

Ep 79: Sparkling wines of Tasmania and Wines from House of Arras with Jess Lamb (Part 2)



Janina Doyle 00:00:07 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just can not get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello and welcome back to part two with Jess lamb, who has a healthy obsession with all things sparkling. So today we're going to be discussing the sparkling wines of the Australian island state Tasmania. Now to give you some statistics from Tasmania, there are currently 185 wine producers, 230 individual vineyards and over 2000 hectares under vine. There are seven wine growing areas of which about 50% are covered in the first two. So Tamar valley is the biggest followed by Coal River valley. And I think Tasmania certainly deserves its own podcast again, where we can talk more about the topography, the climate, the soils and the regions. And although many people are yet to taste Tasmanian wines or even know much about the wines produced here. Fun fact, they're believed to produce the first Australian wines. So according to Wine Tasmania, the country's oldest bottles were found in an abandoned Tasmanian cellar. So there you go. Now this cool climate region produces great still wine, some incredible Pinot noir, Chardonnay, along with Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Pinot Gris. But of course, today we're focusing on the sparkling wines. So I'm excited for you to listen to our chat. I hope you enjoy it.

Janina Doyle 00:02:13 Right. Should we talk about sparkling wine from Tasmania because you wanted it to talk about Sparkling wine from Tasmania?

Jess Lamb 00:02:20 Yeah, well actually I wanted to talk about Cap Classique but somebody had stolen that.

Janina Doyle 00:02:26 Stop it. The people from Tasmania are going to be listening, how dare you?

Jess Lamb 00:02:30 Yeah, no, actually do you know what? I'm actually really glad that that was the case because it's actually been a real joy having a bit of a think about these wines.

Janina Doyle 00:02:39 Okay, good. And I actually think the wines from Tasmania are so, almost undiscovered, the average wine consumer doesn't know about Tasmania. The tiniest amount of production of Australian wine comes from Tasmania, but it's fine wine. It is high end wine. Like they don't do cheap wine. They don't do bulk wine. This is a region of real quality, isn't it?

Jess Lamb 00:03:05 It really is. And I think when you're looking at Tasmania, I think it's important to consider it in the context of Australia as a whole. And actually Australia does produce quite a lot of sparkling wine on the mainland as well, but it's mainly tank method, Charmat method fizz, that's very, very similar to Prosecco. And actually I won't go into all the detail of it because I think it's all very controversial and ongoing, but there has been quite an interesting conflict in recent years between winemakers in Italy's Prosecco region and yeah, and winemakers in Australia who, (Forgive the background noise, it's my dog) and winemakers in Australia who have been making Prosecco style wines from the same grape and labeling it as Australian Prosecco.

Janina Doyle 00:03:58 Oh, I didn't know they were, how were they? You can't get away with that. How are they still doing that?

Jess Lamb 00:04:03 It's it's a big ongoing legal thing, I think. Because in Italy they very fiercely protect their growing regions and they have the DOC and DOCG classifications in order to kind of protect those styles of wine. And then you get to somewhere like Australia, which is much less closely regulated in terms of growing regions and what you can and can't put on labels and things like that. So you will find quite a lot of Australian made Prosecco that makes Italian people very upset. Um, I know that there has been an ongoing legal thing about who gets the rights to call it Prosecco. I don't know if there's been any resolution to that, but people are very upset.

Janina Doyle 00:04:46 Oh interesting. Ok, so quickly moving on from that then.

Jess Lamb 00:04:49 So that's really where the majority of sparkling wine production is focused on. And then we also mentioned earlier sparkling Shiraz, which again is quite a niche category. It's certainly not for everybody. And quite often it's just carbonated, still Shiraz. Um, some better examples sometimes will be made in a traditional method style. But I think the high quality examples of sparkling Shiraz are relatively few and far between at this point in time. Although having said that I'm probably going to outrage loads of sparkling Shiraz lovers. So if you have good ones to recommend, please do.

Janina Doyle 00:05:30 I think I saw in Aldi recently, I think, there was, um, a sparkling Shiraz and I think it was like seven or eight pounds. So if anybody wants to, then they can be pretty good value again, but again, yes, it won't be, it'll be tank method. It won't be, or carbonated in fact. It won't be traditional method at that price point,

