

T H E
W I N E R Y

Winery Classics *Fulham* 09.12.21

To celebrate 25 years of The Winery in Maida Vale and our 1st anniversary in Fulham we are tasting some Winery Classics. There are so many contenders but here is a selection of seven - and we haven't even touched Italy yet!

SPARKLING

Champagne Carte Or Brut NV, Amyot (Champagne/France)

22.99

Champagne is vast. The northern sections fan out from Epernay; north across the chalky Montagne de Reims towards the city of Reims, west along the Marne Valley towards Paris, then due southwards, the Chardonnay slopes called the Côte des Blancs. Way further south there is Montgueux, just to the west of Troyes. Finally, in the bottom right hand corner, there is the Aube, also known as the Côtes des Bars. Here, off the beaten track, the tiny village of Loches-sur-Ource is the very rural home of Champagne Amyot. They speak an impenetrable local dialect: it took us the best part of a decade to understand what we were saying to each other. Their entry-level champagne, a Blanc de Noirs (100% Pinot Noir, grown on sandy soil), is always powerful, big and biscuity and has been the biggest selling item in The Winery for the past two decades.

WHITE

Mâcon-Bussières 'Le Vieux Puits' 2020, Thierry Drouin (Burgundy/France)

15.99

Delicious Chardonnay from south Burgundy. If you find yourself on the autoroute driving south towards Lyon and you look right as you pass Mâcon, 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.

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 vineyards of Pouilly-Fuissé. Slap bang in the middle of the bowl with a view of both rocks is the Drouin family's home and winery. Thierry Drouin and his son Charles split the workload.

'Le Vieux Puits' means 'the old well'. No sign of the well nowadays. This is very classy Mâcon with body, texture and freshness.



Riesling trocken 2020, Walter (Mosel/Germany)

10.99

Gerrit Walter's excellent dry Mosel Riesling has been a fixture on The Winery shelves for a decade. For many, it has been their introduction to the magic of dry Riesling. Benchmark, crisp, racy Mosel Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from perilously steep, slate vineyards overlooking the river in the village of Briedel between Pünderich and Zell.

Gerrit was an intern with us in the summer of 2009 and went back home to help with the harvest before heading back to Geisenheim, the top wine university in Germany. Gerrit was clearly doing his homework at university and at his various internships; one sip and it's easy to understand why his parents were happy to give him free rein in the family cellar.

Riesling is a helter-skelter ride in your mouth. The play of ripeness with the exhilarating lift of fresh acidity is something that can't be found in other wines. It's the definition of minerality (the sense of the geology the vines are grown on expressing itself in the finished wine – stony, slatey, almost salty).

Victoriaberg Riesling trocken 2020, Flick (Rheingau/Germany)

19.99

Reiner Flick and his family live in a renovated 13th-century mill in the village of Wicker. It is part of the east end of the Rheingau next to Hochheim where the River Main meets the Rhine and from whose slopes you can watch the planes on final approach to Frankfurt airport. Wine has been in the Flick family since 1775.

Reiner phoned us in 2010 to excitedly tell us that he had managed to rent a small vineyard in Hochheim called Königin Victoriaberg (Queen Victoria's hill). This was where Queen Victoria's favourite wine was made. She was so taken with the wine that she asked to see the vineyard on a visit to Germany in 1845. 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. And the wine? Elegant, persuasive and reeking (in a good way) of history and breeding.

RED

Gau-Odernheimer Spätburgunder 2018, Becker-Landgraf (Rheinhessen/Germany) 13.99

Spätburgunder is German for Pinot Noir. All the smoky flavours of autumn. Silky.

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 spacious new cellar (with plenty of headroom) has been built and was finished just days before the 2015 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.

Rioja Crianza 2016, Longrande (Rioja/Spain) 13.99

Two decades have passed since we came across Isabel Fernandez's Longrande in the brilliant Casa Toni restaurant in San Vicente de la Sonsierra in Rioja Alta. We had tasted so much mainstream Rioja and her Crianza was a breath of fresh air – a revelation. We had to beg to see her, largely to overcome her fear of export. Fortunately, we were able to convince her to sell to us and her wines have been a fixture on our shelves ever since.

Isabel is as full of personality as her wines. She has been making the wine in her small family Bodega in Abalos for three decades. She goes to great lengths to keep the whole process as natural as possible; treading the whole bunches by foot, using gravity to avoid pumping, never filtering. She determines the bottling date biodynamically, according to the cycles of the moon.

Her wines are fascinating - often boldly perfumed, with a beautiful purity of fruit and surprising body and structure.

La Petite Ourse 2018, Pascal Chalon (Rhône/France) BIODYNAMIC 17.99

The final red in tonight's line-up is a Winery classic from the southern Rhône, not far from Châteauneuf-du-Pape. We discovered Pascal Chalon in 2007 when he was making his wines in his Granny's garage and we had to clamber over apples and a dusty old Renault to get to his five barrels. As soon as we had tasted his entire range of two wines, 'La Petite Ourse' and 'La Grande Ourse', we were quick to back the van up and load the last cases he had.

He has his own, slightly larger winery now and his range now includes Ursa Major and a couple of whites. La Petite Ourse is a rich blend of 60% Syrah and 40% Grenache from vines caressed (some might say ravaged) by the Mistral wind. We love its deep richness and herbal flavours, evocative of the lavender and thyme-laden local landscape. The wines are always pure, biodynamic Rhône heaven. Fragrant and gutsy.

Strictly-speaking La Petite Ourse has been renamed La Grande Ourse Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages. Next year it might be called Grande Ourse Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages Visan. Why? Good question.



LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS – today is a Flower Day.

Thinking of **gifts for wine-lovers**? You can order our **Winery Classics 6-pack for £95** (£107 delivered anywhere in England, Scotland or Wales). The 6-pack features the wines in tonight's line-up excluding Victoriaberg. If you'd like to switch the Victoriaberg with another wine, no problem – there may be a slight adjustment to the price.

Our latest, freshest **Emergency Riesling 6-pack is £87** (£99 delivered anywhere in England, Scotland or Wales). The current selection features Gerrit Walter, Michael Scholtes and Wegeler from the Mosel, Becker-Landgraf from Rheinhessen and Prinz and Flick from the Rheingau

When is our next tasting? We'll let you know as soon as we have some dates inked-in.

Arrived – Wines are arriving thick and fast. Our van has been to-ing and fro-ing from here to Bordeaux, Champagne, the Mosel, the Rheingau and even northern Italy. Our transporters have also been pulling their weight with shipmens from Burgundy, Bordeaux, Champagne, Rheinhessen, Rheingau and Mosel.

Arriving - More Italians from Tuscany & Veneto (tomorrow, hopefully), Lombardy & Piedmont next week (a new Gavi discovery – can't wait!). Burgundy, Rhône. California – unicorn wines?

Join us for our Monthly Tastings
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