

T H E
W I N E R Y

December Tasting *Maida Vale* 02.12.21

The trees are up and the lights are on in Clifton Road – thanks to our lovely local Westminster councillors; Melvyn Caplan, Lorraine Dean and Matthew Green. Shelves are swelling in our street and this month's wine tasting is timed to synchronise with canapés at Raouls and a rumour of pigs in blankets at Provenance.

SPARKLING

Champagne Tradition Brut NV, André Fays (Champagne/France) 29.99

In the depths of lockdown in March, hotels that were open in France were few and far between. Particularly any that had a good kitchen and wine-list. We did however find three between Calais and Beaune. One of the most useful was (and still is) the Val Moret, conveniently close to the autoroute just east of Troyes. It may look like a motel in the midwest of the US, complete with a fluorescent sign visible from the motorway but the rooms are good and they have a wine-list which draws heavily on champagne growers from the southern part of the region – the Côte des Bars.

We were drawn to a Solera Champagne. Solera? Champagne? Solera? Yes, you draw enough out of the tank to bottle and fill up with the latest vintage. The tank has every vintage from 2013-2021.

It was inevitable that we would then go to Celles-sur Ource to meet Marie Fays, current owner and granddaughter of André. What we weren't expecting was the high quality and sheer deliciousness of her other champagnes. Tradition, Réserve, Prestige, Rosé and Étincelles (a local peculiarity, being 100% Pinot Blanc). Boom. In the van and on our shelves. Twice.



WHITE

Château Larmevaille 2019 (Bordeaux/France) 10.99

Why Entre-Deux-Mers? There is a triangle of lush, rolling, green countryside carpeted with vines, between the city of Bordeaux on the Garonne and the town of Libourne on the Dordogne – *Entre-Deux-Mers* - between two seas. Poetic licence - they are big rivers, not quite seas.

This zingy white, which we get from the Rivière brothers, is made mainly from Sauvignon Blanc, with a splash of Sémillon and Muscadelle. It's all about melon, lime and fresh cut grass.

Blauschiefer Riesling trocken 2019, Bastgen (Mosel/Germany) ORGANIC 17.99

Imagine a big loop in a beautiful river, so loopy that the next loop round almost meets the previous one in the middle. Now imagine a saddle-like hill brow at the top and that you built a beautiful house of wood and lots of glass right there. That's where Armin Vogel and his wife Mona Bastgen live. They used Mona's surname for the winery, partly because their family was known in the village of Monzel – as butcher, baker and candlestick maker. But mainly because Armin didn't want their wine to be called "Bird", which is what his name means. They make taut, lean, dry Riesling from the steep slate slopes of Kesten and Brauneberg here on the middle Mosel. Blauschiefer means "Blue Slate". Nervy, smoky, slaty minerality with notes of white flowers and pears.

Nonnberg Riesling trocken 2020, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) ORGANIC/VEGAN 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 is well-known at The Winery as the maker of Victoriaberg, Queen Victoria's favourite wine. He also has other vineyards around Wicker and Hochheim.

The entire Wickerer Nonnberg belongs to Reiner. Nonnberg (*Nun's hill*) is on the hill at the edge of the village and overlooks his home and winery. There's a sandstone statue of a nun in one corner, the original Abbess of the monastery which owned the vineyard in the late 1200s. Reiner has worked hard with the chalky, clay soil and has introduced mixed flowers, grasses and herbs between the rows of vines. His Nonnberg always produces impressive Riesling with explosive minerals, depth and concentration.

RED

Château de Lavagnac 2010 Bordeaux Supérieur (Bordeaux/France) 14.99

Philippe Rivière, with his brother Jean-Pierre, co-owns the Clos des Menuts, one of our favourite Saint-Émilion. They also individually own châteaux in Saint-Émilion's satellite appellations. Jean-Pierre has Château Picampeau and Philippe owns Château de Lavagnac, a 15th-century fort, down the hill from the picturesque town of Saint-Émilion, so close to the Saint-Émilion line that it's still north of the Dordogne but just inside the Bordeaux Supérieur zone. Lavagnac, from the great 2010 vintage, is a classic Right Bank Bordeaux blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, punching well above its modest Bordeaux Supérieur status.

Carmignano 2017, Terre a Mano (Tuscany/Italy) BIODYNAMIC 32.99

A former colleague, Dan Towler, first told us about Terre a Mano a decade ago after doing a harvest in the region. One thing led to another and we have been bringing in Rossella Bencini's fabulous Carmignano ever since. When we visited Rossella and her winemaker Marco Vannucci, we lobbied her heavily to let us buy some of her mad dry white wine Sassocarlo, her sweet Vin Santo, some olive oil and as much of this fabulous, fleshy Carmignano as possible.

Rossella inherited the beautiful estate high up in the hills and woods above Prato, 40 kms west of Florence, from her grandfather. The farm previously formed part of a much larger estate belonging to the Medici family which was used for hunting parties.

Although Carmignano was recognised as one of the first *Super-Tuscans* in 1975, the locals argue that its DOC (*Denominazione d'Origine Controllata* or *Appellation*) actually dates back 300 years to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III de' Medici who proclaimed that Carmignano, Chianti, Pomino and Valdarno were superior quality and granted them legal protections.

Carmignano is allowed to blend a percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon into their Sangiovese. Rossella is keen to point out that Cabernet was not new to the area – Catherine de Medici married into French royalty and the grape was brought to the area and known locally as Uva Francesca.

Biodynamic since 2001, Rossella's blend is 75% Sangiovese with a 15% splash of sunshine-soaked Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Canaiolo (which, along with Sangiovese, is one of the grapes used for Chianti). Supple, high-class, high-toned, juice-saturated Tuscan red.



Viñahonda Crianza 2017, Silvano Garcia (Jumilla/Spain) 15.99

Intense, dense, powerful Monastrell by Silvano Garcia from Jumilla, deep in the scorched landscape between Valencia and Murcia in southeast Spain. Monastrell is Spanish for Mourvèdre, which is known as the main grape of Bandol in Provence. With all the southern sunshine comes even more ripeness and even more alcohol. Silvano has somehow managed to attenuate the power slightly, so hopefully we will all still be standing after a thimbleful.

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

Our following tasting at The Winery Fulham, 797 Fulham Road, SW6 5HD is slated for Thursday 9th December.

Arrived – A vanload from Piedmont; lots of Barolo by Pugnane, Osvaldo Viberti, Alessandria - and some Dolcetto, Barbera, Nebbiolo, Chardonnay & Nascetta. From Nicolas & Aurélie Cheveau; Mâcon, Saint-Véran, Pouilly-Fuissé, Beaujolais in white & red. Burgundy in red and white; Denis Père, Pertuzot. Germany; Mosel Rieslings from Martin Müllen, Clemens Busch & Gerrit Walter. JB Becker, Flick & Zum Krug from the Rheingau. Lots of Bordeaux. Château La Galiane & Château Charmant, Château Calon in multiple vintages (2006/2007/2010), Corbin-Michotte, Lavagnac, Larmecville, Picampeau, Haut-Piquat, Callac, Martinet, Tour Canon, Fleur Poitou.

Arriving - More Italians from Tuscany, Lombardy, Piedmont & Veneto. Burgundy, Bordeaux, Germany (mainly Mosel coming in next week's vanload). California – unicorn wines?

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

thewineryuk.com

mailinglist@thewineryuk.com

info@thewineryuk.com