

Seasonal Wine Tasting: 17 June 2024

WHITE WINES

Manni Nössing, Kerner, Südtirol Eisacktaler/Alto Adige Valle Isarco, 2021 - £44

The Kerner Grape is an aromatic white grape. It was first produced in 1929 by crossing Trollinger (also known as Schiava Grossa or Vernatsch) and Reisling. It is named in honour of a poet and physician from Swabia, Justinus Kerner, whose works included songs and poetry on wine. Kerner is most commonly planted in various regions of Germany, but is also grown in Austria, Switzerland, Japan, Michigan and the Italian province of South Tyrol, which is where this particular version is from.

Grapes are harvested by hand and brought in 200 kg crates to the winery within 30 minutes where they are destemmed and gently pressed. The must settles for 24 to 48 hours prior to fermentation in stainless steel vats under temperature control for 10 to 12 days. After fermentation the wines age on the fine lees for 8 months. There is no malolactic fermentation.

It has a delicate yet impactful bouquet of exotic floral perfumes, tropical citrus and sour melon. Crunchy grass and hay, potent fruit (kiwi, nectarine) on the palate, with depths of saline minerality and residual acidity. It should drink well to 2031. The saline minerality and citrus concentration suits delicate fish dishes, and simple hors d'oeuvres.

Erbaluce di Caluso DOCG, Ferrando, 2021 - £45

Since the seventeenth century, Erbaluce has largely been grown in the Northeastern corner of Alto Piemonte, known as the Canavese. *Erba* means grass and *luce* means light, and Erbaluce yields grassy flavour with good acidity and minerality (sometimes compared to a Chenin Blanc). In the valley commune of Caluso, which is its ideal home, Erbaluce is made into both a spumante, a dry white wine, and a passito.

This wine is produced with 100% Erbaluce grapes, from 35 year old vines grown in 4 hectare Torrazza vineyard in municipal district of Borgomasino. A selection of the best grapes was hand harvested in late September/early October. The grapes were soft pressed and fermented in temperature-controlled steel vats. Erbaluce has a bright, straw yellow colour, with floral, fresh apple and aromatic herbal flavours on the nose. It is fresh but full bodied and balanced between the fruit, the alcohol and the acidity, and with good length. It particularly goes well with antipasti, vegetable bisques, seafood, poultry.

Timorasso Derthona Colli Tortonesi DOC, "La Colombera", 2021, Azienda Agricola Fratelli Semino - £46

Grown primarily in the southeast corner of Piedmont, Timorasso is now regarded as perhaps the most promising white wine grapes in Piedmont, and in all of Italy. It was once quite common, but was driven almost to extinction in the 1980s by vulnerability to oxidation, asynchronous maturation, fussiness, and the cult of Nebbiolo. Since the 1980s there has

been a major revival and it is now regarded as one of the best Italian white wine grapes. It exemplifies what can be achieved with careful attention to the methods and conditions required to achieve its highest possible quality. It yields wines which are slightly tannic, honeyed, and spiced, with traces of tangelo.

This wine was produced from 23 year old vines. No herbicides are employed; only copper and sulphur fungicides are used. The grapes are hand-harvested, and refined on its lees without malolactic conversion in stainless steel tanks for 9 months. Low addition of sulphites before bottling.

The wine is a gold straw colour. It's robust balance provides for a long-lived wine with capacity for ageing and evolving characteristics over time. It has early crisp, herbal flavours of ripe peach, apricot, acacia and hawthorn; 3 to 4 years in bottle leads to later development of mineral elements and hazelnuts on the finish. It is well-matched with the local Tortonese Montébore mixed cow's and ewe's milk cheese, and/or the salami of Giarolo.

RED WINES

Saumur-Champigny Tuffe 2016, Château du Hureau - £23

So we are in the appellation of Saumur-Champigny in the Loire, about 100 miles from the Atlantic along the south bank of the Loire. The appellation covers 8 villages in addition to Saumur itself.

"Tuffe" is the local name for "tuffeau" which means limestone or chalk, and is responsible for the particular chalky terroir which is so good for the cultivation of wines. The soil is referred to as "*argilo calcaire*" meaning a mixture of clay and limestone, and is known in England as "Kimmeridgian limestone". This limestone is, incidentally, responsible for the wonderful cream-coloured stone used in the construction of the Châteaux of the Loire.

Medium bodied, with good cherry and berry fruit. 100% Cabernet Franc, which is known for providing a certain spicy character. A good time to drink this attractively priced wine.

Montes Alpha Carménère 2020 - £24

Made from the Carménère grape variety, which came from Bordeaux – vines imported into Chile for the first time in the mid-19th Century. The name *Carménère* is derived from the French word *carmin* (our word carmine) and reflects the beautiful crimson colour to which the leaves turn in the autumn. It also makes wine with a deep red colour. It was once common in Bordeaux, but was highly susceptible to the phylloxera aphid which decimated the vines in the late 19th Century. It thrived however in Chile which has thankfully stayed clear of the phylloxera pest.

This wine is made from vines in the valley of Colchagua is about 100km south of Santiago, so about halfway down the north-south extent of Chile.

Enthusiasts describe the wine as having a *Deep ruby red in colour, with intense aromas of chocolate, black and red fruits with spicy notes of black pepper, and flavours of cherries and chestnuts with smoky, spicy and earthy notes.* The tannins are softer than those in, for example, Cabernet Sauvignon, and it is accordingly easy to drink with a variety of foods. It is a very pleasing wine so if you are looking for a bottle of red in the lower price range I think it represents very good value.

Nuits-Saint-Georges 2013, Bertrand Ambroise - £53

Here is a fully mature Burgundy from a good vintage. Burgundy is of course the home of Pinot Noir, and this is a classic example.

Nuits-St-Georges is about a third of the way up the Côte de Nuits towards Dijon. Maison Ambroise dates back to the 18th century when only a few parcels of vines had been planted around Nuits-Saint-Georges. Bertrand Ambroise took over the vineyard from his father-in-law in 1987, and it is now run by his son and daughter. They achieved organic certification in 2013. They remove many of the leaves around the bunches of grapes so that they ripen better and have de-stemmed the Pinot Noir since 2002 which, along with 28 day maceration, helps produce balanced wines of classic Burgundian character with structure and poise.