Jess Lamb 00:05:49 But there is also a certain amount of traditional method wine made on the mainland, but the kind of characteristic environment that you need to make really, really good traditional method wines is a cool climate. So relatively low summertime temperatures, you know, cool winters, all that kind of thing. And obviously in Australia, there are pockets of cool climate growing regions, mainly focused around high altitude areas. So the higher you go, the cooler it gets and the easier it is to create those really high acid grapes. But because Tasmania is so much further south and it's more on a latitude with New Zealand, yes, the climate is naturally cooler. And so therefore it's much easier to grow the grapes in the style that's needed for traditional method, which is, you know, very high in acid. They don't need to be super, super ripe. They just need to be, you know, fresh, refreshing good quality. So it translate into these lovely wines, which is why Tasmania has become such a hotspot for really really very high quality traditional methods. Um, actually I have a really fun fact that I just discovered when I was doing a bit of research, so I'm going to, forgive me, I hope this is okay. I'm just going to read to you from the encyclopedia of champagne and sparkling wine. Um, so the origins of

Tasmanian wine. So it says here that the first known Australian sparkling wine was produced in Tasmania in 1826. It was also the first ever reported commercial wine production in Tasmania, the wine that was produced by Mr. Broughton, a native of Stamford Lincolnshire, which is where I happen.. which is where I live. I know, coincidence. And where I've lived for about the last 10 years. And so Mr. Broughton of Stamford. Lincolnshire was sentenced to go to Australia for life, for charges of embezzlement and theft. And he was shipped down there in 1819. And then a few years later rocked up in Tasmania making this wine that was made in the imitation of champagne

Janina Doyle 00:08:08 Seems like he was really punished, seems like he spent the rest of his life, regretting all of his crimes.

Jess Lamb 00:08:15 Having a terrible time. And it also says that several gentlemen, such as Dr. Sherwan and, and Mr. Bryant who have tasted the wine and pronounced it little inferior to champagne.

Janina Doyle 00:08:25 Well, there you have back in the 1800s people.

Jess Lamb 00:08:30 There you go. Thank you, Mr. Broughton of Stamford Lincolnshire for bringing us all this lovely, lovely, sparking wine that we now enjoy today.

Janina Doyle 00:08:37 I love that. Thank you for your fun fact. And I love how you're just really, and you're just excited because this guy came from your town. It's brilliant. No, that's nice. We love it. No, but there you go. The Brits getting involved. So, um, I like the connection.

Jess Lamb 00:08:52 And that's actually a really interesting point. So there is often a lot of outside development. When you find a emerging wine region that someone suddenly realized this is really, really good for sparkling wine and you see it all over the world. And I think there is a certain process for every emerging sparkling wine region, in that some of the big champagne houses start to buy up land. Um, so for example, you have Domaine Chandon of Moët & Chandon fame. And over the course of the last 50 years, they started buying land everywhere from California to Tasmania to Australia. And even there is a sparkling wine Chandon production place in India as well. And of course you can also look at the UK in English sparkling, and there are several champagne producers, very quietly planting their own vineyards in different areas. There's a lot of champagne influence there. And that's because these houses that have all these centuries of champagne making traditional method experience, recognize the potential of these regions to make really, really high quality traditional method wine. So it tends to be that where people like Chandon go, development follows. And I think that Tasmania was a little bit behind the curve in that it didn't really start to get going until about the 1980s. And at that point you saw Chandon come down and set up. There's also a really, really excellent producer who you can find a Waitrose called Jansz. Which is spelled J A N S Z. And they're owned by Louis Roederer.

Janina Doyle 00:10:39 I didn't know they were, ok.

Jess Lamb 00:10:42 Yeah. Or they were founded by Louis Roederer. I mean, I don't know if they've changed hands since they were founded, but they were, they were certainly sets up by Roederer. And so again, you see that there's all the champagne houses going on in the background and, and it's grown from there really. And as you said, Tasmania is a tiny, tiny percentage of Australia's wine production. It accounts for about 0.5% of Australia's total output. But within that, there are some really, really big hitters and the wine that we've chosen to talk about today, or the producer that we've chosen to talk about today is The House of Arras.

Janina Doyle 00:11:20 Yeah. Why have we chosen this? Well you chose it actually, and I love these guys, so I was very happy to go along with tasting these wines, but you specifically said, I think we should really talk about this winery. So why did you pick Arras?

Jess Lamb 00:11:33 Because I think they are just the quintessential Tasmanian wine and produce that. I think that they are a brand that are slightly more well-known than others. And as you said, quite rightly, the recognition of these brands and these producers, especially in markets like the UK is still really, really low. And actually that is in some part because they tend to keep all the best wines for themselves. It's a very similar situation in New Zealand actually. When I visited, I discovered all these amazing producers making incredible traditional method that you just can't get it in the UK because they don't, they don't want us to have it. And you know, fair enough.

Janina Doyle 00:12:18 So I feel like we'll talk a little bit more about Tasmania and we'll talk about Arras, but I feel like we need to pour ourselves a glass. So I think we need to start with probably the Premium Cuvée. Right? I think we do Premium Cuvée, then do we want to do Blanc de Blanc, and then Elite?

