

Ep 153: Trading Yellow Tail Shiraz to one of the world's most expensive wines in the world Domaine de la Romanée-Conti with WSET wine educator Sam Povey (Part 1)



Janina Doyle 00:00:08 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just cannot 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!

Janina Doyle 00:00:31 Hello wine friends, and welcome back to another episode. Now, today I have Sam Povey on the podcast. He is a WSET wine educator teaching at the London Bermondsey School. He does wine tastings in restaurants and hosts private events. In fact, this year he was named one of Harper's 30 under 30 for his work, educating consumers and those in the trade. And I recently discovered him myself on Instagram. You can follow him @Sampovey.wine telling weird and wonderful wine stories. He's fascinating to listen to. So in fact, as an example, when we think of Burgundy, we think of the red grape variety Pinot noir. That's what it's famous for. But I learned from Sam himself that back in the 1300s, it was one of the powerful dukes of this state wanted to create a scarcity of wine to make more money, and in fact, banned the much higher yielding, more reliable, easier to grow grape variety Gamay, which was at that time the focused grape variety of Burgundy. But the story that I am very much invested in is his personal journey to trade an everyday supermarket wine up to the most expensive wine in the world. And so we are going to be talking on this episode about his trades so far. And of course they continue to get more and more premium. So you'll learn about the story and history of Egri Bikaver, a really full-bodied red wine from Hungary, one of the top pinot noir producers from New Zealand, a small little project in Bordeaux made by the producer of Le Pin in Pommel. And then there will be several other wines that you will learn about. So I know you're gonna find this episode interesting. You will find it educational and I just hope as well you find it inspiring. So if you haven't poured yourself a glass of wine already, do it now. And let's go over to Sam and his story.

Janina Doyle 00:02:53 Okay, Sam, I, should I say, discovered you, I found you on Instagram and you captivated me because you speak about wine far better than me. It's true.

Sam Povey 00:03:03 Thank you very much.

Janina Doyle 00:03:04 True fact. And so before we get into what is one of the best wine stories I think ever created, I want you to tell me how you even got into wine and how you ended up becoming a wine educator. Was there the moment, one wine, what happened?

Sam Povey 00:03:22 I mean, I, I wish I could say it was, it was just one moment. So I, I've been working as a wine educator now for about two and a bit years. And before that, you know, working in retail, but wine has been an interest of mine and going back for about a decade now. And, you know, if, if I were to point to sort of any one kind of instance, it was definitely the first sort of the, I remember very distinctly the first time I ever tried, to my knowledge anyway, tried Riesling.

Janina Doyle 00:03:48 To your knowledge?

Sam Povey 00:03:49 To my knowledge at least, yes. And it was at a wine tasting at university. And basically I've been convinced to go along because my friend said that they would be free or very, very heavily subsidized alcohol.

Janina Doyle 00:04:03 You are not the only person that I've had on this podcast that has basically the exact same story Yay for university free or very cheap wine events.

Sam Povey 00:04:12 Yes. So, uh, you know, shout out to the LSC Student Union Bacchus Society, you're doing great work. And we had this incredibly posh man leading the tasting. He was wearing a double breasted jacket.

Janina Doyle 00:04:27 Oh, he was really looking the part.

Sam Povey 00:04:29 Oh yeah, absolutely. You know, all of, all of the stereotypes. Um, but he was lovely and enthusiastic and introduced this wine. Said, was talking about it. And I obviously didn't recognize the term Riesling at the time at all. So he just said words, none of which had any resonance with me whatsoever. But he did say that the wine that sort of, um, a couple of helpers were pouring, smelled like petrol. And I was at the back of the room, so I had to wait a little bit of time. And, and so while I'm waiting for this petally liquid to be poured into my glasses, you're kind of thinking number one, obviously it doesn't smell like petrol because it's made of grapes so it doesn't because that's not possible. And secondly, even if it did, what would that be a an attractive quality you to, to be shouting about? And then it came round and it was poured in my glass and it, yeah, it did, it smelt like petrol. And that was, that was a real, yeah, I guess, I dunno, eureka moment, but it was, it was one that definitely raised quite a few questions. And I suppose I've now spent the last, you know, five years of my career trying to answer a lot of those for myself. Um, and I think as is the case with lots of wine people, as soon as you answer a couple of questions, more questions spring up and, and you're just, you're sort of playing whack-a-mole the whole time.

Janina Doyle 00:05:35 Down the rabbit hole.

Sam Povey 00:05:37 And now I'm here.

Janina Doyle 00:05:38 Down the rabbit hole. Now you're here. Oh, dear me. Okay, so, well now you are here and I mean we are cutting obviously quite a few years out, but you're teaching for the WSET Wine School actually in Bermondsey. That's where I did my level two, three, and four. I did my diploma there. So yeah, what are you doing? Are you doing specific levels there?

