

Wine: what to look out for in 2016

The developments in 2016 that are worth keeping an eye out for

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One of the things critics are expected to do at this time of year is to spot trends for the coming 12 months, but the problem with wine is that there tends not to be a huge difference between one year and the next - I see no diminution in the public's appetite for prosecco, New Zealand sauvignon blanc and rioja, for instance. On the other hand, we started drinking malbec in quantity only a couple of years ago; it wasn't "a thing" back in 2012. So what is going to happen in 2016?

The first noticeable difference, starting to be evident at the end of 2015, will be in the type of wine sold. With the honourable exception of Marks & Spencer, supermarket ranges are shrinking, which means less choice for the adventurous drinker. But that said, Lidl has been blazing a trail for limited-edition seasonal wine selections that have helped push its wine sales up 38%. Maybe others (Tesco?) will follow suit. It's good news for the indies, anyway.

Another big boost for wine will be a glitzy new TV series, *The Wine Show*, which should air soon and which I suspect will change the face of wine on telly. It features the refreshingly down-to-earth Joe Fattorini - he's the new Oz Clarke, mark my words.

English sparkling wine looks set to get bigger and bigger. Look out for the name Dermot Sugrue, the former winemaker at Nyetimber who is now at Wiston, and who also has a hand in other labels such as Jenkyn Place and Digby - the excellent Jenkyn Place Brut Cuvée 2010 is currently on offer at Davis, Bell McCraith for £23.95, and £24.99 at Waitrose (12% abv). Actually, while we're talking sparklers, there are interesting developments in champagne, too, with more grower (individual producer) champagnes and less reliance on dosage (the sugar solution added to sweeten the wine), resulting in bottles of greater character and complexity.

The continuing focus on "clean eating" will, I suspect, result in a growing demand for fresh, natural-tasting wines such as Christelle Guibert's and Vincent Caillé's richly-textured Vine Revival Terre de Gneiss Muscadet 2014 (12% abv). Yes, it's pricey at £22.50 (from Caviste in Hampshire, or £22.99 from Handford in London SW7), but it's easily the most exciting muscadet I've tasted recently.

And finally, maybe we'll see a recognition that the Germans make seriously good pinot noir (they're now the world's third largest producer). Try the delicious Thörle Spätburgunder 2013 (£15, Caviste again;), from Rheinhessen, to experience first-hand just how impressive it is.

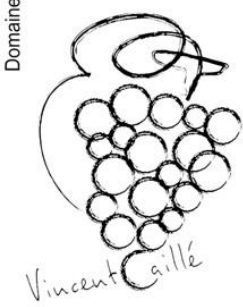
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TRADUCTION

Le point suivant sur “la consommation saine” va, je le préssens, se traduire par une demande accrue en vins frais et aux saveurs authentiques comme Le Terre de Gneiss 2014 (12%) aux riches textures de Christelle Guibert et Vincent Caillé. Oui, son prix est de 22,5 Pounds (chez un caviste de l’Hampshire, ou 22.99 chez Handford à Londres), mais c’est de loin le Muscadet le plus intéressant que j’ai eu l’occasion de tester récemment.