

T H E
W I N E R Y

September Tasting 07.09.16

SPARKLING

Prosecco 'Saia Brut NV, Marsuret (Veneto/Italy)

12.99

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.

WHITE

Saint-Véran 2014, Thierry Drouin (Burgundy/France)

17.99

If you find yourself on the Autoroute des Anglais, the French motorway 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. They make Macon-Bussières, a spread of Pouilly-Fuissé bottlings and this excellent Saint-Véran. Oak is used very carefully and never dominates.



Königin Victoriaberg Riesling trocken 2015, Flick (Rheingau/Germany)

17.99

Victoriaberg is back! You can't miss Queen Victoria's favourite wine – it's the one with the flamboyant Victorian label - made by Reiner Flick, one of our favourite growers in the Rheingau.

We were almost as excited as Reiner when he phoned in 2010 to tell us that he had managed to rent the vines in a small vineyard in Hochheim called Königin Victoriaberg (Queen Victoria's hill). This was Queen Victoria's favourite wine and where the name "Hock" comes from (the British struggled to pronounce Hochheim and eventually referred to all Rhine wine as Hock). She was so taken with the wine that, on a visit to Germany in 1845, she asked to see the vineyard (which was known as Dechanten Ruhe – *Dean's Rest* at the time). She observed it from her carriage and, shortly after, the vineyard was named after her and a monument was built to commemorate the visit.

We adore this wine and adore the historic label. Reiner phoned us to ask our opinion on whether he should keep the original label. "Yes, definitely!" we replied. Emphatically.

Schieferboden Riesling trocken 2012, von Racknitz (Nahe/Germany)

18.99

It was a tip from top Mosel growers Clemens and Rita Busch that took us to von Racknitz. Formerly belonging to a historic cloister, the estate has a long history traceable back to Hildegard of Bingen (the Saint, Composer and Mystic) back in the 1100s. There have been ups and downs through the centuries to the point where the winery was on the brink of collapse in 2002. Enter Matthias Adams, former CFO of tech company Infineon Germany. Then in his late 30s he decided he wanted a career change, jacked-in his high-powered job and spent a year walking around the Black Forest. A friend at a large consultancy firm phoned him up and said, "A job has come in and it's too small for us. Can you take a look at this winery, see if there's anything you can salvage?" What no-one could have foreseen was that Matthias and Luise von Racknitz would fall in love and that together they would turn the estate's fortunes around. Although the love was not to last (the couple split up in 2014), the wines continue to develop beautifully – as this recently unearthed stash of Schieferboden 2012 illustrates.

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WHITE (*continued*)

Schieferboden is from slate vineyards; Odernheimer Kloster Disibodenberg (the vineyard on the ridge by their home) and three vineyards in nearby Niederhausern – Hermannshöhle, Kertz and Rosenheck.

We plan to visit Luise and her sons again soon, to taste recent releases and see if they have another barrel of that mad old Pinot Meunier in their cellar.

RED

Chianti 2014, Dreolino (Tuscany/Italy)

11.99

A few years ago, we stumbled across a delicious Chianti Rufina by Dreolino in the unassuming and excellent Trattoria Tre Soldi in Florence. The following morning we were driving north-east out of Florence to the pretty town of Rufina and knocking on Sabrina Tanini's door. (Tanini? Dreolino? Dreolino was her grandfather, Gino Tanini's nickname).

We were back in Tuscany in March and another visit was overdue. Her wines are no-nonsense and toothsome – breezy strawberries/raspberries and yet savoury, with weight and texture. It was a welcome relief after too much overhyped, overpriced Chianti Classico. We agonised long and hard over whether or not to buy it in the old straw-covered flasks, finally opting for the newer label and bottles. Feel free to lobby us for the flasks for next time. After all, you may need new candle-holders for your 1960s retro interior, right?

Spätburgunder "Walters" 2013, Josef Walter (Franken/Germany)

17.99

Spätburgunder = Pinot Noir.

There was a sense of inevitability about us starting with Christophe Walter of Bürgstadt. We had spotted a photo on Anne Kriebel's twitter feed almost simultaneously with an overnight in Michels Stern restaurant in Marktbreit in Franken. The enthusiastic and very helpful Stefan Michel guided us to one of Walter's bottles. Verdict? Elegant, refined and a different style from other parts of Germany. It turns out that he's a cousin of Paul Fürst, the giant name of the area who also has vineyard holdings in the Bürgstadter Centgrafenberg vineyard.

When we were in Germany a month ago, we made the diversion again due east of Frankfurt to taste and pick up more of Christophe's wines – including some more of the outstanding 2004 Spätburgunder.



Mamertino di Milazzo 2012, Mimmo Paone (Sicily/Italy)

17.99

For the past seven years the periodic return of Funnari, a Nero d'Avola from Sicily, is always eagerly awaited and barely touches the shelves before selling out. In the meantime we thought we might show the next one up the ladder in Mimmo's range before this too runs out.

Mimmo Paone is a Sicilian with the firmest, most bone-crunching handshake we have ever experienced. Once our hands had recovered, we were blown away by his dark, brambly Nero d'Avolas and his rarer Mamertino di Milazzo red, a blend of Nero d'Avola with Nocera from Messina - the top right corner of Sicily, where he lives and works.

OLIVE OIL

L'Arbaude Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Mas de Cadenet (Provence/France)

500ml - 22.99

The Négrel family of Mas de Cadenet make peppery Extra Virgin Olive Oil overlooked by the Mont Sainte-Victoire.

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

Our following tasting here at The Winery is scheduled for **Monday 17th October**.

Fred Prinz's daughter Anna will be with us here at the shop on **Saturday 10th September** during the afternoon. We'll have three of the Prinz dry Rieslings open, so feel free to call in to taste.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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