Sam Povey 00:05:57 Yeah, well I mean firstly, I, I also studied all of my, my levels there as well. So I'm working there. I've been there just over a year now and it's beginning to get more normal, but at first it

was very, very strange to be working, yeah, to be on the other side of the classroom and, but also working with a lot of the teachers who instructed me when I was doing my level two and level three. And then I actually joined and I hadn't quite finished my level four at that time. So that was, that was very strange at first. But it, it's wonderful. Having worked in wine retail, when you learn about wine, you want to talk to people about it and you want to share your knowledge. But most people go into a wine shop and they just want a bottle of wine and they want to get out of that

Janina Doyle 00:06:40 Oh, don't tell me that. It's not true. It's nurturing. Yeah, I know.

Sam Povey 00:06:44 I know. And you know, you always have to kind of funnel your knowledge and go into, no, this is, this is a nice bottle of red wine for 10 pounds and then thank you very much. And then they'll leave. So being able to sort of stand up in front of a class of 20 or so people who are all not only interested but they've paid you money to, to be there to listen to you talk about wine is a real privilege because you can have those kind of in-depth conversations that you wouldn't be able to otherwise. So I teach wine, I mainly teach level one and two and uh, beginning to teach a little bit of three now as well. So those conversations are becoming even more in depth, which is fantastic. But it's, it's been wonderful and not only teaching the courses, but we hold lots of amazing events as well, which allow us to go a little bit more off piste and being able to do, you know, earlier last year I did a three earlier this year, sorry, I did a three part tasting series just on the history of wine itself.

Janina Doyle 00:07:41 Oh wow. That's interesting.

Sam Povey 00:07:43 Yeah. And I don't know anywhere else in the world maybe where you can say, do you want to come to a tasting about the history of wine? And people go, yeah, absolutely.

Janina Doyle 00:07:51 So presumably was there some wines from Georgia in there? What did they show in that, historic tasting.

Sam Povey 00:07:57 Yes. Yeah. So we, we start, we did some wine from, from Georgia and Armenia. I think probably the most interesting wine that I showed over the course of the three tastings was, I tried to recreate a Roman style wine.

Janina Doyle 00:08:11 What is a Roman style wine?

Sam Povey 00:08:15 So it, it's one, obviously they, you know, they, they wrote down a lot and that included what they used to eat and drink and, and it was basically, it was, it was almost an aromatized wine. So I took some wine sort of fairly, kind of clapped out white wine that was a bit past its best because to be honest, it would, we would've been in pretty bad quality and we added honey and some herbs, some aromatics and uh, a good amount of water as well. 'cause it was watered down. But the thing that...

Janina Doyle 00:08:43 Of course, yes.

Sam Povey 00:08:45 Right. So 'cause they, they were drinking quite a lot, but actually it was not very alcoholic by our standards anyway. But the weirdest thing of all is that when they did water it down, they sometimes used seawater.

Janina Doyle 00:08:55 No, did they?

Sam Povey 00:08:56 Yeah. Yeah. So what we did is, is rather than sort of chuck a load of, of salt in there and, and, and let people sort of hope for the best really, uh, I just put some, put some salt water on the side and let people kind of, um, you know, adjust the saltiness themselves and do you know what?

Janina Doyle 00:09:12 Choose their fate.

Sam Povey 00:09:14 Yeah, exactly. But you know what, in, in small quantities it is, it is quite nice and you know, wine people go on and on about salinity in their wines and so on. Well I mean this, this actually had salinity, um, and it kind of works.

Janina Doyle 00:09:27 That's really interesting because, you know, I very often say to people who are just getting into wine, oh, you understand acidity bite into a lemon, fill your mouth watering, okay, now that's super high acidity. If you want to taste body, you know, you get your water, you get some full fat milk, you get some cream, that's your light, medium, full body, you know, so you talk about these different things I have never thought about potentially, I don't know. When we do taste a little bit of salinity and wine and you say to people as well, it's got this saline edge just like petrol, uh, why do you want to drink a wine that tastes salty? But actually I wonder that could be quite an interesting way, just dropping in a little bit, drinking a normal water compared to drinking one with just a little bit of salt. 'cause it would, what that would probably do as well is it's gonna round out the wine a little bit. It's just gonna ch you know, I dunno, it's not gonna be horrible. That could be a really interesting way..?

Sam Povey 00:10:22 I mean, I, I suppose the issue is when people say a wine is saline, they don't really mean it's salty and that's overused.

Janina Doyle 00:10:27 It's mineral...Well, but there, there is, I mean this is the problem. That's the conversation. What is minerality and and what are you tr...But there is, there is that thing with the saltiness and minerality where it kind of makes your mouth water in it's gut. I dunno, it's, that's, yeah. What's your interpretation? Do we have an hour? This?