Jess Lamb 00:12:38 The three.... Yes. I think that is an excellent suggestion.

Janina Doyle 00:12:41 Okay. So I haven't opened mine yet. I'm just doing it now. I want to get a bit of a, whoo, there we go. That was a really small little pop. Wasn't it?

Jess Lamb 00:12:52 A little poof.

Janina Doyle 00:12:53 A little poof.

Jess Lamb 00:12:52 Oh my Gosh. Ha ha ha. Mine's just sprayed all over my office.

Janina Doyle 00:12:57 Oh my god. That is hilarious. Well quite, I'm sorry, everyone quite clearly we know who is the sophisticated one out of the two of us. I apologize for her. Jess, you're letting us down. You're letting us down.

Jess Lamb 00:13:11 I'm dripping.

Janina Doyle 00:13:12 Oh, that's so funny. I hope you didn't waste too much of it.

Jess Lamb 00:13:16 Um, well some of it is up the wall, but I think that's ok.

Janina Doyle 00:13:20 Oh, it's fine. At least it's not sparkling Shiraz, right?

Jess Lamb 00:13:24 No, that's very true.

Janina Doyle 00:13:26 Bless. Right. So one thing that we know, we were talking about this weren't we. With The House of Arras, they're very big on lees aging and time having, after that second fermentation, the wine in contact with the lees for a decent amount of time. So 30 months...

Jess Lamb 00:13:43 Yeah. And I think he's aging is something that is really, really important to traditional methods. But I think it's something that it can often be discussed quite flippantly without really going into what that process actually means. And it's essentially that the yeasts that are used to convert the, the sugar in the wine into alcohol, then remain in the bottle because the hallmark of traditional method is to all the fermentation, the second fermentation happens in the same bottle in

which the wine is ultimately then sold. So all the yeast in that bottle and it dies and it breaks down. So what you're tasting when you taste the effects of lees aging is actually the flavor of the dead yeast cells.

Janina Doyle 00:14:29 Yum.

Jess Lamb 00:14:31 Yay. Which sounds horrible, but it's actually a really incredible process.

Janina Doyle 00:14:34 I just tasted it and I can confirm it tastes delicious.

Jess Lamb 00:14:40 Oh, it does smell absolutely delicious.

Janina Doyle 00:14:41 It's really bright. Isn't it? It's really, what I really like about this wine is that it's got this lively, fresh fruit, but already straight, you can taste this kind of slightly honeyed brioche note, which of course is classic. But I feel like some sparkling wines, traditional method are much more about just fruit, but I feel like, I guess 30 months on the lees, you aren't getting much more, even a slight, I guess, a slight nuttiness as well.

Jess Lamb 00:15:08 Yeah. Kind of a hazelnut-almondy thing going on. And I think it's really important when we're talking about time or lees to just mention that in comparison, an average Non-Vintage champagne will spend 12 months on the lees. So that's the minimum time that they're allowed to do that for, and you know, there's premium wines that will spend, you know, up to, even something like 13 or 14 years aging on the lees, although it's debatable. I think the research has kind of shown that it has an effect for about 10 years.

Janina Doyle 00:15:47 Ah, I didn't know that.

Jess Lamb 00:15:47 Yeah. Yeah. I think it's generally understood that it's got about a 10 year window of imparting extra flavor. And then I think after that what's already there just develops rather than any new, new flavor coming in. But so, when you consider that, you know, if you're buying, you know, a Bollinger or a Veuve Clicquot or anything off the shelves in Waitrose, that will probably have been aged for a year in comparison to this wine, which has had nearly triple that as standard.

Janina Doyle 00:16:18 It's really soft and vibrant on the palate, isn't it like, there's really like, even for me, I get lovely yellow fruits. Um, but it, the, the finish is almost like a little bit sherbet-y as well. I find this quite delicate. This is a delicate style of sparkling wine, which still has lovely autolytic characters, but yet it's actually really restrained still. It doesn't feel chunky. It doesn't feel rich. It doesn't feel opulent or heavy. I feel like it. What do you think?

Jess Lamb 00:16:52 Yeah, it's very precise. And I think, again, that's a hallmark of the cool climate growing conditions that because it never gets too warm, the grapes retain very high levels of acidity, which means that the wines don't start to feel overly cloying or overly fat because that very precise acidity kind of lifts it all and make sure, it makes sure it's refreshing. And I think with this one, you can really, you can really tell on the palate that it's got this lovely, quite full creamy texture, but it's lifted by that kick of acidity at the end that just dances off the tip of your tongue and it just lifts it.

