

Harrogate Fine



Wine Co.

HARROGATE FINE WINE COMPANY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2012

CORN EXCHANGE CELLARS

THE GINNEL

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Welcome to our first newsletter of the year. We thought we'd get the year off to a bang with a closer look at two of our favourite South African wineries, both of whom have just released very limited wines. On top of this we have a very tasty offer for our newsletter subscribers of 15 % across the whole range of these wines when purchased as part of a mixed dozen.

Our next tasting will be on Friday February 24th (in store from 6pm until 8pm – tickets are £5 and must be reserved in advance) where we'll showcase the wines of Chris Williams, winemaker at Meerlust and The Foundry. We're showing all the wines from both wineries in our usual informal and relaxed way in the shop.

Winemaker Chris Williams (Meerlust Estate and The Foundry)

It's funny to look back and think how impressed we first were with The Foundry wines because at the time we hadn't made the connection with the heir apparent at Meerlust. Of course as we got to know each vintage we got to know Chris a little better, and when he took over the winemaking duties at the esteemed Meerlust estate The Foundry rather took the back seat at Harrogate Fine Wine for a while as he worked his magic on the already successful wines of Meerlust. We can say with confidence that Meerlust is now better than ever, and sitting writing this piece with a glass of The Red 2009 illustrates just how to get that fine balance of fruit and structure right, with classic Bordeaux varietal character galore, yet without being too green or leafy. The range of Meerlust is excellent across the board and fully deserving of the accolade of one of South Africa's most important wineries.

While we had one eye on Meerlust The Foundry slipped in a few stellar vintages that really made us sit up pay attention - and indeed perhaps the most talked about white of last year was The Foundry's Grenache Blanc, a wine that vanished from our shelves in the blink of an eye.... The proof of its quality was shown in how many people kept asking for another bottle as it had made that much of an impression. The new Grenache Blanc has arrived and lives up to the heights we found in the last two vintages so we thought we'd best make something of this this time and strike while the iron is hot so to speak. Only 100 cases came to the UK and we expect this to be sold out long before the summer hits so would suggest grabbing some now before it's too late.

**Special offer – 15% off any mixed 12 bottles of the following in February
2012. Please mention this offer when purchasing.**

The Foundry and Meerlust

Tasting notes

The Foundry Grenache Blanc 2011 £12.99 – Last year's white star as we keep on saying! Full-bodied, spicy and long, this is a wine which managed a dizzy 93 Parker points last vintage – remarkable when you consider its price range. Pronounced stone fruit with a nutty angle from deft oak ageing it's a brilliant alternative to Chardonnay and an ideal partner for ethnic cuisine.

The Foundry Viognier 2009 £14.99 – Hints of white Rhone are obvious through the mineral-based flavours, but the pronounced apricot and white peach notes make this more classically southern hemisphere. Add a delightful floral angle, subtle oak and classic Viognier spice to make a big mouthful with a most impressive finish. There's some richness about the wine too although it works very nicely as an aperitif as well as with food.

The Foundry Syrah 2007 £19.99 – A favourite of ours and rightly so. The power and structure you'd expect from Syrah is in abundance here, but it's so beautifully controlled the high quality of this wine sets it apart from many of its contemporaries. Succulent dark fruit, herbs and liquorice are held nicely by a concentrated yet rounded tannic structure. It's a big wine alright but so sleek it shows more than a hint of elegance. Definitely one for strongly flavoured cuisine or even blue cheese.

Meerlust Chardonnay 2009 £19.99– We've always had a soft spot for this wine. Even going back a few years we loved to drink this once it had emerged from its oaky outer coating. Over recent years it still big on oak, but not heavy or flabby - in fact it has a wonderful freshness. The precision and cleanness work so well with the strong nutty character. A wine that's good to drink with food now but will gain yet more complexity over the next few years.

Meerlust Pinot Noir 2009 £19.99 – On our visit to Meerlust last year it was suggested that the 2009 was every bit as good as the 2008 which scored 5 Platter stars. After tasting them side by side at the time we would have to agree - in fact the 2009 might even have just edged it. A year later it's still bang on with a lovely core of fruit, and although the fruit is rich it's not too heavy. Clean, fresh and with a great finish, there's an underlying power running through the wine to make it robust enough for hearty food.

Meerlust Rubicon 2007 £22.99 – Unmistakeably full-bodied, with rich warm aromas of red fruits and blackcurrant, plus bags of spice and a touch of leaf and green pepper. An attractive body of fruit but with enough structure to make this a superb food wine. There's wonderful length here to make this one of our favourite Rubicons in some time (and that's saying something!). It has excellent cellaring potential, no question, but is also highly approachable now.

Meerlust Merlot 2009 £18.99 – This rates as one of the Cape's finest Merlots without doubt. Despite its positive fruit content there's a nod back towards right bank Bordeaux. Herbs, minerals and streak of tar mingle happily with plums and blackberries, and there's a rounded tannic structure holding things in check. Always irresistible when young but with great ageing ability

Meerlust The Red 2009 £11.99 – Meerlust's entry level red packs a punch most wines at this price level can only dream of. A Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot shows ripe fruit such as raspberry and blackcurrant combining nicely with mocha and creamy oak. Medium-bodied but with enough character to partner strongly flavoured meats such as game and roast beef. A wine that punches well above its weight.

Meerlust Cabernet Sauvignon 2009 £19.99 – A welcome return for this esteemed bottle to slot alongside the Merlot and Rubicon wines. Brimful of cassis, plums and cedar wood, there's an attractive angle of chocolate and spiced minerals as well as a hint of liquorice. The finish is big yet stream-lined and the structure just shines through. Again there's the opportunity to age the wine but it tastes absolutely delicious already.