



# Tim's Wine Market

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This statement may seem a tad obvious, but very few modern grape varieties sprang from the ground fully formed, ready to drink. Still, it comes as a surprise to many of our guests that varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon are relative newcomers to the world of viticulture. This month, we are exploring the “parents” of two legendary grape varieties, Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon, in their native environments. Both parent varieties are enjoying renewed interest by winemakers and consumers so this is a great time to bring them into the spotlight of the Explorers Club.

## **Paul Buisse Chinon Rouge 2020 - \$16**

Not long ago the dry red wines of France's Loire Valley were still relatively unknown in the United States. Cabernet Franc had its place to be sure, but was often filtered through the lens of Bordeaux where it is primarily a “blending” varietal. This is hardly an appropriate place for the “parent” of Cabernet Sauvignon! However, a handful of American importers took interest in the region in the 1970s, attracted by the Loire Valley's (at the time) relative obscurity. Among their favorite discoveries were the red wines of Chinon, renowned for their expression of terroir and drinkability, both evident in this month's first feature.

Domaine Paul Buisse was founded in 1905, at the time known for the quality of its bulk wines. Understand that France's appellation system did not exist until 1936, and most wine sold before then was simply labeled “wine.” Paul's father, Jean Buisse, purchased several hectares of land on the limestone-rich hills of Touraine, where the family winery still sits today. Jean Buisse took great steps to move away from bulk production and towards terroir-specific appellation wines. Paul took this one step further in the 1980s, when he acquired several hectares of vineyard land in neighboring Chinon and diversified the winery's portfolio. Today, the Buisse estate is managed by the Chainier family of negociants, who specialize in small-production Loire wines and sustainable vineyard practices. Never one to shy away from hard work, owner Pierre Chainier is also the estate's head winemaker.

Chinon is an appellation situated on the steep hills of the Vienne River, with soils composed of gravel and prehistoric limestone. Both of these soil types are ideal for the Cabernet Franc grape, which by law must make up at least 75% of the regional red wine, to ripen. In the case of the Buisse Chinon, these Cabernet Franc vines are planted at lower elevation closer to the banks of the Vienne. Traditionally, Chinon from this part of the appellation tends to be medium-bodied with notes of wild berry and anise. Pierre eschews the use of new oak in the winery to allow these characteristics to shine through.

When you open this wine, you will want to decant for up to half an hour. In addition, it will benefit from a slight chill, so do not hesitate to put it in your refrigerator for a few minutes. When served at optimal temperature, this wine delivers notes of dried red cherry, fresh blackcurrant, wild raspberry, and menthol. Drink now through 2023 with cured meats, cedar plank grilled salmon, or sesame noodles.

## **Cantina del Morellino Ciliegiole 2021 - \$20**

Cabernet Franc is enjoying its moment in the sun among international consumers, however, outside of Italy one would be hard pressed to find much written about Ciliegiole. This heirloom Tuscan variety is one of the assumed “parents” of the ubiquitous Sangiovese, and often plays a minor role in Sangiovese-based blends such as Chianti Classico or Morellino di Scansano. However, in recent vintages, several producers have been experimenting with varietal wines made solely from Ciliegiole. In Umbria, the resulting wines are typically lean and easy-drinking (two descriptors seldom used when talking about Umbrian reds) but in its native Tuscany the variety is typically vinified in a fuller-bodied style.

This particular wine is sourced from a co-op winery located in the Maremma region of coastal Tuscany, which can trace its viticultural history back to the days of the Etruscans. At that time Maremma was primarily marshland but was drained by Mussolini's government before WWII to create potential crop land for wheat. However, the soils are too rocky in some

areas and while cereal crops dominate the area there are also substantial vineyard lands in spots where wheat will not grow. Thanks to this expansion, since the 1950s, Tuscany is Italy's third-largest appellation under vine, with its coastal climate well-suited for the production of native and international varieties. In the case of the Cantina del Morellino, each of the co-op's participating families cultivate their vines around the town of Scansano, home to numerous heirloom Tuscan varieties. Head winemaker Paolo Caciorgna made the decision to produce this wine after noticing the intense color and concentration which came from some of the families' old vine Ciliegiole.

To make this wine, all fruit is sourced from old vine, dry-farmed parcels of Ciliegiole whose age naturally reduces yields and concentrates flavor. Work in the participating vineyards is done predominantly by hand, including green harvest, sorting, and de-stemming, before the fruit is brought to the winery. After fermentation takes place in stainless steel, the wine undergoes an extended post-fermentation maceration which contributes additional color and concentration. The finished wine spends an additional 3 months in stainless steel before filtration and bottling.

When you open this wine, I strongly suggest decanting for at least half an hour. The similarities to its more famous offspring, Sangiovese, are apparent on the palate with notes of fresh red cherry, wild strawberry, dried herbs, and dried violet petal. Drink now through 2024 with veal parmigiana, bean soup with tomatoes and kale, or any of your "red sauce" pastas.

## **Pasta alla Nerano**

I first saw this recipe prepared during an episode of Stanley Tucci's Searching for Italy, when he was visiting the Amalfi Coast. While it looked interesting I did not prepare a version at home until a recent newsletter hit my inbox from Gustimano, an online retailer of specialty Italian products. Their version was intriguing, combining only a few ingredients to produce a luscious sauce that is packed with flavor.

For this recipe you will see it includes an ingredient called Anchovy Colatura, which is hard to find, except from Gustimano, and expensive. You can substitute Fish Sauce if you have it, or simply leave it out. It does add a wonderful umami background to the sauce, without being fishy, but the dish is excellent without it too. Also, I apologize for a pasta recipe for the second consecutive month but the green flavor of the zucchini really works with both of the wine selections.

### **1 lb. Spaghetti**

**4 medium zucchini, about 1 lb. sliced 1/4 inch thick**

### **Olive Oil**

**2 whole garlic cloves, peeled**

**1 teaspoon Anchovy Colatura, or fish sauce**

**1 cup Parmigiano Reggiano, shredded**

**10-15 fresh basil leaves, most julienned**

Heat 2 tbsp of olive oil in a large, heavy bottomed saucepan. Add one garlic clove, allowing it to sizzle and flavor the oil. Remove when it begins to brown and discard.

Add half of the sliced zucchini and cook over medium heat, stirring intermittently, until they have completely softened and browned in places, about 15 minutes. Remove them into a deep bowl or large pyrex measuring cup and set aside. You are going to blend these with pasta water.

Heat another 2 tbsp of olive oil in the same pan and flavor with the second garlic clove, removing it once it begins to brown. Add the remaining zucchini and allow to cook down, brown and soften in the same manner as your first batch. While the second round of zucchini is cooking, cook the spaghetti in boiling salted water.

Add 1 cup of pasta water and the anchovy colatura, or fish sauce, to the cooked zucchini you have set aside. Blend using an immersion blender (or a food processor) until thoroughly combined. Add this mixture to your whole pieces of sliced zucchini cooking in the large pan.

When the spaghetti is 2 minutes shy of al dente, drain it reserving an additional cup of pasta water. Add the drained spaghetti to the pan with the zucchini sauce, along with most of the basil leaves, a hefty glug of olive oil, 2/3 of the grated cheese, and 1/2 cup of the reserved pasta water. Stir everything together, allowing the pasta to finish cooking in the sauce. Add more pasta water and olive oil as necessary to achieve your desired consistency.

Serve garnished with additional basil, cheese, and olive oil.