Janina Doyle 00:17:30 Yeah, yeah. This is £19.95. It's still cheaper than your average champagne, everyone, and you can get it from Wine Republic. Um, that pour just disappeared, unfortunately, very, I warm everybody, it's very easy to drink. So as well, just for everyone to know, this is more Pinot noir dominated. It's 49% Pinot, 44% Chardonnay and 7% Meunier, but gorgeous, really, really fresh. And I

would love, again, seafood, ceviches, really lovely, fresh fish, but not any thick fish or like richer fish, very flaky white fish would be fantastic with this.

Jess Lamb 00:18:09 I would also say, I mean, this isn't a pairing that I would have myself because I hate goats cheese, but this with a bit of goats cheese. Absolutely delicious.

Janina Doyle 00:18:17 Yeah. Because you know, it's got that kind of that lift and that really soft almost like for me, that kind of sherbet-y style at the end. And so absolutely kind of to go with that saltiness of goat's cheese. Perfect. Yep. Happy with that.

Jess Lamb 00:18:30 I mean, I think with traditional method pairing a lot of the time, like I love all the kind of combinations of, you know, light, fresh fish and ceviche and things like that. But I think, I think that I really love to do is because these wines are so refreshing and they have high acidity and they've got a lovely lift. They work really well with slightly fatter foods, because that acidity just takes the edge off anything that's a bit greasy or a bit richer. So there's a real classic pairing, which is sparkling wine or champagne and fish and chips.

Janina Doyle 00:19:02 Everyone should know by now every time I talk about champagne, English sparkling wine, whatever it is, I'm like fish and chips. Just done. Let's, you know, there is no argument here. So I'm like, I'm glad that you've backed me up on that one.

Jess Lamb 00:19:13 Yeah. Or even if you're going really horrible and you're getting like a dirty kebab or a takeaway pizza.

Janina Doyle 00:19:21 Well, I mean, I would much prefer the fish and chips, but I suppose it's true. It'll cut through fat. Won't it? Absolutely. That's so funny. And by the way, I should probably confirm, I said, I called it the Premium Cuvée, but it's actually A by Arras Premium Cuvée, and this is a non vintage. So you've everybody, you've got the full name of this wine because you need to search it and you need to try it. It's delicious. So we, were going to, let's go onto the Blanc de Blanc now. Can you try not to pour it all over your walls?

Jess Lamb 00:19:48 I already opened this one, so.

Janina Doyle 00:19:50 Oh that's so, so hilarious. Um, let's see if I can actually be sophisticated. I think it's worth pointing out as well. Actually. I'll give you a little fun fact. Did you know, whoo hoo, so there you go Jess, that's how it's done. Um, did you know that Tasmania has apparently the cleanest clearest air on the planet?

Jess Lamb 00:20:08 I didn't know that, but it does not surprise me at all.

Janina Doyle 00:20:11 And I think that, again, whether this is just me convincing myself of that, but it's this super cold climate. This is a maritime as well. Everyone keep in mind, you know, the, the vineyards tend to be planted by the coast. So this is a cool maritime climate. It used to be loads of apple trees growing there. And when I think of like, you know, where, where the apple trees grow - England, you know, cold, horrible climate. But you know, so you've got this really, really cold climate. You've got this really clear air and I feel like the wines from Tasmania, they are, they're crisp, they're more linear and pure. And again, I'm, I don't know whether that's accurate to say for every wine, but I, you know, all the sparkling wines I've had from there, there's just, there's a vibrancy and a liveliness to them. Right?

Jess Lamb 00:20:57 Yeah. I think that's very true. And I think it's also interesting that where Tasmania, Southern Australia, New Zealand sit, there, the ozone layer is much thinner. And that also has a really significant effect on grape growing because that means that more UV light is permeating through, down, into, down into the growing regions. And so what UV does it help the grapes ripen really fully, but because the temperature is still cool because of those cold currents and because of the southerly latitude, that balance of ripening and cool climate, which helps the grapes retain high levels of acidity, creates exactly what you've described, which is this beautiful balance where it's got the lovely, and I mean, I find these wines very precise, poised, you know, really, really balanced, but the fruit, I think if you take English, sparkling wine as comparison. Sometimes those wines are so acidic and so fresh fruited that they can be very tart because it's just real high punchy acidity. It's very, very, very fresh kind of lip puckering lemon lime, very citrusy aromas. But because of the extra help, that Tasmania has from the UV, the fruit is more developed. And so you move from really sharp citrus to, you know, a little bit more kind of a lemon curdy, lemon peel, golden apple, peachy kind of thing, which I just absolutely love. I think it works beautifully.