Sam Povey 00:10:45 It's, I fight. Yeah, I think salinity and minerality is definitely a, a vex question I think would be fair. So should we, should we skip over that?

Janina Doyle 00:10:53 Move on?

Sam Povey 00:10:53 Um, and and that will be for an episode for another day, I think.

Janina Doyle 00:10:57 So. Okay. Because I know you have a million stories, but as we said, for another day, let's get to the wine story. Now. I was telling somebody about what you have created. And they said to me, do you know what, this is a bit like the guy in the eighties. I dunno if it's the eighties, nineties, whatever, it doesn't matter the decade, who decided he wanted to swap a box of matches for a house? Is this the story that inspired you?

Sam Povey 00:11:26 So I am part of the social media generation and depending on the age of the listeners, there might be some, some rolling of eyes right now. But I was made aware of this kind of pro..

well not this one that you've referred to specifically, but there was a, a talker in 2020 called Demi Skipper. Who lives in San Francisco and she traded her way from a bobby pin to a house. But, it very much sounds like this, her, that was a modern interpretation of what your fella did in the, in the 1980s.

Janina Doyle 00:11:57 Yeah, my fella. My fella, yeah. Okay. So, well I can't imagine only one person has ever done this. So for everybody listening and for anybody who has not been following Sam on his journey, and by the way, so it, what is your Instagram account so they can follow you now if they're not

Sam Povey 00:12:13 Very simple. It's @Sampovey.wine.. So P O V E Y dot wine.

Janina Doyle 00:12:17 Right. Perfect. So you decided one day you woke up and said, I have a bottle of Yellow Tail Shiraz, right? Is it Shiraz?

Sam Povey 00:12:28 Yeah, absolutely. It was the, the classic.

Janina Doyle 00:12:30 Yeah. Which many people are drinking. How much did it cost you this bottle?

Sam Povey 00:12:36 I, you know what, well see, it depends if you get it on club card prices.

Janina Doyle 00:12:39 Tesco's Club...

Sam Povey 00:12:40 But I believe it's around about £6.50.

Janina Doyle 00:12:43 Yeah. Okay. Right.

Sam Povey 00:12:44 Roughly.

Janina Doyle 00:12:44 So that, so just in case anybody has never heard of Yellow Tail Shiraz, this is one of the big brands. It's a very affordable wine. It's probably one of the most drunk wines, is it not certainly in the uk, I'm sure in around the world. And you decided...

Sam Povey 00:12:58 It's in its own way, it's an iconic wine.

Janina Doyle 00:13:00 And is that why you chose this wine to start your journey?

Sam Povey 00:13:04 I think the, you know, the reason I chose Yellow Tail Shiraz, it is an iconic wine, but it, it's, it's a wine that I had a very bad experience with because there was, it was once put into a blind tasting that I was doing.

Janina Doyle 00:13:18 Oh no.

Sam Povey 00:13:20 And I'll get my excuses outta the way. And I was, end of the day I was tired, et cetera, et cetera. But I think I guessed that it was a Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Not my finest moment.

Janina Doyle 00:13:27 Oh wow. Okay. So the bad experience is that you felt slightly embarrassed that your palate had let you down a little bit?

Sam Povey 00:13:36 Oh definitely. Absolutely. And I think if every wine professional's being honest, we always have these absolute clangers of sort of tastings from time to time. But that one was particularly humbling. And it is the classic and, and we see this when we do blind tastings at the school all of the time. If people, they smell a wine that is very, very ripe and very, very rich and you don't think critically about the quality of those flavors and how sort of well defined they are and and the depth of the depth of flavor and the concentration of those flavors, it's very easy to say, oh this is obviously high quality wine, even though it of course isn't. So it's caught me off guard and ever since then, it's had a special place in my mind.

Janina Doyle 00:14:17 Oh, it's haunted you.

Sam Povey 00:14:19 Yes, definitely. Definitely. Basically

Janina Doyle 00:14:21 Absolute. I think it is worth saying as well, you know, you have some of the best tasters in the world, however, they have done experiments with people and they have slipped in really entry level wines into things or, and they've manipulated people's minds telling everybody it's either gonna be a certain price bracket or led people to believe that they're drinking something of high quality. And our emotions. We are led by many factors, not just the very simple analytical palate, you know, nose, sensory. There's so much more to it. And many, many a good taster will, if they think they're drinking something good. Is that because they don't wanna feel embarrassed to say something that they think is really good, doesn't taste very good, whatever we can brainwash ourselves before we even tasted something. And that's the intriguing world of, of tasting, right?

Sam Povey 00:15:11 We are deeply, deeply fallible and very suggestible.

Janina Doyle 00:15:15 Yeah. Never trust a human.

