

T H E
W I N E R Y

August Tasting 14.08.17

SPARKLING

Cruasé Metodo Classico Rosato NV, Cantina di Casteggio (Lombardy/Italy) 13.99

The little known region of Oltrepó Pavese is a bump on the plain 60kms south of Milan. There is one major player in town. It's fair to say Cantina di Casteggio is bigger than any other winery we work with – much bigger. A Co-op with 350 members and a massive facility, part run-down *fascista*-style, part Space Age. 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. The combined group now has 900 members spread across 28 villages, 90% of them in the hills. Quality has gone from strength to strength. Try as we might, we just can't resist the wines. The Cantina is very switched-on and started a “quality project” with their best 50 growers, bringing in high-profile consultant Riccardo Cotarella. 100% Pinot Noir, Cruasé is a true *Methodo Champenoise*, fermented and aged for 18 months in bottle.

WHITE

Riesling trocken 2016, Melsheimer (Mosel/Germany) BIODYNAMIC 16.99

“I'm the only one stupid enough to work the steepest part of the Reiler Mullay-Hofberg vineyard” says Thorsten Melsheimer, the perfect picture of a Saxon in rude health. “It's not as if the vines are actually facing in an ideal direction either. It forces you to work hard. It helps to be biodynamic. You have to slash the yield and pick insanely late. I bought some vines in a perfect south facing vineyard on the other side of the river and the wines are not as interesting - the vines are just lazy!” Thorsten is certainly not lazy - he has been nursing old vines back to life, rebuilding walls in the remotest, steepest, least accessible parts of the Mullay-Hofberg vineyard. “When I get really hot working in the vines, I jump into the Mosel for a quick swim to cool off.”

Certified organic in 1997, since 2013 Thorsten now also has the Demeter biodynamic certification. Thorsten sees this dry Riesling as his calling card – it's a blend from his vineyards other than the Mullay-Hofberg; Reiler Goldlay, Reiler Falklay, Burger Hahnenschrittchen and Pündericher Marienburg. Bright, herbal, racy, packed with slatey minerals. Incredible complexity with such lightness – 10.5%!



Riesling Kabinett trocken 2016, Asbach-Kretschmar (Rheingau/Germany) ORGANIC 13.99

Full name: Winkeler Hasensprung Riesling Kabinett trocken 2016

Rüdesheim is on the western edge of the south-facing Rheingau, where the Rhine then makes a sharp turn north. There's a statue of Germania (not unlike Britannia) at the top of the hill and the car ferry from Bingen below. A cable car crosses the vines. We had long been searching for a great Rüdesheim Riesling and it was a BIO-vintner on another river, Rudi Trossen from the Mosel, who pointed us towards Peter and Tania Kreuzberger of Asbach-Kretschmar.

Organic for over two decades, Peter and Tania apply such attention and loving care to their small parcels of vines - whenever we call they seem to be working in the vineyards. They have parcels in Hallgarten, Rüdesheim and Winkel - source of this dry Kabinett. (Hasensprung – *Hare's Leap*)

Peter and Tania's Rieslings are benchmark Rheingau; opulent, oily, with an almost unctuous Baroque perfume emerging as the wine warms up.

ROSE

Spätburgunder Rosé 2016, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) 14.99

Reiner Flick is well-known at The Winery as the grower who makes Victoriaberg, Queen Victoria's favourite wine – the one with the flamboyant Victorian label. Yes, his latest Victoriaberg is in – hurray!

Reiner does make some other wines and for the past five summers his Rosé has been a pink smash here at The Winery. It is made from the free-run juice of his Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir). The judges of this year's UK Top 50 German Wines were also impressed – it was the only winning Rosé.

“Perky, bright strawberries. Clean, lively and very drinkable wine with lots of lovely fruit.”

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RED

Schieferboden Spätburgunder 2015, Nelles (Ahr/Germany) 16.99

Smoky, velvety, Pinot Noir from Germany (*btw Spätburgunder = Pinot Noir*). The tiny Ahr valley near Bonn is one of the northernmost winemaking regions of Europe. Romans planted vines here. Locals say the sheltered valley has an almost Mediterranean micro-climate. We wouldn't go quite that far, but there is little doubt that some of Germany's finest Pinot Noir comes from here. Philip and his father Thomas name their top wine "B52" and ferment their wines in the traditional, huge, old oak Fuders. Founded in 1479, the Nelles family has been making wine for generations and own some of the best vineyard sites for red wine in Germany. Schieferboden (*Slate Soil*) is a recent addition to their range, a pre-selection from Ruber, the next one up their ladder of quality.

Moulin-à-Vent 2013, Laurent Gauthier (Beaujolais/France) 16.99

When we first stumbled upon wild-eyed Laurent Gauthier well over a decade ago, he seemed a man of few words. It could just have been that he didn't understand our mangled French. Laurent makes an excellent Moulin-à-Vent called Cuvée Étalon, 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 fuller bodied of all the Crus, and is one of the wines of the Beaujolais that ages 30 years with ease.

Despite having bought annually since our first visit in around 2004, there was a 10 year hiatus before we visited again. Since then we have been dropping by his mini-fortress style winery on the road between Fleurie and Chénas much more frequently. 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!"

Cabernet Franc 2012, Alessandro Vicentini Orgnani (Friuli/Italy) 17.99

From the Friuli-Grave, in the foothills of the Alps in the top right hand corner of Italy.

A massive earthquake in 1976 reduced the Orgnani home to rubble - the family moved their home into the winery and the winery into the barn. Alessandro came back from architecture college in nearby Venice, took over from his father, overhauled and modernised everything, and decided to bottle the entire output himself.

When we visited him again in May, we found that the style has changed since we last visited. What happened? "Quite a lot. My wife and I split up, I have a new girlfriend called Raffaella, I ditched my Oenologues and made the wine myself". In our opinion, ditching the consultants was a very good move. The wines are bolder and more textured. Bravo!

To all intents and purposes, he has been organic for several years (and using very low levels of SO₂) but is currently, finally, going through the certification process.

Friuli is certainly best known as one of Italy's top white wine regions and we adore Alessandro's confident new Friulano, Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc.

For red, locally, the Friulians rate their Merlot. Perversely perhaps, we found ourselves drawn to Alessandro Vicentini Orgnani's herbal, gently stern, Cab Franc.



OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Il Mercante di Delizie 500ml - 13.99

Milly and Carlo Paladin's latest Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Peppery, liquid gold.

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

Our following tasting will be here at The Winery on **Tuesday 26th September**.

Just arrived – Reiner **Flick**'s Victoriaberg, Christine **Huff**'s Top 50-winning Rabenturm 2015, Biodynamic dry Rieslings from Peter-Jakob **Kühn**, **Melsheimer** (including his Vade Retro Natural wine) and **Busch** (including their secret Orange wine). Spätburgunder by **Nelles** (Ahr) and **Christophe Walter** (Franken), including 2007 and more of the 2004.

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