Janina Doyle 00:22:38 Well, it's interesting because whilst you've been talking, I've been sticking my nose in the Blanc de Blanc, and this is so completely different to the Premium Cuvée. Now, everyone, when you have a Blanc de Blanc, it means white of white. It's a Chardonnay, most likely, unless it's from a region that doesn't grow Chardonnay. So this is a Chardonnay, 100 percent. And generally you get much crisper styles. You get, again, even more linear, very direct, which actually I do, I get a real lemony note, but it's, for me, it's like, um, a bit of sea spray. It's actually, I feel like I'm by the coast and a bit of even like sour dough. So instead of it being like brioche, like sweet or digestive biscuit, sweeter bready notes. The sourdough note I'm getting, it's because of that salty saline nature, something really intriguing on this wine.

Jess Lamb 00:23:29 Yeah it's delish. And I mean, I think Blanc de Blanc has the tendency. It can be a little bit straight down the line sometimes as you said, it is a hundred percent white grapes, high acid, very, very pure. And it can just be a little bit one dimensional. But was something like this, as you've said, you know, we know we've got the long lees aging, so that's giving it texture. It's giving it this lovely nutty, I'm getting quite a lot of kind of shortcrust pastry.

Janina Doyle 00:23:57 I'm getting a bit of croissant, but hey, potato, potato.

Jess Lamb 00:24:02 The one thing that I always really pick up in very good Blanc de Blanc is this kind of apple tart tatin.

Janina Doyle 00:24:07 Oh yes. Yes.

Jess Lamb 00:24:10 So, you know, when it's fresh out of the oven and you've got that crumbly, buttery pastry, you've got the slightly caramelized apples you've got the slight, ah just absolutely beautiful. And for me, this really, really reminds me of that. I think it's lovely.

Janina Doyle 00:24:26 Oh, I mean, I loved the other one before, but for me, my personal preference already, just the intensity, this is sharper apple fruit and more saline, so yeah, I feel, yeah, I'm just really, yeah. This, this is £22.95. So it's not a big step up from the one before and from Wine Republic again. So it's the same retailer. So you can get both everybody. So that's always useful. You can get both bottles and you can let us know whether you prefer one over the other. Again, you could do fish and chips, but

this is a bit more linear and tarter, tarty, tartier. Is Tartier a word? It has to be because I've just said it. What would you want to pair with this? What do you think? What comes to mind?

Jess Lamb 00:25:10 I think for me, this is a real aperitif wine. It's an evening kicker offer, you know, when you've got people over and you've got nibbles out, you know, you've got your palma ham and I don't know, ham and pineapple on sticks or whatever it is.

Janina Doyle 00:25:26 I haven't had that since I was five years old.

Jess Lamb 00:25:30 Did your Mum ever used to make the hedgehog?

Janina Doyle 00:25:31 Of course she made the hedgehog. Any, well, I don't want to say any good mother, but I'm in England. That was definitely a thing, right?

Jess Lamb 00:25:39 Yeah. But I, yeah, I think any kind of canape, vol-au-vents type thing. And I also think, I'm a real shellfish lover. And I think things like oysters, like langoustine. Oh my God. You know? Or like, a little bit of crab pate or a little bit of chili crab with some fresh bread.

Janina Doyle 00:25:59 Oh, okay. You're doing, you're doing wonderful things, but yeah, because of this salinity that I'm getting, I mean, if we, we can't all afford oysters pretty much every day, sadly, but it would definitely be a perfect pairing, wouldn't it?

Jess Lamb 00:26:12 Absolutely. And I mean, I know oysters is a hard to come by thing. So, you know, prawns, anything like that.

Janina Doyle 00:26:19 Exactly. And also the good news is, we put salt on things. So just put one extra little grind.

Jess Lamb 00:26:23 Loads of salt.

Janina Doyle 00:26:24 Just, stop it. You and your bad tips, do not put loads of salt on food. That's just irresponsible, irresponsible.

Jess Lamb 00:26:32 You know, that just sums up my style of cooking as well. Like again, more chaos. No recipes. Just going to put a load of salt in. Bit of this, bit of that. See what happens.

Janina Doyle 00:26:43 To be fair. I agree with you. I kind of do that. Now I think it's worth mentioning as well. These wines are fantastic. These are looked after by a winemaker called Ed Carr and he is known as Australia's most award-winning sparkling wine maker. I think 34 years in the business. And I mean, this, this winery they claim, I'm assuming it's still the same. They claim to have the most awards again for sparkling wines, 96 trophies. I've written this down. I'm not, I don't remember it. And 250 gold medals. So for anyone who's wondering, is it just me and you that love it? No, no. It's not a few other people love it too.

Jess Lamb 00:27:25 And actually, that's very interesting because going back to Brits abroad, Ed Carr was born on the Isle of Wight, he's English.

Janina Doyle 00:27:32 I didn't know that. You are so full off... Look at us Brits doing our thing in Tasmania.