Sam Povey 00:15:17 No. Basically

Janina Doyle 00:15:18 It's a valid point. They've done tests on people's memory and basically what we think is the truth very often is not the truth. They have, are asked different people and to describe certain like world massive events. And they said, yeah, I saw this, I saw that. And they're like, that's actually not possible. 'cause scientifically the wind would've gone this way. It actually didn't happen in that town. It happened in that town. So you wouldn't have been anywhere near it. And we can't be trusted. Sorry, everyone. So what I have not said is what is your journey? So we've started with your very iconic nightmare of a wine that is drunk by many and you have decided that you want to swap this wine to literally the most prestigious, one of the most iconic, one of the most expensive wines of the world. Which is..?

Sam Povey 00:16:10 So it is, so many people know it, of course as DRC or Domaine Romanée-Conti. De la, I think.

Janina Doyle 00:16:18 It is DE LA. Yes. And exactly. And I don't ever say the DE LA but you're correct.

Sam Povey 00:16:25 Um, so often and, and I think the reason again is I, the first video that I did, I said I would like to try a bottle of Domaine Romanée-Conti, La Romanée-Conti, which is completely incorrect. It's Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. And then, well, we'll talk about the vineyard maybe in a

little bit. But yeah, it's, it's a wine, it's a wine producer that is iconic in a slightly different way from Yellow Tail Shiraz. I think it might be fair to, fair to say.

Janina Doyle 00:16:49 I'll be honest, I have tasted Yellow Tail Shiraz many years ago. I have never tasted any DRC wines. So I mean, one would assume that they are a little, just the, just the price difference alone would suggest that they're probably a little bit different in quality.

Sam Povey 00:17:06 I would hope that if you put a glass of Yellow Tail Shiraz and a glass of any of DRCs wines next to each other, I, I would hope that we would be able to tell the difference. But the reality is that as with you, and as with I think most people in the wine industry, really, I have never tried it. I've never tried any of their wines whatsoever. And the reason is because number one, they're available in such small quantities, but number two in particular, they are incredibly expensive. And there is absolutely no way that most people, whether or not you'd live, work in the wine industry or not, would be able to afford a bottle. So taking sort of, of inspiration from these, these bobby pin to house match box to house trades, I thought I would try and do the same thing, but for, but for wine. And this is, this is the wine equivalent of Bobby Pin to house, uh, Yellow Tail Shiraz to Domaine de la Romanée-Conti.

Janina Doyle 00:18:04 I love it. Now within their portfolio, they, of course, by the way, everyone, this is Burgundy. We are in Burgundy now, in France. We, we assume that everyone will know. So this is Burgundy in France, right In the north we have eight vineyards and they release eight wines. So are you after their very top wine, the Romanée-Conti? Is, is this, you want the considered, the best wine of their's?

Sam Povey 00:18:34 The, the iconic wine? Yeah. Yeah. So for those of you that maybe dunno a little bit of the, of the background about, I think we can call it DRC now.

Janina Doyle 00:18:40 Yes we can. We can, yeah.

Sam Povey 00:18:41 Yes. Excellent. The winery has a very long history. Its origins go back to the 1200s. And as with many of Burgundy's most famous vineyards back, they were, you know, first, uh, or or or planted attended by monks, usually sort of Cistercian sort of monks. And it's a storied vineyard. It at one point was the subject of a bidding war between the mistress of King Louis the 15th. That was Madam Pompadour and the Prince of Conti. And Prince of Conti won the bidding war and added his name Conti to the Romanée bit. It was expropriated under, after the revolution, then was owned and expanded by Napoleonic General. And it's always, if you go all the way back, 'cause you know, records of the sale of Burgundian wine have been kept for hundreds of years. We know that it's always been very expensive. It used, you're going back to the 1700s, it was sold at sort of six to seven times the price of Clos de Vougeot, which is another grand cru vineyard not terribly far away from the sort of Romanée area. So it has this, it has this kind of storied character, I think makes it so iconic and makes it so sought after. And you're right, so they, they produce wine from these, these different vineyards. All of them are grand cru vineyards. So the very kind of pinnacle already of what is produced in Burgundy and the sort of the lesser of the wines starter around £2000 a bottle roughly.

Janina Doyle 00:20:09 Yeah. So this, so this would be the Corton. That one I know is the, the lowest. So yeah. Anyone...

Sam Povey 00:20:15 Yeah, the everyday, the everyday glugger.

Janina Doyle 00:20:19 Exactly. Your Monday wine, just two grand. Well actually it's more like I think \$2,000. So I mean for us maybe it's only £1,700.

Sam Povey 00:20:25 Oh, well then there you go. Then depending what the pound is doing. Very reasonable.

