



the guinea pig club

Aoife Carrigy greets the new season with a half dozen examples of sunshine and summer berries in a bottle

Our thanks to all at **ely winebar** in Ely Place for their help in hosting this tasting

Photography by **Con O'Donoghue**

Strictly speaking, May is the first month of summer, so to encourage this kind of thinking (in the hope that the weather will follow suit) we presented this month's guinea pigs with three rather summery white wines. First up, Sauvignon Blanc from Touraine in the Loire region can offer a great value alternative to its more well-known neighbour, Sancerre. And Le Grand St-Vincent Touraine is just the thing to wake up palates after a long winter: expect a burst of grapefruit and meadow blossom on the nose, and a play of lush tropical and punchy citric fruits on the palate, undercut with clean minerality. Next up, the Alpha Zeta Pinot Grigio (from Kiwi flying wine-maker Matt Thompson) is proof that the lunching-ladies' choice doesn't have to be bland to please the crowds. This take on the grape infuses zesty lemon mousse with green apples and pear, buffed up with a generosity of body. And now – for something completely different – a Riesling from Pfalz in Germany. Even without the gorgeous label to fall in love with, this golden-toned, honeyed

drop lures you in with its nectar-rich character before hitting you with a slice of electric acidity to get the mouth watering for more.

If each of the whites captured sunshine in a bottle, the reds were all about the summer fruits and berries. First up, the Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon from Marks & Spencer is a brambly, spicy number with notes of green bell peppers, giving it a greenness of flavour that would work well with a sweet-savoury stew such as a lamb tagine. The Portia Ebeia Roble from Ribera del Duero tempers late summer stone fruits like damsons and ripe plums with toasty oak and vanilla and a little tannic bite. And finally, sweet, chocolatey and generous without being over-ripe like that fruit-bomb cliché of Australian Shiraz, the Innocent Bystander bursts onto the palate with intense strawberry sweetness but then pulls itself back from the edge with some welcome savoury notes of black pepper and balsam. Like much Aussie wine, this one is built for cracking open on a balmy evening. Now, over to the weather to comply. 🍷

Meet the Align team

Align is a Dublin-based company which offers fast, sustainable pain relief through somatic movement education, based on neuromuscular reprogramming (put simply, retraining the mind to retrain the body). For more information and testimonials, see www.alignsomatics.com.



Tanya Fitzpatrick

Tanya Fitzpatrick is co-director and founder of Align. As well as being professionally trained in somatic movement education, Tanya trains yoga teachers in The Elbowroom, Dublin 7. Though she'd be a Guinness drinker in the pub, Tanya picks up

wine at speciality wine shops to enjoy at home or with food. She's a big fan of Portuguese wines, having lived there for some time. Other favourite reds include New Zealand Pinot Noir, Spanish Crianza and Chilean Merlot, and in whites she loves Spanish Albariño and French Burgundies. Aside from looking out for grapes she likes, Tanya keeps an eye out for medal winners on the labels and follows wine columns up for recommendations. She's also a keen cook and as a vegetarian, is a big fan of Dennis Cotter's cookbook, *Seasons* (from which she could even quote page numbers of favourite recipes), and of Green's in San Francisco, an "unbelievable vegetarian restaurant overlooking the Golden Gate".



Lisa Peterson

Lisa Peterson is co-director and founder of Align. Lisa also teaches yoga and offers private yoga therapy sessions. Lately Lisa has been leaning towards white wines, and particularly Sauvignon Blancs – French Pouilly Fumé and New

Zealand Marlboroughs. She enjoys drinking wines from places she's been to, and loves Côtes du Ventoux red for sentimental reasons. She prefers to buy wines from wine stores so that she can quiz the salespeople "for fun and wine stories". Lisa cooks most nights of the week, often something simple like fish – Nigel Slater is a great source of inspiration, plus "he writes beautifully and the pics are fab". Lisa loves vegetarian food too, dishes like southern Indian pumpkin curry, and gets lots of recipe inspiration from her business partner Tanya. She's a big fan of Greens in San Francisco, and Dotti's in San Fran "for the best breakfast ever".