Jess Lamb 00:27:37 I know. Getting everywhere. But yeah, he made his way down to Australia and started making wine there. And as you said, he's won every award going. He has had, he himself has had various lifetime achievement awards for the contribution he's made to the Australian industry. And he also, I think it's also worth mentioning, so these, this wine is looked after by an Australian brand called Accolade who make all kinds of things. They look after Hardy's, they look after Banrock Station, you know, loads of really memorable brands. But they also have another property on Tasmania, which does lovely sparkling wines called Bay of fires. And Ed also makes the wine for Bay of fires. So if you ever come across that, it's a great one. It's a great one to try. And I think that one of the greatest, well, depending on how you feel about Krug. Yeah. So Arras is often described by, you know, sparkling wine lovers and experts and people in the know as the Krug of Australian sparkling wine.

Janina Doyle 00:28:45 There you go, everyone. I mean, I haven't tasted this, Decanter magazine in 2020 picked the EJ Carr Late disgorged 2004, so from the Arras brand, as the best sparkling wine of the world.

Jess Lamb 00:28:59 Yeah that surprises me not.

Janina Doyle 00:28:59 So yes, we need to get our hands on the EJ Carr Late Disgorged 2004.

Jess Lamb 00:29:05 Yeah. That would be lovely one to try although I imagine extremely, extremely rare.

Janina Doyle 00:29:11 Um, it is, but what is not as rare is the last one. And I actually I've honestly, I've really enjoyed that Blanc de Blanc. Um, right. Um, have you opened up the other one in advance or are you going to try...?

Jess Lamb 00:29:21 Yeah, the Brut Elite, so there's going to be no more.

Janina Doyle 00:29:25 Well after you disaster. So I've got to open this one up. This one is from, easy for everyone to get hold of in the UK, Majestic £34 99 but, again there you go Jess, see look, nice. Oh, it's just foaming away.

Jess Lamb 00:29:41 Okay no one likes a show off.

Janina Doyle 00:29:42 Three out of three, to be honest, I've done, don't worry Jess. I've done other podcasts and literally poured them all over myself. And I've been sat, the rest of the podcast, like literally with a wet bum. So anyway.

Jess Lamb 00:29:54 Yeah, I've actually just looked up as well and my ceiling is dripping.

Janina Doyle 00:29:56 Oh that's fabulous. You know, if you're going to do it, you know, do it properly. So this is the Brut Elite. Obviously all of them, we haven't really talked about sugar levels. There are all Brut and you can definitely tell they are, they're dry and there's a crispness to them. So this one as well, I said, it's from Majestic at £34 99, but let's face it, nobody buys one bottle for Majestic. If you're buying six, as you should, that's your tip, please make sure you buy six, it's £29 99. So this is £29.99. That's the real price, right? So let's, moving things around so I can taste it. And let's give this, this, give this bad boy, this a little go. So.

Jess Lamb 00:30:36 So this is just delicious. This is, this has a real smokiness.

Janina Doyle 00:30:42 It's so different. It's like Walnut skins. It's oh my God. And it is actually like toast, but the actual burnt part, but not in a bad way, or literally by a fireplace. The embers.

Jess Lamb 00:30:59 Yes it is. It's just that like that warmth, that smokiness.

Janina Doyle 00:31:04 I have to say that the defining feature almost of the Blanc de blanc was that kind of, for me, sourdough-y sea spray. Premium Cuvée was just beautiful. Lovely brioche, honey. Good yellow fruits. Here. Wow. I don't, I think it's undeniable that, that anyone could not pick up the smoky vibe here.

Jess Lamb 00:31:22 This is definitely the most generous. I think if I was given this in a blind tasting, I think I would perhaps mistake it for Cap Classique. Because it's got a real is unctuousness about it. I kind of associate it, It's got very, very bright fruit, real lovely peachy pear, golden apple, beautiful thing going on. It's a little bit honeyed. A little bit of ginger and nutmeg. Spicy. It's got everything.

Janina Doyle 00:31:55 It has hasn't it. For me as well, you mentioned the apples, but there's almost like some crunchy red apple skins, like not green it's riper, without being rich in any way. Because again, it's actually pretty linear. I feel like it's the biggest, but it's not huge at all. This sees four years of aging, doesn't it? So we had four years of aging on the lees. It sees malolactic fermentation. I don't know if the other two do, but actually from feeling the weight in my mouth, you, you know, you can taste this. You can feel the creamy, the extra, yeah, exactly, the softer creaminess. Um, it's more Pinot Noir dominant, well, Pinot dominated. It's 57% Pinot Noir. There's 8% Pinot Meunier, so just a little bit thrown in and then 36% Chardonnay. So just in case anybody wants to be wine geeky on the grape varieties. This is actually quite unique.

