

Wine Notes – Friday July 10th

‘Female Winemakers’

Introduction

Female wine makers are now producing some of the highest rated wines both here in the UK and abroad – in both the northern and southern hemispheres.

White Wines

Wine 1 – England - Classic Cuvee – Nyetimber

Cherie Spriggs

Cherie Spriggs is Head wine maker at Nyetimber and joined the business in 2007.

Nyetimber, (meaning “new timbered house”), is possibly the most famous of all English Sparkling wine producers and wine production here dates back as far as the Domesday Book. The West Sussex estate gained prominence in 2023 when their wines beat Bollinger and Louis Roederer in a blind tasting at the Sparkling Wine World Championship. Cherie was the first person outside of the Champagne area of France to be awarded Sparkling Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine Challenge and she was also the first female to be honoured with the title. She then went on to win the award for a second time in 2016 when Nyetimbers Blanc de Blancs 2016 Magnum was crowned Champion Sparkling Wine of the World.

She focuses on quality and in fact abandoned the entire 2012 vintage harvest because the weather-damaged grapes did not meet Nyetimber's standards.

Nyetimber’s fruit is 100% estate-grown and hand-harvested. Grapes include the classic Champagne varieties - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, and all cuvées are made using the same ‘Traditional Method’ applied in Champagne. The vineyards are allocated on deliberately selected south facing slopes with either sandy or chalk soils similar to those found in the Champagne region in France. The estate covers a total area of 375 hectares over 11 vineyards and produces between 1 million and 1.8 million bottles of sparkling wine per year – depending on weather and harvest conditions. It accounts for roughly 10% of total English Sparkling Wine production.

Price	£43 (£30 mix of 6)
Alcohol	12 %
Stockist	Majestic
Grape	Chardonnay (60%) , Pinot Noir (35%) and Pinot Meunier 5%)
Country	England

Notes:

Nyetimber Classic Cuvée is England's flagship traditional-method sparkling wine.

Described as:

- **Appearance:** pale gold and gentle with fine bubbles
- **Aromatics (Nose):** - aromas of toasted brioche, baked apple, lemon and marzipan
- **Palate (Taste):** - crisp and refined with layers of apple, fresh apricot, honey and subtle sweet spice

Food Match:

Can be enjoyed as a refreshing aperitif on a warm summer evening or paired with fresh seafood, such as oysters and scallops.

Wine 2 – New Zealand, Marlborough - Sauvignon Blanc

Emma Marris

Emma Marris is the daughter of Brent Marris, the man behind Majestic's best-selling Sauvignon Blanc - The Ned. She started her own brand of wines of which the Sauvignon Blanc was the first. A Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are also going to be released. In 2022, this wine won an IWC award for the 2021 vintage.

The wine is produced in the Leefield Station Vineyard in Waihopai Valley in the Marlborough region of the South Island of New Zealand. The unique terroir of the valley and influence of the cold oceanic breezes and a contrast in diurnal temperatures mean grapes mature slowly, allowing a unique balance of sugar and acidity to develop. As a result, the wines from this area have an intensity of flavour and freshness.

Stats:

Price	£13 (£10 mix 6)
Alcohol	13.5%
Stockist	Majestic
Grape	Sauvignon Blanc
Country	New Zealand

Notes:

Described as:

- **Appearance:** - clear
- **Aromas (Nose):** - intense and vibrant, with distinct notes of lime zest, guava and crisp apple along with pepper and herbal undertones.
- **Palate (Taste):** - juicy and fleshy on the tongue, blending exotic papaya, passion fruit, and guava with sharp citrus like pomelo and grapefruit.

Food Match: It is best paired with fresh seafood, tangy salads, and dishes featuring herbs or citrus to match its bright acidity.

Wine 3 – South Africa - Aslina Chardonnay

Nitsiki Biyela

Ntsiki Biyela was South Africa's first black female winemaker. In 2009, she was crowned Woman Winemaker of the Year, and in 2017 she was listed in the world's top 10 most Innovative Women in Food and Drink by Fortune's Food & Wine. At the prestigious 2021 Wine Harvest Commemorative Event, Ntsiki received the Diversity and Transformation Award for her pioneering work in the industry in South Africa. The accolade celebrates her role in paving the way for others by eliminating barriers; setting an example and inspiring others; contributing to knowledge that others can use; and having an overall influence on the image of the South African wine industry.

She is head winemaker and director at Aslina Wines (founded in 2016) having been awarded a scholarship to study winemaking at Stellenbosch University in 1999. The name is a tribute to her late grandmother. She sits on the board of directors for the Pinotage Youth Development Academy, which provides technical training and personal development for young South Africans in the Cape Winelands, preparing them for work in the wine and tourism industries.