Janina Doyle 00:20:29 Exactly. Uhhuh really for what you get, maybe? You don't know. And then yes. What is the price of going up to Romanée-Conti?

Sam Povey 00:20:39 Yes. So Romanée-Conti is a specific vineyard that Domaine de la Romanée-Conti produce and they own the entire vineyard. So it's about, it is a little under two hectares in size. They make around 5 to 6,000 bottles of the wine per year. And I looked it up last night on the internet. The average price of a bottle of this is £21,141.

Janina Doyle 00:21:01 Boom.

Sam Povey 00:21:02 Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:21:03 You've got some work to do.

Sam Povey 00:21:05 I've got some work to do. Um, and obviously, we'll, we'll come on in a second to talk about the wines that I've sort of traded, I've traded so far, but there is a gaping gap, a chasm between where I am now and, and where I'm, I'm trying to get to, I mean, £21,000 is an average. So some of those wines are, are cheaper. I mean, there are bottles of these wines from kinda storied vintages that have been sold for much more than that, going up into sort of six, six figures a bottle. In some rare cases.

Janina Doyle 00:21:34 I wrote down, 'cause I thought it'd be fun for a wine fact in 2018, apparently they managed to smash the world record with two bottles of 1945. Now this was a really difficult vintage and they only made 600 bottles that year. But this vintage, one of the bottles went for \$558,000. And yes, the other one went for \$496,000. I don't think you're gonna be drinking that vintage.

Sam Povey 00:22:06 No. The reality is, a, as good as the wine is a, a bottle of wine from 1945 is unlikely to taste that good unless it's being fortified really, at the end of the day, that's being purchased for the collecting, the collection value of it. And, and, and, and funny enough, actually that 1945 vintage is widely forged.

Janina Doyle 00:22:26 Oh yeah.

Sam Povey 00:22:27 There's been particularly some instances of Jeroboams of that vintage being sold at auction when none were produced in that size whatsoever. So who knows, maybe I can actually get a bargain.

Janina Doyle 00:22:40 You mean a fake one? And everyone, if you wanna know much more about the stories of fake wine, there is Sour Grapes, which is an incredible film/documentary. And I've even

done an episode on fake wine. I'll put that in the show notes, the link to the fake wine. And Rudy, the guy who, oh my God, did all of this. It's a very interesting episode. And Sour Grapes is an amazing film to watch, just to know what's still out there that we need to be careful of. Yeah, I mean, for you and I, we're not spending...

Sam Povey 00:23:11 Yeah, I I'm, I'm not at really at risk of being defrauded at a Christie's wine auction anytime soon. Sorry. That would be unfair. Christie's would say that they, um, they authenticate their bottles very carefully, and I'm sure that they do.

Janina Doyle 00:23:24 Oh, that was a bit of a Yep. Um, we'll leave people to...

Sam Povey 00:23:26 No, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm sure they do. But that there has, there was a very famous incident in New York where some of Rudy's wines were on auction at, I believe the auction house was called Ackerman. And the proprietor of Domaine Ponsot actually flew to New York because he realized that these bottles were, were being forged and arrived at the auction house, I think on the, maybe the day or the day before the auction and said, we never made these wines in this vintage. They, um, they must be fake. So it does, it does happen.

Janina Doyle 00:23:58 It still happens.

Sam Povey 00:23:58 But anyway, I'm, I am hoping I'm very much hoping for a...

Janina Doyle 00:24:01 You get a real one?

Sam Povey 00:24:02 An authentic bottle. Yeah, that would be, that would be ideal.

Janina Doyle 00:24:04 So the plan is to get to the Romanée-Conti, the best one. But would you settle for the Richebourg or an Échezeaux or Grands Échezeaux, you know, any of the other vineyards?

Sam Povey 00:24:15 Maybe in a, maybe in a few years' time? If I'm not there yet, I, I would say yes. And I'll just have it so beaten out of me that I'll go yeah, that's fine. I'll take it. But no, I'm, I'm aiming I'm aiming for the top. I want to, I want to try the best Pinot Noir in the world. That that's what I want to try. And it's my only hope of ever trying it realistically.

Janina Doyle 00:24:34 Maybe, maybe And they also as well, when I only found out a little while ago, they actually have a white as well. One white. From Bâtard-Montrachet. And they make literally two barrels though, so I have no idea how much that costs, but yes, it's all about the Pinot. But they do have...

Sam Povey 00:24:50 Think that's, that's one, that's one of the relatively, it's relatively inexpensive as it happens. And I love chardonnay, so this is the tricky thing, you know, as, as I trade these wines, obviously I have to, I then have to trade that wine on.

Janina Doyle 00:25:01 And you never get to taste it.

Sam Povey 00:25:02 I'm never gonna get to, so may, maybe at some point I will ha, I will get that wine.

Janina Doyle 00:25:06 In your hands.

