

T H E
W I N E R Y

April Tasting 13.04.16

SPARKLING

Crémant de Bourgogne “Grand Lys” 2009, JN Gagnard (Burgundy/France) ORGANIC 22.99

Burgundy; spiritual home of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Chassagne-Montrachet; a tiny village at its epicentre.

We were first converted to Jean-Noël Gagnard’s Chassagne-Montrachets in the 1990s: the 1992s and 1994s remain etched in our memories. Almost two decades later, we met Caroline Lestimé (Jean-Noël’s daughter) who has been making the wine since 1989. One thing led to another and we are very proud to have her wines on our shelves. Like most growers in the hallowed triangle of Puligny-Montrachet, Chassagne-Montrachet and Meursault, Caroline mainly produces white wine and a small amount of red. More unusually, she also makes a small quantity of this sparkling Crémant using the Champagne Method - it’s a Blanc de Noirs, 100% Pinot Noir. She stopped using herbicides in the vineyards in 2000 and has been working with the soil guru Emmanuel Bourguignon (son of Lydia & Claude).

WHITE

Rendez-vous sous le Chêne Ventoux Blanc 2014, Grand Jacquet (Rhône/France) ORGANIC 13.99

The impressive and distinctive Mont Ventoux towers over the Ventoux region, as it does over the entire southern Rhône valley. Despite it’s steepness, the mountain is a magnet for cyclists - like moths to a flame.

Grand Jacquet has been on our radar for some years. Our colleague Ben’s family lives nearby and frequently picked up wine from them. The best-known restaurant in the area, Chez Serge in Carpentras, features their wines heavily. It was only a matter of time before we stopped circling and called-in.

Patricia and Joël Jacquet started their winery in 2000 and have been organic since 2002. They work with the Lunar Calendar. Their red “Rendez-vous sous le Chêne” (*rendezvous under the oak tree*) was the runaway success of last month’s tasting – tonight we are showing their white; a blend of 80% Grenache Blanc with 20% Roussanne.



Riesling trocken 2014, Fred Prinz (Rheingau/Germany) ORGANIC 13.99

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, 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 was so great he had to give up his day job and rent another cellar nearby, thereby freeing-up space in his garage for a Mid-Life Harley. This is his super-racy dry Riesling from 2014.

Escheburg Riesling trocken 2012, Immich-Batterieberg (Mosel/Germany) 22.99

From an entry-level Rheingau in a racy vintage we move to a single vineyard Mosel from a riper year. Immich-Batterieberg, in Enkirch on the Middle Mosel, is an estate with a long and colourful history.

The East Frankish King Ludwig IV (aka Louis the Child) had a throne room in the original building from 908 AD. He bequeathed the building to the Church (not such a surprise, perhaps, as he was a child and still under the control of the Archbishop of Mainz when he died in 911AD). In 1425 the estate passed into the hands of the Immich family, who held it until 1989. The intriguing Jugendstil/Belle Epoque style label with the two cherubs firing a cannon at the vineyard tells the story from 1841 of the incumbent Immich wanting to modify the exposition of his vineyard and tilt it more in favour of the sun. He achieved this by pounding the steep slope with cannons (some say it was dynamite) – the deafening sound ricocheted along the valley. The vineyard thus became known as Batterieberg (*Cannon Hill*).

Today the estate is run by the very talented Gernot Kollmann. Originally from the industrial Ruhr area (not known for wine), he has worked at Loosen, the Bischöfliche Weingüter in Trier, helped establish Van Volxem, consulted at Knebel and in Bulgaria before putting down roots at Immich-Batterieberg in 2009.

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RED

Beaujolais Vieilles Vignes 2012, Cédric Vincent (Beaujolais/France) 14.99

We have been working with Cédric Vincent for over a decade – pretty much from when he took over his grandfather’s vines. There have been some recent developments. He was working as an Oenologue in the Beaune area when we first met and has now knocked that on the head. The commute was too much and he now has more vines – almost 6 hectares now. He has built a new cellar and house overlooking the village of Pouilly le Monial, in the southern part of the Beaujolais, closer to Lyon than to Macon, a sub-region now becoming known as *Les Pierres Dorées* (the golden stones). Until recently he just made one wine, this delicious, very stylish Beaujolais-Villages made from 65 year-old vines and which he now labels as Beaujolais as he thinks that Beaujolais-Villages has a lesser reputation. Not sure that we agree. He has planted some Chardonnay on his chalkier soil and has been making some Beaujolais Blanc.

When we saw him last, in between mouthfuls of his mother’s Boeuf Bourguignon (a dish that stopped us in our tracks), he was dead excited to reveal that he has also bought a hectare of old vines in Moulin-à-Vent, one of the most highly-regarded Beaujolais Crus. “It was always a dream of mine to own some vines there.”

Vannières Mont Caume Rouge 2014, Chateau Vannières (Provence/France) 15.99

Bandol is a coastal town in Provence and one of France’s great red wines. It is the spiritual home of Mourvèdre, a grape that needs plenty of heat and sun to ripen.

We adore Chateau Vannières’ age-worthy Bandol. The current incumbent, Eric Boisseaux, has the air of a 1960s playboy about him – suave, jacket, scarf, smart jeans and smart shoes: very Côte d’Azur. We are delighted that our first shipment has arrived with Bandol in white, rosé and red (including a full spread of mature vintages of the “Grand Vin”, including the magnificent 1998) and his Mont Caume rosé and red. (*Mont Caume*? Great. Another new appellation that no-one has ever heard of).

Eric’s Mont Caume Rouge is a gently robust, gently fruity-herbal blend of mainly Mourvèdre with Grenache and Cinsault.

Taruguin 2013 (Castilla y Leon/Spain) ORGANIC 17.99

We are big fans of Nacho Leon and his impressive red wines from Bierzo; Demencia and Pyjama. He also makes Taruguin, from just outside Soria, at the east end of Ribera del Duero and not far from La Rioja.

Nacho was driving back to Bierzo from Barcelona and had taken some back roads through the villages near Soria. What’s the story Nacho? “I was really surprised to see some very old vines and decided to take a walk through them. It was marvellous and exciting because I knew this area lots of years ago. A close friend from my childhood has family there and I used to spend some weekends with him and his friends.

I was thinking about the wines that I tasted in Barcelona, and was looking for another profile of Ribera del Duero wine - more altitude, more fruity sensations, more acidity. Maybe vines like these could help us? I told my friend Julio and we began working on the idea of making a different type of wine from his parent’s land. We chose some vineyards in the area and, thanks to his family, were able to start work right away. We are not the owner of the vines but we do the vineyard work. 2010 was a terrible vintage, we had late frost and we decided not to make the wine. Hard for us!” But they gave it another go in 2011.

Although it could be labelled as Ribera del Duero, they decided to make it outside the Denominación de Origen (Spain’s classification system). “We are only a ‘Vino de Mesa’, the lowest classification in Spanish laws, but we believe that this is not important, the most important thing for us is the wine we have in the bottle.”

Taruguin is made from Tempranillo (known as Tinta del País locally) with a splash of Albillo, a white varietal. “We took the grapes in a van and brought them here (to Bierzo) where I can work easier. 9 months in French barrels and the result - a pretty wine that has sold out in 3 weeks!” We certainly are glad we could get some!

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

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

Our following tasting, featuring the legendary Nahe estate **Gut Hermannsberg**, will be here at The Winery on **Wednesday 18th May**.

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