

T H E
W I N E R Y

February Tasting 22.02.16

Tonight's tasting features a flurry of recent arrivals from Italy and Germany.

SPARKLING

Prosecco NV, Bosco del Merlo (Veneto/Italy) ORGANIC 13.99

It's back! The Winery's top performing, favourite Prosecco for over a decade. Carlo and Milly Paladin have been making organic wines under their Bosco del Merlo label for many years. They have a spread of vines over the flat plains at Annone Veneto northeast of Venice, the Alps visible in the background. It's an area rich with Roman history - the old Roman road, the via Postumia runs right by the estate. This Prosecco is made in a *frizzante*, lower pressure style, under a normal cork. Gently floral in the nose, crisp, lean and fresh.

WHITE

Roero Arneis 2015, Guasti Clemente (Piedmont/Italy) 14.99

One of the highlights of a trip to northern Italy a couple of years ago was stumbling across a ridiculously good Barbera d'Asti in Le Due Lanterne, a restaurant in Nizza Monferrato in Piedmont. We were there to visit the iconic Scarpa winery and were wading through a bottle of their delicious Barbaresco 1999 when we asked the restaurant owner if he could recommend something else from his winelist that was in a similarly unreconstructed and old-fashioned vein. He thought for a moment and said "there is just one other wine I can think of". He disappeared and came back with a bottle of Barbera d'Asti Fonda San Nicolao by Guasti Clemente. It was excellent. Plump, deep, dark autumnal fruit with a whisper of truffles and distant bonfire.

The following day, after a wonderful tasting at Scarpa, we hotfooted it around to meet Andrea and Alessandro Guasti and to be dazzled by Andrea's incredibly mobile and expressive hand gestures - and the wines. Here is their freshly-bottled local white, Arneis, which evokes acacia, honeysuckle and bitter almonds.



Rot-Schiefer Riesling Kabinett trocken 2014, Nico Simonis (Mosel/Germany) 14.99

Pünderich is one of the most beautiful villages on the incredibly beautiful river Mosel but, in wine terms, its reputation is dominated by Clemens and Rita Busch who have set the bar extremely high.

We found ourselves at something suspiciously like a Pünderich Village Summer Fete last July. It was an all-day event, culminating in an evening of Flammkuchen (a super-thin pizza with onion, cheese and lardons) and dancing (Hoedown followed by Oompah and Techno). The main theme was the "Riesling Kartell", a group of six young growers from the village.

As we were piling through our second bottle of Busch's Marienburg GG, we bumped into Gerrit Walter (our former intern and maker of one of our favourite dry Rieslings) and asked him if there was something we should be trying. "Try this" he said, passing a glass of Kabinett trocken. It was proper Mosel - light, delicate, floral and yet with backbone - all about herbs and salty, slate minerals and racy, running water. Lovely. What is it? It's Nico Simonis' Rot-Schiefer (*red slate*) Kabinett trocken 2014. He's young and learning a lot, working a few days a week at Franzen.

Needless to say, we visited Nico and his parents Elke and Elmar asap. It's a very small, family winery with just 3 hectares of vines. Nico (currently 24) did an internship at the Buschs' and now splits his time between his family's winery and Franzen's a few villages further downstream.

He is very proud of his Rot-Schiefer Kabinett trocken, the wine that brought us to his door, because it was the first wine that his father let him do entirely his own way. It turns out that his father, Elmar, was very nervous about Nico's wine. Nico was using wild yeasts and long lees contact, like he'd seen at Franzen's. By contrast, his Dad was taught a very different style of winemaking - super clean, super safe, zero risk. The results in the bottle and the reception locally suggest that Elmar may let Nico do more going forward - or, at least, try to look the other way!

T H E
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Schiefer Riesling trocken 2014, Van Elkan (Ruwer) 15.99

From Nico Simonis' it is 50 kms as the crow flies (and 100kms if you follow the river), to the outskirts of Trier and the village of Mertesdorf on the Ruwer, a tributary of the Mosel.

A tip from Marco Winterberg, a teacher and part-time wine importer in Holland brought us to Marco van Elkan's door. He works full-time in a social research project at Trier University, so our appointment had to be early. Very early – we were tasting dry Riesling at a bracing 8.30h in the morning.

He bought a miniscule parcel of abandoned vines in the Kaseler Nies'chen vineyard in 2001 and nursed the 70 year-old vines back to life. First vintage was 2003. The vines were grateful and, with some guidance from established locals, Peter Geiben (of Karlsruhle) and Ludwig Breiling (former wine-maker at Karthäuserhof), the results are pure Ruwer. Clear, herbal and fresh, like a fast-running mountain stream. In 2008, he and his wife built a striking new house that includes holiday apartments and his cellar. Marco now has four parcels of vines totalling half a hectare (still tiny) which produce a meagre 3,000-4,000 bottles a year, which means we buy as much as 3% of his annual production!

RED

Barbera 2014, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy) 8.99

In 2008, the Cantina di Casteggio was bought (although they euphemistically describe it as a "fusion") by the Cantina di Bronis in the town of Broni just 12kms to its east. Quality has gone from strength to strength. Their dynamic boss, Livio Cagnoni has been driving big projects through and, when we visited in April, we saw their shiny new, extensive, state-of-the-art facility in Broni. The combined group now has 900 members spread across 28 villages, 90% of them in the hills. This Barbera is ripe and sleek, packed with autumn fruits and soft tannins.

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

Spätburgunder is German for Pinot Noir.

A Rheinhessen grower threw a party early last decade, hoping his daughter would catch Johannes Landgraf's eye. Unfortunately it didn't quite 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.



Nebbiolo 2008, Il Chiosso (Piedmont/Italy) 16.99

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. Marco is an Oenologue and, with his Dad, takes care of their vines over in the Colle Novarese, including their Ghemme. Carlo (who has a day job as an engineer) and his Dad look after Il Chiosso's Gattinara vines, including their monopole Gattinara Cru vineyard "Galizja".

Il Chiosso means "home garden" or "Clos" and their labels are taken from a manuscript from 1500 AD depicting ancient astronomical phases.

OLIVE OIL

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

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

Our following tasting is slated for **Monday 21st March** here at The Winery – what a coincidence, another Monday!

Join us for our Monthly Tastings
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