Sam Povey 00:25:07 And then I'll have to, and then I'll have to throw it away again.

Janina Doyle 00:25:10 Okay. Right. Let's talk about your journey so far. Okay. And hopefully anyone listening when we get to the end, if you've got something that's gonna help take Sam on his journey, get in touch, we'll be very interested. So you had your yellow Tail Shiraz, what was your first swap?

Sam Povey 00:25:28 So the first swap was tricky. Every trade that I've been doing, I've, I've basically made a little video about the wine itself and, and why you should want it and why it's interesting. So lots of people saying, oh, this is a great idea, this is fantastic. But unsurprisingly, very few people actually wanting to trade the wine. So that, it was a little tricky. But I did organize a swap and it was for a wine called 1 Vélo Pour 2. So a, a bicycle for, bicycle for two, bike for two. And it is a Vin de France. So grapes coming from all across France, traditionally at the kind of lower quality end, although there's lots of producers doing really interesting things with it. And I think this is one of them. So the producer of the wine is Maison Bertrand Ravache. They're based in St Emillion. They make a lot of Bordeaux wines. They're a big merchant. And this is sort of one of their Vin de France wines. So it was a blend of Cabernet Franc and Grenache.

Janina Doyle 00:26:21 Which is a really interesting blend, isn't it? That's not a red blend that you would see very often.

Sam Povey 00:26:27 Um, but that's what you can get from Vin de France. Sometimes they, the wine makers can do kind of what they want. And when you think about it, you have, you have Grenache, which is this black grape variety that can be quite alcoholic and very, very fruity and quite broad, but maybe lacking a little bit of acidity. And then you've got Cabernet Franc, which is on the other end of the spectrum and has lovely acidity and really fresh flavors, but can be sometimes a little bit too herbaceous and green. I can kind of see why that, that makes sense. So I, I tried to find out exactly where these grapes come from. I am assuming the Cabernet Franc is from Bordeaux, and I'm assuming that the Grenache is from the south of France, because, you know, no one's growing Grenache in, in Bordeaux at least yet anyway. And then blended together to make, you know, this sort of light-hearted, easygoing, relatively fresh style of wine. I mean, I would love to say I knew what it tasted like, but again, I haven't, I haven't tried it.

Janina Doyle 00:27:20 And then moving on. No, exactly. So you swapped that wine for what came next?

Sam Povey 00:27:25 So I swapped the next wine for two bottles of Hungarian wine. Hungary is a favorite wine country of mine. Uh, not just the sweet wines, but also their dry wines, particularly their, their dry white wines. So I swapped it for two wines, a a red called Egri Bikavér. Which is Egers Egers Bull's blood is how it's known.

Janina Doyle 00:27:46 I love it. Great story.

Sam Povey 00:27:47 And then another, another white wine called Olaszrizling. And the Bull's blood in particular was really interesting to me. I mean, I, I kinda looked up, I, I always look at the, the value of

these wines as I go. And they, you know, neither was really sold in the uk and you get 'em in Hungary for about three pounds each kind of thing.

Janina Doyle 00:28:03 Oh wow.

Sam Povey 00:28:04 Yeah. But that's, that's a reflection of, you know, buying local wine in, in Hungary, I suppose. The Bulls blood style of wine. So, um, Egri, it comes, comes of Eger, which is sort of in the northeast of the country. It's quite, it's relatively close to, to the region of Tokaj, which of course is the most famous region. And it's a blend mainly based on grape variety they call Kékfrankos. And the Austrian are called Blaufränkisch. And it's, it's big, it's powerful. It's usually quite alcoholic. The better examples are aged in oak to kind of round out the talents. And this one was as well. And the story basically goes that when the Ottomans invaded the kind of the Balkans in central Europe, they laid siege to the town of the city of Eger in the sort of 16th century. And the Ottoman sort of scouts were sort of looking at the, the castle and the fortifications. And, and they spotted all of these Hungarian troops drinking this, uh, this red wine. And their, their beers were stained and their eyes were bloodshot and they, they went back to their commanders and they said, you know, we need to be careful here because they're, they're drinking the blood of the bull. And it's obviously made them sort of mad with a sort of war rage and all of this. I mean, obviously it's not true.

Janina Doyle 00:29:17 Yeah But the wor...no, of course it's not true. The worst thing is, apart from the fact it's hilarious. And apparently they actually retreated 'cause they thought, oh my god, these Hungarians, they're filled with bulls blood and they're too strong for us. But apparently actual history suggests there was no red grapes planted in that area during the century. Yes. So this incredible story, apparently there wasn't even any red grapes. That's so sad.

Sam Povey 00:29:41 I know, I know. And it's often, it's often the case of these things. It's an apocryphal story. It's wonderful.

Janina Doyle 00:29:46 It's a great story.

