

T H E
W I N E R Y

September Tasting *Maida Vale* 17.09.24
featuring Francesca Tanini, Dreolino

sparkling

Champagne Blanc de Blancs Brut, Amyot (Champagne/France)

35.99

Champagne is vast. The northern sections fan out from Épernay; 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. Continue south and you find the Aube, also known as the Côte des Bar. Here, off the beaten track, the tiny village of Loches-sur-Ource is the very rural home of Champagne Amyot. They speak a local dialect: it took us the best part of a decade to understand what we were saying to each other. Their entry-level champagne Carte Or (gold label) has been our biggest selling item in The Winery for over 25 years. Our latest, massive, four pallet order arrived late last week so we are celebrating with their fresh, lively, mouth-filling Blanc de Blancs, 100% Chardonnay.

white

Château de France Blanc 2022 (Bordeaux/France)

39.99

Pessac-Léognan starts where the southern edge of Bordeaux city ends. It's the fancy part of Graves, and where, unusually, its whites get equal billing with its reds. Château Haut-Brion and Carbonnieux are here. For the past dozen or so years we have visited Arnaud Thomassin at Château de France. Arnaud's father bought the Chateau in 1971. The family were farmers 50kms northwest of Paris, growing corn, potatoes, pick-your-own strawberries and sugar beet. Why 'de France'? This land in front of the Chateau has been known as 'France' for a few centuries. 19 million years ago it was a tropical beach and the earth is thick with perfectly preserved fossilised shellfish.

This very stylish white is made from Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon in proportions varying from vintage to vintage. The Sauvignon Blanc comes from three different plots: sandy, gravel and clay respectively. Even in hot vintages the clay keeps the wine fresh. The wine is never allowed to go through malolactic fermentation. Classy. Never overtly grassy. A touch of salinity.

Riesling 'sur lie' 2008, Querbach (Rheingau/Germany)

20.99

How does Riesling age? Effortlessly. Some say that the acidity of Riesling gives it longevity. We often drink old Rieslings at Zum Krug (our favourite Hotel and Restaurant in the Rheingau). We have drunk amply from the 1970s, less frequently 1959, 1949 and, most recently, a 1917. All alive. Maybe it is the acidity.

Back by popular demand and scooped up on our trip in August, we have another batch of Peter Querbach's 2008. Peter was a long-time member of the VDP (the Premier League of German growers). He eventually found the rules too restrictive and handed his membership back: a big step – like a chef handing back Michelin stars. So, the Rheingau 'Bad Boy' is now free to do what he pleases. Peter likes to age his Rieslings (and his Pinot Noirs btw) and that pleases us.

Victoriaberg Riesling trocken 2023, Flick (Rheingau/Germany) ORGANIC (magnums 54.99) 24.99

Not far from Frankfurt, the Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rudesheim. The south-facing slope on the north bank between the two is the Rheingau, thick with castles, convents and vineyards. Evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim - the home of Queen Victoria's 'Hock', back when German wines were the most expensive in the world.

We were really excited that from 2010 Reiner Flick, our favourite wine grower in the area and whose family has been making wine since 1775, procured a small vineyard in Hochheim called Königin Victoriaberg (Queen Victoria's hill). This was Queen Victoria's favourite wine. 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. Reiner's latest dry Victoriaberg is an impressive, powerful, dry Riesling, exploding with layers of minerals and freshness, texture and depth.



red

Chianti 2023, Dreolino (Tuscany/Italy)

13.99

We are delighted to be joined today by Sabrina's daughter Francesca, who is currently working remotely from Fulham.

Chianti is a broad subject, more complex than many imagine. From edgy pizza wine to the heights of some Chianti Classico. Even at the highest level, the wines can be bracing and hard work: always better with food. One night at Trattoria Tre Soldi in Florence, well over a decade ago, we stumbled across a Chianti Rufina Riserva by Dreolino. Neither harsh nor edgy, no-nonsense, mouth-filling Sangiovese with a splash of Colorino - breezy strawberries/raspberries on the palate and yet savoury, with weight and texture: a welcome relief after too much overhyped, overpriced Chianti Classico. The morning following our night in Tre Soldi, we found ourselves driving 25kms north-east out of Florence to the pretty town of Rufina and knocking on Sabrina Tanini's door. Sabrina Tanini and her family make Chianti, Chianti Rufina and Rufina Riserva. The wines were super. We were drawn to the white-label Chianti, the blue label Chianti Rufina and the red-label Chianti Rufina Riserva. Having agonised long and hard over whether or not to buy the Chianti 'Normale' in the old school straw-covered flasks, we opted for the newer label and bottles. Since then, some wicker flasks have crept onto our orders. After all, you may need new candle-holders for your 1960s retro interior, right?

BTW while we are talking about them: **Chianti Fiasco 750ml 16.99 – 500ml 12.99**

The white label Chianti is 85% Sangiovese with 15% Merlot. Solid, bright and chunky.

Chianti Rufina 2022, Dreolino (Tuscany/Italy) ORGANIC

16.99

The family name is Tanini. Why is the winery called Dreolino? Dreolino was Sabrina's grandfather, Gino Tanini's nickname. Gino's father was Andrea and *Drea* is the diminutive form, The locals started calling him Dreolino, *little Drea*. Gino started the winery in 1939. Gino's son, Raffaello, joined in 1967 and made big changes: he bought the vineyards outright and built a modern winery, still in use today.

Organic since 2021, the Rufina is classic Sangiovese (strictly speaking 90% Sangiovese and 10% Colorino), slightly terracotta in colour, with good intensity, silky and well-made.



Chianti Rufina Riserva 2020, Dreolino (Tuscany/Italy)

25.99

Rufina is one of Chianti's seven subzones, the furthest inland and the highest altitude, sitting in the foothills of the Apennine mountains. The Dreolino vineyards are up at 400-450m in the hills above the town. Part farm, part estate, the vines are protected by woods on three sides. There's a mediaeval villa and a chapel built by Olivetan monks in the late 1700s. The geology is limestone with clay. Clay retains moisture, so the vines are rarely stressed by lack of water.

Two years in French barrels (used barrels, to avoid oak notes dominating). Intense in the nose, silky entry, round, savoury, long and with lifting freshness.

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

Our **following tasting** will be at **The Winery Fulham on Wednesday 23rd October**, when we will be joined by **Nacho León** from Bierzo on the Pilgrims' Trail in northern Spain. Nacho makes Demencia, Pyjama and Taruguin.

Arriving today – legendary rich red wines by **Cosimo Taurino** from **Puglia**, the heel of Italy. **Arriving in the next few days** – **Sancerre** by **Didier Raimbault**.

Coming soon – from the **Oltrepò Pavese** south of Milan, **Cantina di Casteggio** and impressive sparkling wines by **La Versa**.

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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