

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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## January Tasting 29.01.18

Welcome to our first tasting of the New Year. The big news is that our longest-serving colleague, Ben, is moving with his girlfriend to Australia next month. Ben has done brilliant work at The Winery for over seven years. We will all miss him and we wish him and Lucie every success in their exciting future.

Tonight we welcome Serena Costa to our team. Serena comes from the heart of Valpolicella/Amarone country near Verona, northern Italy.

### SPARKLING WHITE

**Cuvée Vaux Sekt Brut 2014, Schloss Vaux (Rheingau/Germany) 19.99**

Schloss Vaux originally started in Berlin in 1868 and in the 1880s had the opportunity to buy a winery in Metz in Lorraine, eastern France, which became Chateau Vaux. Fifty years later it was time to move from Metz to Eltville in the Rheingau, where, at first, they focused on making Sekt from top Rheingau sites. From the beginning it was based on the French Champagne House model and, at the time, had no vines of their own.

Cuvée Vaux is their calling card and a Winery staple. It's a blend of Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) with a splash of Riesling and spends 24-28 months on its lees to add complexity and texture. According to a recent UK Top 50 German Wines panel - "Malty aromas of brioche and spice. Creamy citrus mousse and good length on the finish."

### WHITE

**Riesling trocken 2016, Huff (Rheinhessen/Germany) 15.99**

We have two dry Rieslings from our recent German van-full, both 2016s and both from trendy Rheinhessen. The first is by Christine Huff from Nierstein, a town overlooking the Rhine on the strip between Mainz and Worms, and which historically has always been considered to be at the peak of the hierarchy of Rheinhessen's vineyards.

We came across Christine's bright, minerally, dry Rieslings shortly after she finished at Geisenheim, the top German wine university. She has had a busy decade; increasingly taking control of the winery; meeting and marrying Kiwi Jeremy Bird (who came to help with the 2009 harvest and never left); having two babies; working tirelessly in the vines and cellar to create wonderful, finely-judged dry Rieslings from the red slate and sandstone cliffs (*der Roter Hang*: red from iron oxide, which can often infuse Riesling with some marked spicy and tropical notes). Christine came to The Winery last summer with her Kiwi husband Jeremy to do a Flash Tasting where we sold out of several of her aged single vineyard dry Rieslings.



**Riesling trocken 2016, Bischel (Rheinhessen/Germany) 15.99**

The Runkel brothers, Christian and Mathias, who are almost as young as Christine Huff, took over Bischel, their Mum's winery, ten years ago and turned the place upside down, focusing entirely on quality. No expense is spared and everything is done by hand. Wild yeasts and long lees contact give their wines added texture. It's a challenging conversation to have with your parents, says Christian: "We are going to slash the yields but we're not going to be able to charge much more for the finished wine." You don't need an accountant to tell you how counter-instinctive that is. They have been making explosive dry Rieslings ever since, turning heads in Germany and here at The Winery, where they have become fixtures on our shelves for the past half-decade.

Although the richness and minerality would seem to contradict the lab stats, the wines are dry.

**Viognier 2016, Aurélien Chatagnier (Rhône/France) 23.99**

We often get asked for Viognier. Finding one that isn't heavy or flabby is tricky. Viognier's spiritual home is Condrieu, south of Lyon, in the northern Rhône valley. We often stop in Ampuis, the small town below the Côte-Rôtie, not far from Condrieu. There are a couple of useful wine shops and wine bars where we can poke around to see what's new. This is where we came across Aurélien Chatagnier's wines.

Aurélien says he was "bad at school". When he was 16, his mother said he should probably knock it on the head and get a job. He went to work for Jamet and then for François Villard. He loved it – and especially enjoyed working in the vines. In 2002, after a gentle, encouraging nudge from Villard, he set up on his own, starting with just a single hectare. He now has 7.5 hectares and is making wonderful, expressive northern Rhone wines. He still doesn't make much and it has taken over two years to claw some bottles from his grip - not helped by the fact that last March thieves broke into his remote winery and made off with most of his 2015s, including cases earmarked for us. Apparently this is a frequent occurrence in the region. The good news is that our first hit of Aurélien's pure, modern Viogniers and Syrahs made it out of "Dodge" to The Winery intact.

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## RED

### Chateau de Callac Graves 2002 (Bordeaux/France)

16.99

We have increased our Bordeaux range over the past decade but getting it to settle is difficult: the faster we bring it in, the faster it sells. We always try to scoop up older, favoured vintages of Chateaux that we like and saw that Chateau de Callac in Graves had some 2002. Yes, please!

The Graves appellation tracks the left bank of the river Gironde, southwest of the city of Bordeaux. It is the birthplace of *Claret* in the Middle Ages. Named after its gravelly soil, Graves benefitted from good natural drainage and predated the drainage of the Médoc by the Dutch in the mid 1600s. Chateau de Callac dates back to 1773 and is very close to the sweet wine appellations of Barsac and Sauternes.

A blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc, the 2002 has entered its mature phase.

### Côtes de Bergerac Rouge 2014, Chateau de la Malleville (Bergerac/Southwest France)

14.99

While it is often a battle to calm Thierry Bernardinis' oversize and very vocal Alsatian guard dog, the tasting that follows is always a joy. Each wine in the line-up (Montravel, Bergerac in white and three reds at different levels) is packed with character, thoroughly enjoyable and punching well above its weight. With the entry-level Bergerac Rouge all but sold-out (thanks in part to our colleague Thomas' particular enthusiasm for it), the time is right for us to show the next one up the quality ladder– the Côtes de Bergerac Rouge.

It may in essence be a variation on a Bordeaux blend (90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc) but, despite the proximity to its famous neighbour, it is quite different. Proper red wine with a hint of lead pencil in the nose, wonderfully balanced between salty savouriness, intense saturated fruit, thanks to the older vines (over 40 years old), plus a hint of new oak.

### Fara 2012, Il Chiosso (Piedmont/Italy)

22.99

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. 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". Marco is an Oenologue and, with his Dad, takes care of their vines over in the Colle Novarese, including their Ghemme and this Fara, which is a blend of 70% Nebbiolo, 15% Vespolina (which is genetically related to Nebbiolo) and 15% Uva Rara (also known as Bonarda Novarese).

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, Heredad Pangua Sodupe (Rioja/Spain)

500ml - 12.99

Roberto Pangua makes Rioja in red and white and recently started bottling his own olive oil.

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

Our **next tasting** at The Winery will be on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February**, when we will be joined by **Marc Adeneuer** and his silky, autumnal Spätburgunders from the Ahr valley near Bonn. Marc loved meeting everyone at last January's tasting and we all enjoyed his delicious Pinot Noirs (particularly the magnum of 2009 that everyone wanted to buy but couldn't, as it was a rare bottle from his dwindling private collection).

**Music Diary Dates** - the excellent Berkeley Ensemble, who run the annual Little Venice Music Festival, are holding a series of one hour concerts on the last Tuesday of each month at St Saviour's. The first is tomorrow, Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January, at 18.30h/6.30pm.

**Just arrived** – the finest Burgundy from Caroline Lestimé of Jean-Noël Gagnard, Chassagne-Montrachet.

**Coming soon** – Amyot Champagne, Gerrit Walter's dry Mosel Riesling and Spätburgunder, Schola Sarmenti's deep and powerful reds from Puglia, the heel of Italy. Also from Italy, but from the northwest – Barolo, Barbera and Dolcetto by Pugnane, Osvaldo Viberti and Cavallotto.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**

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