Sam Povey 00:29:47 But I think it appeared in the, in the 18th oh sorry the 19th century during, you know, the height of nationalism and it's all part of, but it, it, it says a lot about hungry in that part. You know, one of its kind of foundational myths is around wine. And, um, Hungary, fun fact is, as far as I know, the only country in the world whose national anthem mentions wine.

Janina Doyle 00:30:08 Like that fact. Well, there you go.

Sam Povey 00:30:10 Including France. France's National Anthem doesn't mention wine. Hungary's does, specifically Tokaji, which of course is the most famous. But, uh, yeah, that says, I think that says quite a lot about a country.

Janina Doyle 00:30:19 Yeah, no, I love that.

Sam Povey 00:30:21 And it, and it is, it's to the country's credit.

Janina Doyle 00:30:23 And then the white wine wasn't Olaszrizling, which is not Riesling everybody. That's, it's got nothing to do with Riesling. But I imagine, I know that was probably quite, it's generally quite a crisp, fresh wine.

Sam Povey 00:30:35 Yeah. E exactly. Sort of fairly, fairly crisp, light, fresh, easygoing, and again, you know, not necessarily the world's most expensive, expensive, fancy wine. But I had two of them, which was fantastic. And then so took those two and traded them on for a bottle of wine from Beaujolais. And so this is from the cru of Juliéenas, which I didn't know how to pronounce until I got this wine, because I have to double check. I was always calling it Juliéenas.

Janina Doyle 00:31:05 I mean, honestly, trying to pronounce French words. I mean, when I'm doing these podcasts, it's almost like everyone, I'm so sorry. I'm just sorry. This show, there's the transcript. Just, you know, I'm trying my best.

Sam Povey 00:31:15 I know I'm, but it's been, it's been fun for that reason because as I've been trading this wines, I've been learning more about them and the regions in order to kinda make the videos around them as well. So Juliéenas now one of the 10 crus of Beaujolais. Funnily enough, I, I like, I like this wine. I like trading for this wine because one of the things that I say in class, when we cover the region of Beaujolais, historically, it has this bad reputation, uh, reputation for poor quality. But that has changed significantly because of how expensive its neighbor Burgundy has become. And specifically red Burgundy. And its wines like DRC that are so emblematic of this. So that lots of young promising winemakers have moved down south. A lot of investment has gone down into Beaujolais as well. And they've really championed these 10 villages. And the result has been a massive increase in the quality of, of wine that's been produced even in the last, you know, 20 or so years. It was nice to have a wine that is, is kind of part of that wider story that I suppose I'm trying to tell about wine and these iconic wines that are now really quite far out of reach for, for most people. The producer's called Benjamin Passot, again, relatively small property, really focusing on the different crus. And, and he, he produces his wine from several different of the villages in the north of Beaujolais to make a wine that is much more serious and much more complex and thought provoking than you would probably expect if you are used to drinking your kind of Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais Villages, nice, easy drinking, alcoholic cherry juice.

Janina Doyle 00:32:55 To be honest, it's really nice to have a play around with the crus. And especially if you find one producer and they have wines from different crus, because then that's, you know, Saint-Amour, which is in the far north is often again almost like the love. It's, it's soft and it's fruity and it, you know, it's it lovely red fruits and it's, it's quite a little bit more say fun. But then Moulin-à-Vent gets really serious and, and Morgon again is really big and bold and stuff like that. And so you can actually start, well what's my favorite? They're all very different, aren't they? But of course still have that beautiful roundness and fruit. But yeah, a lot of them are getting a lot more serious. So shame you had to give that one up.

Sam Povey 00:33:33 I know. I know. And, and the next one as well. So I took the Juliéenas and traded it for an English wine, which I was very excited to do. 'cause I'm a big fan of this winery. So this was The Arches, which is produced by an urban winery in London called Black Book.

Janina Doyle 00:33:49 I talk about them a lot. I know they, they just do great things with still wine and not always just Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. I like that they take things to different directions with different grape varieties.

Sam Povey 00:34:01 Yeah, absolutely. And you're right, 'cause the, the winemaker, um, Sergio is particularly focused on still wine. And I think he has really the right idea, which is basically that you, to make good quality English still wine, you basically need to age it for quite a significant amount of time, ideally in barrels. And ideally with lots and lots of lees contact. Because the thing that English still wine can sometimes lack is texture. Because if we're in a cool climate and we have less alcohol in our wines, so how do you make up for that? Get it onto the lees, make sure that it's got that nice, not overwhelming but nice kind of bready character. And then crucially that extra little bit of weight on the palate. So this wine is a version of one that he made called The Sea of Love, which is made from Pinot Blanc. So it's a special 'cause it, it's something I'd never seen before. And I thought, oh yeah, I'm a big fan of these wines. Why have I never noticed this? So basically the guys at GB wine shippers had done a tasting with Black book and Sergio and really enjoyed this barrel of the Sea of love. They sort of, you know, barrel sample. And they essentially purchased the barrel and Sergio kept it in the winery for another eight or nine months or so, essentially. Or maybe even, maybe even as much as an extra year before they bottled it. So it was this sort of limited edition kind of wine. Very interesting. Again, I'd never tried it and I haven't because I had to, I had to trade on inevitably. But it was really nice to kind of get a little bit of an insight into these sort of special additions and how they happen. And it was literally just a conversation in a winery going, this barrel is amazing, can we have it please? And they did. And they bottled it. And by all accounts it's supposed to be lovely