Jess Lamb 00:32:46 It is lovely. I just, this is the kind of wine that I would describe to people as banging. It's just, it's really, really complex. It's got a real depth of character. It's got everything. It's got smokiness, it's got nuttiness, it's got fruitiness, it's got leesiness. It's got some sort of malo, but it's still lovely and acidic. It's got brightness, you know. Name a thing that you would like in a wine.

Janina Doyle 00:33:15 Funny thing is this is better quality, but I actually still have a love affair, I think, with the Blanc de Blanc, just because... It is that just because of the way I was talking about the other one, was that why? But, but this is unique. This is really, really interesting. This I would pair, it would be so good with something like a Mackerel, like warm Mackerel, because I think because of the smokiness, you want to put it again and it great, obviously acidity and it's still really pristine, it's clean, it's direct. I think it would cut through anything oily. So get a really oily fish, but something like Mackerel with the fact that it has that kind of smoky vibe going on.

Jess Lamb 00:34:02 I agree. And I think actually one thing that it's really worth talking about in terms of wine pairing is that I think traditionally people really shy away from pairing sparkling with food a lot of the time.

Janina Doyle 00:34:12 And they should not.

Jess Lamb 00:34:15 Which they absolutely should not. And I had some really lovely dinners over the last couple of years, which have been purely champagne, paired from starters to main, to desserts. And I just think, I think they're fabulous. And I think this is the kind of wine that wine people would describe as vinous, if you know what I mean by that is that real, when I think about the word vinous, in terms of

sparkling wine, it puts me in mind of a wine that was made first and foremost as a really, really great still wine, that just happens to have bubbles. It's got that complexity. It's got that interest and I think it makes them very gastronomical. It makes them very fruit, food friendly. And because this has got so much complexity, it's got their loving richness and texture. You could have this with, with anything. I think, you know, like a lovely roast chicken, any kind of fish, even, you know, like lighter, lighter meat, like we're in it's, it's late November now. So we're in the midst of game season. And I think things like Partridge.

Janina Doyle 00:35:23 Yes, absolutely. And just taking a whole load of root vegetables and then putting them in the oven. So they're roasted. And actually we forgot to say, there's a reason why this is extra smoky. It's not just for the extra aging on the lees. It's, 7% of the wine sees a little bit of first and second use oak barrels. It's taken a step up and it's taking sparkling to a very interesting place. It's such phenomenal value at £29.99. And I promise you everyone, you can take this, do it. In fact, do it, take this, go to majestic and then go and get a Moët & Chandon. You'll pay more, depending on the deal. It's going to either be the exact same price, the Moët, or it might be a little bit more. Literally take the two and compare and you will change your mind for standard champagne forever. And you'll be looking all over the world for finding the best traditional methods. It will change you. It, this is phenomenal.

Jess Lamb 00:36:21 I completely endorse that.

Janina Doyle 00:36:23 Yes, yes we do. Tasmania at the end of the day is something that most people probably wouldn't think of. And I think it'd be really interesting to see where Tasmanian wine goes. You know, the majority, I think like two thirds of the island are planted to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. That is their focus. So you can find still wines as well from those two varieties. But you know, they're making fabulous sparkling wine. There's a very good producer making good Cabernet Sauvignon. So they do have some other reds, but it is like your Pinot Blanc, your Riesling, your Pinot Gris alongside it. But it's just a really interesting island. And certainly in the UK, there are a few producers, but you'll find them in the independent wine merchants more often, but you can get Tasmanian wine and you should probably find out. 40% of it will come from the Tamar Valley up in the north. It's growing more and more. And actually, I suppose as well, we should point out you're never going to find anything in the west of Tasmania cause it's like a rainforest and I think it's one of the wettest, ironically, it's funny, we haven't even touched on it. It's like, it's funny, in the west, it's like one of the wettest areas of Australia completely, but then over in the Southeast, so obviously the eastern side anyway, but the Southeast is Hobart and it's like after Adelaide, it's the driest place in Australia.

Jess Lamb 00:37:38 Well, it's actually, that's really interesting because it's almost mirrored across Tasmania and New Zealand South Island. Because they both have these, these mountain ranges, this topography in the west, that blocks all that sea influence, which is really important as two small Islands in amidst, like down that I'm not going to distinguish myself with my knowledge of where all the seas are. But you've got, you've got the Pacific, you've got the Indian ocean in there somewhere, like there's. And then the Atlantic, like there's a lot of sea, is what I am saying.

Janina Doyle 00:38:13 There's ocean. There's water. Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink.