Ntsiki sources the grapes from both warm and cool climate sites in the Western Cape, rests the wine on texture-imparting lees and treats it to a restrained use of oak.

Stats:

Price	£21 (£17.50 mix 6)
Alcohol	13.5%
Stockist	Majestic
Grape	Chardonnay
Country	South Africa

Notes:

Lightly oaked, fruity and complex and reminiscent of a top Pouilly-Fuissé

Described as:

- **Appearance:**
- **Aromas (Nose):** Notes of honey with white peach, tropical fruits and lime
- **Palate (Taste):** lingering finish and a mild buttery flavour, with undertones of vanilla and honeybush tea

Food Match: Roasted chicken and grilled vegetables

Wine 4 – Spain - Martin Codax Albarino

Katia Alvarez

Katia Álvarez is the head winemaker at Bodegas Martín Códax where she has directed the winemaking at the Spanish winery since 2005. She is recognised as one of the top 10 female wine producers in Spain.

The winery's name pays tribute to Martín Códax, a celebrated 13th-century Galician troubadour (poet/musician) whose work reflects a deep connection to the land, the sea, and Galician culture. The wild Atlantic coastline forces growers up to high altitudes growing vines on steep slopes. The sea influences the local climate and it is more cool and damp than neighbouring regions.

Her style is based on respect - of the typicity (the way the wine reflects the characteristics of the grape), the weather conditions and the land. She describes Albarino as complex and that this grape needs to be handled with care to be able to demonstrate its full potential. Grapes are harvested by hand.

Stats:

Price	£16.50 (£13.50 mix 6)
Alcohol	13 %
Stockist	Majestic
Grape	Albarino
Country	Spanish

Notes:

The Albarino grape is one of Spain's most versatile grapes which adapts perfectly to the region's climate and soils, giving the wine a fresh, fruity, and light aromatic style.

- **Appearance:** straw yellow in colour
- **Aromas (Nose):** fresh with aromas of peach and citrus fruits.
- **Palate (Taste):** crisp and zesty with flavours of ripe pear, tropical fruit, and subtle, minerality and salinity. Clean, dry, and persistent with a lingering citrus and fruity aftertaste.

Food Match: Seafood especially clams – a Galician speciality; poultry and pasta. Can be drunk as an aperitif.

Red Wines

Wine 5 – Romania – Pinot Noir

Nora Iriarte

Nora is the Head Winemaker and runs a team which is 80% female at Cramele Recas. Nora trained at University of Bordeaux and started her career at various chateaus in the area. After spending some time completing research she moved to Bodegas LAN in Rioja, Spain where she worked for many years. After a successful time there she joined the Cramele Recas team and hasn't looked back since. Listed as one of the worlds top 100 winemakers.

Stats:

Price	£7
Alcohol	12%
Stockist	Waitrose
Grape	Pinot Noir
Country	Romania

Notes:

Waitrose Blueprint wines are crafted to reflect the world's classic wine regions and styles. This wine has all the typicity of Pinot Noir, showing elegant juicy red berry characters and a hint of savoury complexity.

Described as:

- **Aromatics (Nose):**
- **Palate (Taste):** Elegant juicy red berries and a hint of savoury complexity
- **Appearance:**

Food Match: Chicken or other poultry

Wine 6 – Spain - Bodegas Montecillo

Mercedes Garcia Ruperez

Mercedes was an early breaker of the industry's all male mould, appointed as chief winemaker in 2008. Originally from Madrid, she holds three degrees: a degree in Oenology from Rioja University, an Agricultural Engineering degree from Madrid University, and a Master's in Oenology and Viticulture, also from Madrid University.

Stats:

Price	£15
Alcohol	13.5%
Stockist	Waitrose
Grape	Tempranillo
Country	Spain

Notes: Described as a wine with character having undergone a long macerations during alcoholic fermentation. Aged for 2 years in handcrafted oak barrels, followed by a further 18 months in bottle.

Described as:

- **Aromatics (Nose):**
- **Palate (Taste):** Rich and rounded
- **Appearance:**

Food Match: Lamb or a mature cheese

Wine 7 – Australia – The Hedonist

Kemberly Cooter

The daughter of a winemaker Kimberley originally studied architecture but realised winemaking was the place she wanted to be. She runs The Hedonist and another winery with her husband.

Stats:

Price	£16
Alcohol	14%
Stockist	Waitrose
Grape	Syrah
Country	Australia

Notes:

This is a delicious, silky and smooth wine with dark-fruit flavours and an intense palate. The Hedonist is made from grapes grown biodynamically, without pesticides or herbicides.

Described as:

- **Aromatics (Nose):**
- **Palate (Taste):** Dark fruit flavours
- **Appearance:**

Food Match: Red meats

Favourite Wines of the Evening

Red: The Hedonist

White: Aslina Chardonnay

We liked the Nyetimber Sparkling