

T H E
W I N E R Y

October Tasting 28.10.14

There is a strong Italian emphasis tonight with four fresh arrivals from the north. Completing the line-up are (as usual) two dry German Rieslings and, fresh out of the back of the van, from the Beaujolais, Laurent Gauthier's Moulin-à-Vent.

SPARKLING

Prosecco "Treviso" Brut NV, La Vigna di Ermes (Veneto/Italy) 12.99

Meet our brand new Prosecco which arrived last week from a valley in Valdobbiadene - "Prosecco Central". This is one of those rare occasions when a grower sends us an email asking if we'd like to taste their wine, we say yes, they send samples and we like them enough to order them right away.

The grape formerly known as Prosecco has been re-named Glera. We love the delightful aromas of white flowers, soft, round mouth-feel and the gentle 11.5% alcohol of this, the Marsuret family's Brut. Fear not, Bosco del Merlo will be back, but we thought - you can never have enough Prosecco, right?

WHITE

Müller-Thurgau 2013, Rottensteiner (Alto Adige/Italy) 13.99

Our latest hit from Rottensteiner arrived last week.

It was a surprise bottle at lunch in Trentino that made us drive further north into Alto Adige rather than south. Hannes Rottensteiner makes an excellent range of dry mountain whites and lighter reds in the outskirts of Bolzano, close to the Brenner Pass. Borders here are blurry. Hannes sounds Austrian, speaks German but, being as Bolzano is in Italy, is Italian. He studied Oenology locally at San Michele, then Geisenheim in the Rheingau in Germany, then Udine in Friuli and now makes a wide range of wines. Weissburgunder, Pinot Grigio, Müller-Thurgau (the most impressive we have yet tasted), dry Gewürztraminer and Goldmuskateller form the range of whites. In reds he offers Edelvernatsch (also known as Schiava in Italian and Trollinger in German), Blauburgunder (Pinot Noir), Lagrein and a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenière. The biggest influence on the wine is the red porphyry rock that the vines grow on, which bring an exotic spiciness. It's an impressive range and half of their output gets no further than the Bolzano city limits. The rest is sold to visitors, some restaurants around Italy - and us!



Riesling trocken 2013, Clemens Busch (Mosel/Germany) BIODYNAMIC 15.99

Clemens Busch, the man who looks like Jesus, is something of a guru to his disciples, the New Wave German winemakers. He was the first to show that, with meticulous work in the vineyards, 100% organic viticulture - biodynamic even, and if you pick late enough, you can make amazing dry Riesling on a river best known for its sweeter styles. Based in the village of Pünderich, between Traben-Trarbach and Zell, Clemens and Rita's live in a 17th Century picturebook house on the riverside, with a stunning view of the overwhelming wall of vines on the opposite bank.

This is Clemens and Rita's first level, dry Riesling from the Pündericher Marienburg - until recently labelled Riesling Kabinett trocken. Mosel valley Riesling is all about the slate. Although their Rieslings are exclusively from one village, Clemens and Rita have two colours of slate to play with; grey and red. Their wines are packed with minerals and, year-in year-out, are clear, expressions of their geology and their vintage. Precise, focused, always balanced, mineral-laced and tingling with fresh, crisp acidity.

Riesling trocken 2012, Himmel (Rheingau/Germany) 13.99

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. Himmelstraum (*heavenly dream*), Hölle, and top-of-the-line Kirchenstück. Snatch them while you can!

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RED

Moulin-à-Vent 2011, Laurent Gauthier (Beaujolais/France) 14.99

Fresh out of the back of the van, from Dan and David's trip a week ago, from Beaujolais, at the southern end of Burgundy, just north of Lyon. The wild-eyed Laurent Gauthier makes this Moulin-à-Vent, a dense and fleshy interpretation of the Gamay grape. Moulin-à-Vent is one of the ten "Cru" villages of Beaujolais, all of which enjoy superior soil, rich in granite, compared to the rest of the region. Moulin-à-Vent always tends to be the fullest bodied of all the Crus, and is one of the wines of the Beaujolais that ages 30 years with ease.

We have bought annually since our first and (until last week) only visit a decade ago. Laurent was certainly a man of few words when we first visited. He might have been grappling with our accents and restricted vocabulary. He seems to have become a bit chattier. Either that or our French has improved a little. "See you in another ten years then?" he said as we went. "Haha – maybe sooner!"

Nebbiolo 2008, Il Chiosso (Piedmont/Italy) 16.99

We are dead excited that two new finds from our Italian trip before summer are finally in. We have always had a massive weakness for Nebbiolo – it is the grape of Barolo after all. Before heading to Barolo on our way from Lombardy we decided to drive north. Past the rice fields of Arborio, towards the Alps, to Gattinara – the other home of Nebbiolo. Carlo Cambieri and Marco Alunno brought their two families' vineyards together to form Il Chiosso in 2007 and make beautiful, high toned, high-altitude Nebbiolo in the Alto Piemonte. Carlo has a day job as an engineer. Marco is an Oenologue and, with his Dad, takes care of their vines over in the Colle Novarese, including their Ghemme. Carlo and his Dad look after Il Chiosso's Gattinara vines, including their monopole Gattinara Cru vineyard "Galizja". Il Chiosso means "home garden" or "Clos".

Barbera 2009, Albani (Lombardy/Italy) ORGANIC 18.99

You could argue that we already had the small winemaking zone of Oltrepo Pavese in Lombardy, south of Milan well-covered, having worked with Cantina di Casteggio for at least a decade. It was a coincidence to stumble across Albani, a small independent organic grower up in the hills above Casteggio, with a completely contrasting style. When we arrived to taste, they had laid on a translator (very wise as our Italian is, at best, formative) and were met by the tidal wave of energy that is Riccardo Albani, his sister Anna and, on her arm, their fully suited and booted 86 year-old father Erico. They were all on hand to meet the "hot-shot wine merchants" from London. We really liked the wines. Certified organic for 11 years. Mainly Barbera and Riesling Renato with a little Pinot Nero, Nebbiolo and Bonarda. Old vines. No SO₂, no filtering, borderline *Natural Wine*. Distinctive, characterful and built for ageing.

"We don't want to release them until they're ready", says Riccardo. Suits us! If you like this, check out the 2004 Costa del Morone.



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 **Fruit Day**.

Our **next tasting** here at The Winery is slated for **Monday 10th November**.

There has been an absolute blizzard of **new arrivals** at The Winery. From Lombardy, Casteggio and Albani. From Piedmont, Alessandria and Il Chiosso. From Verona, Valentina Cubi (**yes, the Amarone Morar 2004 is back!**). Rottensteiner from Alto Adige. From Burgundy, Denis, Guillemot, Vincent Latour and Dubuet. From Champagne, Marie-Noëlle Ledru (rarer than hens' teeth), Michel Henriët, Velut, Vautrain-Paulet and Saint-Chamant. From Bordeaux, Blanzac (almost gone), Picampeau (already gone), Larmevaille, Lavagnac. Raphaël Trouiller's In Fine Rouge, Blanc and his Cascavel reds from Mont Ventoux. From Germany, Haart, Himmel, Flick, Schloss Vaux and some mature bottles by Becker and Schloss Schönborn.

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