Jess Lamb 00:38:17 There is many waters around, around there. And so it's actually really, really key for these places that they have that protection from that sea influence, because if you didn't have those

areas of mountains and hills and stuff that was stopping all these tropical storms and what have you, it would just be too wet to grow grapes, you know? And, end of, and that's again, why, you know, Central Otago in New Zealand is particularly special because it's exactly the same as the Hobart area and kind of Southeast Tasmania. Really protected, really dry, they benefit from all that UV. And, and it's fantastic. So, you know, we have, we have a lot to thank the hills and mountains of Tasmania for because without them, the wine world would be very different and probably not quite as good a place.

Janina Doyle 00:39:09 Absolutely. And also as well, probably just to finish up as well, the winds also help control. They've got a lot of winds going on there. Um, so wind is not always a bad thing, human beings. No lots of wind and they...oh, you got my joke. Okay, good. Oh Jess, you're brilliant. Oh thank you for that. I appreciate it. I only like people who appreciate toilet humor, they're my, they're my real friends. Um, but yeah, they couldn't, they couldn't going back to real wind, that controls the yield. So we like, I think a huge thumbs up to Tasmania, right? A huge thumbs up to House of Arras, like these, yeah, I think you did a great job choosing these sparkling wines and I mean it you know, genuinely these are divine, aren't they? Um, the pricing is great. People need to get on it.

Jess Lamb 00:39:59 Yeah. Honestly, I mean, you know, in my career as an independent wine writer, I do make it a point that I don't endorse things that I wouldn't drink myself. I never talk about a wine that I wouldn't sit and drink. And never has that been more relevant than with these. I think they're all fabulous. There was also, we haven't tasted it to today and I've only ever had a couple in my life, but they have some absolutely extraordinarily good Rosés. Gosh, I've actually got a vintage Arras Rosé down under the stairs. I'm saving for a special occasion, which I look at wistfully every now and again. Um, but really, really beautiful because Pinot Noir does so well in Tasmania. And they have these lovely, some lovely red fruited beautiful thing going on, but I mean, I would be over the moon when with any of these wines, at any time.

Janina Doyle 00:40:56 I've enjoyed them. And I actually just feel a little bit emotional now. I just feel like both of us have got a bit too enthusiastic, but I'm feeling it right?

Jess Lamb 00:41:03 Yeah. I mean, that's probably also because we've tasted three wines before 11:45 in the morning,

Janina Doyle 00:41:12 It happens. Our palate is most attuned. We are appreciating them the most.

Jess Lamb 00:41:16 I've got to go into my big shop now. So this probably means that I'm going to make a lot of really extravagant purchases.

Janina Doyle 00:41:22 It happens. It happens. Make sure you get something to pair perfectly with these delicious wines. Jess, thank you for bringing your knowledge onto the podcast. Thank you for recommending Arras. And it's been an absolute pleasure to chat with you. And we'll of course, once I end this, we'll find some more time to talk again.

Jess Lamb 00:41:39 Yeah. Thank you. It's been lovely. Thank you for listening to me ramble on.

Janina Doyle 00:41:43 You are fabulous. You are absolutely fabulous

Jess Lamb 00:41:47 Oh stop!

Janina Doyle 00:41:48 Okay. I'll stop. Have a beautiful day. Bye.

Janina Doyle 00:42:00 I hope that's got you excited about this amazing island. Just 150 miles Southeast of the coast of Australia. Now, you know, it's all about quality here. Not necessarily quantity and, and that is in a large part due to its isolation, but most definitely it can compete with champagne. So what are you waiting for? Do grab a bottle when you get the chance. Now I'll leave you with a wine quote from Madame de Pompadour, a member of the French court dating back to the 1700s. She was also the chief mistress of King Louis the 15th. And so allow me to use a champagne quote again, because of course back in the 1700s, there wasn't Tasmanian wine, but as it's made the same way, let's use the term interchangeably. Okay. Now she was known to have said:

“Champagne is the only wine that leaves a woman beautiful after drinking it.”

And quite clearly traditional method sparkling wine does just that. She wasn't just a mistress, but the chief mistress. And now I understand why Jess is so beautiful inside and out. It's all those bubbles. So grab yourself a glass of Tasmanian wine and start 2022, as you mean to continue. That is all for today. Thank you so much for listening. If you're enjoying these podcasts, please don't forget to leave a comment. And especially if you're listening on apple podcasts, because that makes the podcast far more discoverable. Do you like it? If you can share with all your wine loving friends and subscribe, if you haven't already. Now next week I've got awesome episode. I had an incredible chat with, I won't tell you who, a fantastic winemaker from South Africa, and we're going to be talking Cabernet Sauvignon and the differences there and all over the world. So tune in next week and until then, cheers to you.