Beatriz Gil Martin

Beatriz Gil Martin is a personal assistant of the directors of Align Somatics. She only drinks wine with food; otherwise it's mojitos or Corona beers. Beatriz likes red wine from Italy, France, Spain and South America, and would spend anywhere from €10

up to €15 for a bottle. She likes to cook most days – fish dishes or homely lasagne. She tries to buy organic ingredients where possible, as "it always tastes better and is healthier". She doesn't have a TV so doesn't follow any celebrity chefs but prefers to get her recipes from family and friends, or from magazines and the internet. Her favourite cookbook is *Barbecue for Friends*, for its emphasis on having fun cooking with your friends. Her favourite restaurant is Wagamama, for its "simplicity, creativity, texture, and flavours that transport you to a different part of the world".



Georgina Brennan

Georgina Brennan is a somatic movement educator and yoga teacher specialising in pain management and back care. She doesn't drink much, but when she does she tends to go for full-bodied red wines, preferably with good food and/or good company.

Chilean and French are favourites – indeed Georgina's brother and brother in law take regular trips to France to stock up and then divvy it out amongst the family on their return. As well as rarely drinking, Georgina says she rarely cooks, but then elaborates to explain that she's a 'raw foodie' – so she prefers to prepare her food rather than cook it. She gets lots of ideas from books and documentaries on vegan and raw food living, as well as from like-minded friends and the internet. She's a big fan of Russell James and recommends any of his cookbooks to anyone interested in learning more about raw food. Eating out can be a little tricky for vegans, but Georgina has been really impressed with the Ritz Carlton in Powerscourt, as well as Healthy Habits Café in Wicklow Town.

Rates

We asked our Guinea Pigs to rate each wine out of 20, according to the following guidelines:

18–20 Unmissable	11–12 Reliable and value for money
15–17 Stylish wine, some excitement	9–10 You may like it, we didn't
13–14 Decent drinking	8 or less Don't say we didn't warn you!

If you and your workmates or local team would like to volunteer as Guinea Pigs, please give us a call on +353 (0)1 240 5332 or email Carrigy@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you.

SEE OVERLEAF FOR OUR GUINEA PIGS' SCORING OF THIS MONTH'S WINES >>

COMPETITION

POLERO IN ASSOCIATION WITH FOOD&WINE MAGAZINE

would like to offer 3 lucky readers the chance to win a case of POLERO, CABERNET – MERLOT ROSE 2009

This fresh and young varietal wine is produced with high quality grapes from our vineyards located in the Maipo Valley. The Maipo Valley is located in central Chile, just south of Santiago in a region bounded by the Andes Mountains to the east, the coastal range to the west and the Maipo River to the north. Despite its relatively small size, this is the most celebrated appellation for the red wines in Chile.

Poleto Cabernet Sauvignon – Merlot Rose is a shining wine of alive pink colour: its aromas are very fresh, predominated by mature berries like strawberry, raspberry and cranberry. It impresses the clearness of its nose and the intensity of its fruit.

Q. WHAT COUNTRY DOES POLERO COME FROM?

Available from Fine Wine O'Donnell and other local independent off-licences



Entries can be emailed to scurrey@harmonia.ie or posted to Sarah Currey FOOD&WINE Magazine, Rosamont House, Dunsdrum Road, Dunsdrum, Dublin 14. Closing date for entries is 9th May 2011. Winners will be announced in the July/Aug issue.

