



Editors' picks

Each month our editorial team tastes a lot of wine, but not all of it makes it onto the page. So here's our in-house pick of other great wines we've tried

BUZZING ABOUT BIODIVERSITY

JAMES BUTTON

Up high on the west side of the Trentino valley, one of Ferrari Trento's organic vineyards I visited in April had been home to a handful of beehives – until a bear wandered down from the steep wooded slopes above and smashed them all up in search of honey. Today, the replacement hives are protected by a solar-powered electric fence: those bees are an important part of the site's biodiversity. All of Ferrari's estate vineyards have been certified organic since 2017. The company also holds 'Biodiversity Friend' certification, issued by the Worldwide Biodiversity Association. In addition to its own holdings, Ferrari buys grapes from 600 grower families in the region, many of whom work to organic principles but are not certified. Chardonnay specialists they may be, but Ferrari's predominantly Pinot Noir **Giulio Ferrari Rosé** (2008, £216.87 Spirits24) is off-the-charts good. One of Italy's finest sparkling rosés, it channels Burgundian elegance. The **Perlé** range, meanwhile, is a great starting point for fizz aficionados. **Perlé Bianco Riserva** (£37.45 Vinvm) is a 100% Chardonnay extra brut with seven years on its lees. It's intense and juicy, while the mid-palate is incredibly sapid and saline, ending with exotic hints of mango, spices and peach, along with some customary brioche notes. ferraritrento.com



Lenz Moser Benchmarking drinking pleasure

INES SALPICO

It would have been easy for Laurenz (Lenz) Maria Moser V to sit back, relax and enjoy the wealth and recognition that his earlier projects – not least the successful management and eventual sale of the eponymous estate in Krems and the establishment of Robert Mondavi's European operation – granted him. His restlessness, creativity and competence, however, left little time for indulgence or contemplation. Today, **Lenz Maria Moser Wine Affairs** is the umbrella under which myriad exciting projects and collaborations keep the prominent Austrian busy, not only in his home country but also in China, Hungary, Portugal and Australia.

At the epicentre of all his endeavours is the acknowledgement of other people's talent and potential, as well as a conscious effort to keep his palate well aware of what makes an 'exciting, memorable and enjoyable' wine. For this he does regular benchmark tastings, which place his own creations alongside some of the wines that excite him most as a drinker.

In early July, Moser visited London to share one of his benchmark tastings with UK professionals. A truly memorable experience, during which notable bottles such as **Ridge Vineyards, Estate Chardonnay 2020** (£69.99-£72.99 Banstead Vintners, Selfridges) from California, **Franz Hirtzberger's Rotes Tor Grüner Veltliner Smaragd, Wachau 2021** (£42 Lay & Wheeler), or **Antinori's Cervaro della Sala, Umbria 2021** (£90-£110 Hedonism, Mother Vine, South Downs Cellars, Toscanaccio) did not overshadow Moser's own **MM5 Dry Furmint** from Tokaj in Hungary, or the Austrian **LenzMark, New Chapter Grüner Veltliner, Niederösterreich 2021**.



Looking back at Catena Zapata

JULIE SHEPPARD

Dr Laura Catena joined her sister Adrianna Catena in London recently for a lively retrospective comparative tasting of Nicolás Catena Zapata and Catena Zapata Malbec Argentino, with vintages stretching back to 2006. These great wines were tasting beautifully, and it was fascinating to delve into the unique ageing qualities of Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon from their Argentinian terroir. 'With classic Cabernet Sauvignon Bordeaux winemaking, you are always trying to soften the tannins,' said Laura. 'Then our winemaker Alejandro Vigil and I went to Burgundy one year and he said, "You know this is silly – why are we making Malbec like Cabernet?" And that changed everything. Because,



with cool-climate Malbec, we are excited about the florals, the fruit, the acidity and these incredibly soft tannins.' From a stellar line-up, including 2010 and 2019 vintages, my star of the show was **Nicolás Catena Zapata 2019** (97pts,

£61 Berry Bros & Rudd), a seamless blend of 42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Malbec and 28% Cabernet Franc, harmoniously layered, with stunning purity of fruit, poise and presence. catenazapata.com



MANY SHADES OF PINK

AMY WISLOCKI

A quartet of rosés, as we're still (just about) in summer. First to London's Covent Garden for the launch of Ladurée's summer collection in association with **Château d'Estoublon's** delicious **Roseblood** (featured in 'Weekend wines' in our July issue): blush-pink macarons served with blush-pink Provence rosé. Chatting to the export director, I learned that the château is about to launch its prestige rosé in the UK: **1489 Roseblood** has subtle oak influence and like the regular rosé will be stocked by Majestic. (It has also just launched a white wine made from the Rolle – aka Vermentino grape – which may hit UK shelves next year.)

Meanwhile, two rosés stood out at The Wine Society's summer press tasting. **The Society's Corsican Rosé 2022** is pale and Provençal in style, and cracking value at just over a tenner a bottle; meanwhile, the **Thymiopoulos, Rosé de Xinomavro 2021** from Macedonia, Greece, excites with its deeper colour and oxidative complexity (£13.50). Both are must-buys. Finally, off duty, the discovery of a perfect pairing: Kent winery **Chapel Down's English Rosé** (2022, £15-£16.99 Chapel Down, Grape Britannia, Majestic) served with spicy tandoori chicken and prawns. It's a dry but full-flavoured and fruity style of rosé, which worked like a dream. **D**

FINDING FINESSE IN PASO ROBLES

CLIVE PURSEHOUSE

From Peachy Canyon on the MAHA estate's organic and biodynamic vineyards in West Paso Robles come the wines of Villa Creek. They are a study in the power and depth of Paso Robles, yet are crafted with an eye towards cultivating minerality and floral elements in this warm growing region. The Villa Creek wines show that there is ample complexity to be had in these warm hillside vineyards 20km from the Pacific ocean. 'While finesse can often be elusive in Paso Robles, our proximity to the ocean, the limestone soils we find in our vineyards and our approach to farming – just letting the vines do what they want – has allowed our wines to show the finesse and elegance that they do,' says winemaker Cris Cherry.

The Villa Creek, 3 Syrah 2020 is a powerful, deeply hued, yet restrained varietal wine. While certainly broad-shouldered, its emphasis is on stony



minerality and purple florals, with notes of crushed stone and violets, along with a hint of bay leaf. The Villa Creek, Garnacha 2020 offers smoked sea salt and gamey smoked meat notes wrapped around a core of pure purple fruits. All of these wines would benefit from eight to 10 years of patience, but particularly the Syrah and the Garnacha. villacreek.com