have 53 parcels of vines, totalling 35 hectares across 15 different soils. He told us about the very expensive soil profiles that had been taken and how excited everyone working at the domaine was about the move to biodynamism. *Biodynamism = the extreme end of organic viticulture where decisions are made according to the Lunar Calendar - based on the teachings of Maria Thun, who in turn was a disciple of Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher who laid out his mission statement for an alternative agriculture in the 1920s.*

Here is Xavier’s “Gravitices” from a soil of gravel and silices (geddit?). 100% Cabernet Franc, under conversion to biodynamism.



Château de Lavagnac 2007 (Bordeaux/France) 12.99

Philippe Rivière co-owns with his brother, Jean-Pierre, the Clos des Menuts, one of our favourite Saint-Émilions. They also individually own châteaux in Saint-Émilion’s satellite appellations. Jean-Pierre has Château Picampeau and Philippe owns Château de Lavagnac, a 15th century fort, down the hill from the picturesque town of Saint-Émilion, so close to the Saint-Émilion line that it’s still north of the Dordogne but just inside the Bordeaux Supérieur zone. Lavagnac 2007 is a classic Right Bank Bordeaux blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, punching well above its Bordeaux Supérieur status.

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 dates – We are enthusiastic supporters of the 31 Days of German Riesling, an initiative by Wines of Germany, celebrated each July. As many of you know, we at The Winery are fairly strict observers of “365 Days Of German Riesling” and, as someone pointed out recently, 366 every Leap Year.

We have two dates lined-up;

1. **Wednesday 1st July - 31 Days Of German Riesling** at **The Winery** from 17.00-21.00h

2. **Tuesday 14th July - The Winery Wine Course Module featuring German Riesling** – at **Kandoo Restaurant**, Edgware Road from 19.30-21.30h – **Tickets £40**

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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The Winery, 4 Clifton Road, London W9

mailinglist@thewineryuk.com

info@thewineryuk.com

www.thewineryuk.com

020 7286 6475