						
	LE GRAND ST-VINCENT TOURAINE SAUVIGNON 2009	ALPHA ZETA PINOT GRIGIO 2010	LINGENFELD VINEYARD CREATURES BIRD LABEL RIESLING 2007	M&S MARGARET RIVER CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2008	PORTIA EBELIA ROBLE RIBERA DEL DUERO 2009	INNOCENT BYSTANDER SHIRAZ 2008
PRICE	€12.50	€10.99	€14.99	€11.79	€12.99	€14.99
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	France	Italy	Germany	Australia	Spain	Australia
ABV%	12.5%	12.5%	11%	13.5%	13.5%	14.5%
COMMITTEE'S VERDICT						
HOW MANY LIKED IT?	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	2/4	4/4
DESCRIBE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	"almost as clear as water"; "diamond, sparkly, glossy, elegant"; "very clear, transparent"	"light tinge of straw"; "very light in colour"; "lilies"; "pale melon yellow"	"straw"; "yellow citrine"; "summer morning light"	"ruby red and quite clear"; "cherry";	"dark roses but quite bright and clear"; "dried roses"; "plummy"	"autumnal ivy"; "winter red, warm and comforting"; "film noir red"; "slightly burnt looking"
DESCRIBE WHAT IT SMELLS LIKE	"spring holidays in Italy"; "floral, and tropical fruits"; "pineapple, passionfruit"; "peach blossom"; "melon"; "light green apple"	"sweet apples, strawberries"; "elderflowers, apricots"; "gooseberry"; "grassy"; "Golden delicious apples"	"funky, like rotting fruit"; "jack fruit, honey"; "earthy but fruity"	"berries, oak"; "vanilla, chocolate, juicy redcurrants"	"perfumed"; "leather, floral, like Chanel perfume"; "Vivienne Westwood Boudoir perfume"; "fresh but with spice at end"	"Christmas pudding, port"; "strawberries"; "smoky, spicy"; "nutmeg"
DESCRIBE WHAT IT TASTES LIKE	"zesty, fruity, lively, lemony, well-balanced"; "pineapple, acidic finish; lively. Surprisingly good length and balance, thought it would be more citrusy"	"spicy, minty, apricots, pear drops"; "very nice, melts in the mouth, like almond milk"; "creamy and soft, subtle and spicy"	"honeyed aftertaste"; "jar of sweets"; "jack fruit, papaya"; "agave-honey, minty, apple, mango; "very tasty and aromatic"; "heavy, warm, tropical fruits"	"cherries, tannic"; "medium to full-bodied"; "earthy"; "very oaky finish"; "unripe cherries"; "a bit flabby"; "chocolate"	"fruity, quite nice"; "confused"; "medium-bodied"; "Indian spices: cardamom, cloves"; "plums, but fresh, not stewed"; "a bit blah"	"nutty, blackberry"; "strawberries and cream, with toasted nuts"; "vanilla"; "roasted chestnuts"; "smoky";
AVERAGE MARK OUT OF 20?	13	12	14	12	10-16	16
HOW MUCH WOULD YOU PAY FOR IT?	€15-€15	€10-€16	€10-€14	€9-€13	€10-€15	€15-€20
HOW MANY WOULD BUY IT AGAIN?	3/4 - for a warm summer day's drinking, particularly for a lunch in the garden or for cracking open on a warm Thursday evening after work	2/4 - easy drinking, could drink it on its own or with light food	3/4 - a versatile drop: nicely warming for winter or fresh for a summer's lunch or Sunday afternoon	1/4	2/4 - could bring it to a dinner party, or drink on its own without food	4/4 - very versatile, could drink on its own or bring as a gift to a dinner
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE ABV % MIGHT BE	12%	11-13%	11-12.5%	11%-14%	12%-14%	14%
ANY GUESSES ON ORIGIN OR GRAPE VARIETY?	New Zealand? Blend of Chardonnay and Sauvignon? Italian Soave?	France? Italy?	Spain? South America? Austria or Germany? Gewurtztraminer?	Chile? South Africa? Cabernet Sauvignon?	Spain, for its spiciness? France, Rhone maybe?	Italy? Chile? South Africa? Merlot? Cabernet Sauvignon?
WHAT FOOD WOULD YOU SERVE IT WITH?	Fig and blue cheese salad, or cheese plate with fruit	Apple and cheese salad, maybe Pecorino? Or light dish of lemon sole with fruity zesty salsa	Thai food, spicy and gingery	Stew or casserole, rabbit or lamb, Canarian fish cazuela in a clay pot	Indian food, or Moroccan - something with a bit of spice; or a gutsy pasta	Duck with plum compote, or Dennis Cotter's timbale of corn, leeks and Gabriel cheese with toasted hazelnuts
SUPPLIERS	Searsons (Listons, Mortons, Jus de Vine, Sweeneys, Hole in the Wall, Kelly's, Searsons, Next Doors, Mill Wine Cellar, Wine Centre Kilkenny, Butler's Mullingar, Mac's, 1601, Fahy's)	Liberty (Next Door, Enfield; Cellar Master; Cases Wine Warehouse; Fallon & Byrne; Hole in the Wall; JM Vintners; thewineshop.ie; Simply Wines; Cheers Take Home; Bin No 9)	Gleasons (Donnybrook Fair; Cellars The Big Wine Warehouse)	M&S	Gleasons (selected independents)	Liberty (The Wine Boutique; Red Island Wine; Fallon & Byrne; O'Donovans Off Licence; Next Door, various; The Wine Boutique; On the Grapevine; thewineshop.ie; UnWined; Cellars The Big Wine Warehouse; Donnybrook Fair; Hole in the Wall)