Janina Doyle 00:35:44 And well, it comes from Crouch Valley.

Sam Povey 00:35:47 Yes, yeah, yeah. So 16 to 17 months in Oak. But the thing that makes it really special is the fact that the grapes come from the Crouch Valley in Essex, which is the driest, supposedly the driest sunniest part of, of the uk.

Janina Doyle 00:35:59 That's what I've been led to believe. Absolutely. It's very exciting. Everyone check out that area. So you traded that and then got a little bit closer in location? In location, yeah.

Sam Povey 00:36:11 So this, this was swapped for a wine, a winery also known often by its initials PYCM, which is Pierre Yves Colin Morey. And this is a sort of a husband and wife collaboration. So you've got Pierre Yves who is the son of Mark. I mean, I know it's not pronounced Colin, but is Colin correct? Mark Colin?

Janina Doyle 00:36:30 Colin? I'm not helping you here.

Sam Povey 00:36:36 He, he's the son of a very famous Burgundian producer. And, and Caroline Morey is the daughter of Jean Marc Morey, who is another very famous Burgundian producer. So it's kind of this sort of wonder, you know, dream team sort of combination if you will. They're based in Chassagne-Montrachet, which is, is in that area to the south of, uh, the Côte de Nuits, where we find Domaine de Romanée-Conti, specializing in white wines. And this was their, just their Bourgogne. They're sort of, I say regular standard Bourgogne, but already at this stage I'm, we're getting into wines that are not everyday drinkers.

Janina Doyle 00:37:10 And they're such good producers. So even at their entry level, it's way above what is considered exactly a Monday drinking wine.

Sam Povey 00:37:20 Exactly. And, and actually, so the wine itself is a blend of grapes from the village of Saint Aubin and Puligny Montrachet. So these two, well, Puligny Montrachet much more famous than Saint Aubin. But Saint Aubin really has gained quite a, a good reputation for quality. And again, the idea of basically no expense spared wine making, lots of barrel maturation, lots of time on the lees to produce something that is quite a bit more textured and concentrated than you would expect from the rank that the wine has. Which is a lowly, just a Bourgogne. And you can pick up a Bourgogne in a supermarket for what, you know, £12.

Janina Doyle 00:37:57 Yeah, maybe even £10, just that basic Bourgogne. Yeah. But yeah, not with this one. So sadly, you had to trade this and I have to say, the next wine I would absolutely love to get my hands on.

Sam Povey 00:38:10 Yes, yes. And I was really excited. And this was a, this was a big dilemma, 'cause I had, I had sort of three, I was getting more offers now. It was getting a little bit, funnily enough, when the wine began to get a little bit more expensive, people were interested. I had quite a few offers for the, the PYCM I think because it has such a cult status. But the one that won out was a winery called Pegasus Bay, who are very far away from Burgundy, all the, on the south island. And I'm a huge fan of Pegasus Bay and particularly their Riesling, which you can buy for only about 25 pounds and it's absolutely incredible. But this was one of their pinot noirs. So I liked the, uh, the fact that we were, we were going to the grape variety that I hoped to eventually get and taste with, with DRC. The Cuvee in particular is called Primadonna. So it's their kind of top, top wine. It's made from Ungrafted Vines, which are exceptionally rare. And perhaps the most exciting thing was the age. This is from 2012. You really do not see well aged Kiwi wine in the UK all that often at all. And I basically, I looked, looked for this wine, tried to find it in the uk and it just wasn't available essentially.

Janina Doyle 00:39:16 Wow. I was so sad that you passed this on, and actually you've had their Primadonna pinot noir in your hands, but even they do a standard pinot noir and very often I see this in top, you know, Pinots is considered often the very top pinot of New Zealand in general. Like even their more standard one is always getting attention. So to have their top top cuvee and have that off. This is from Canterbury, everyone as well. So it's not from Marlborough or Martinborough or some of the other regions you might have heard, but Canterbury has some absolutely stunning Chardonnays and Pinots, don't they?

Sam Povey 00:39:52 It really, really does. And it, again, it's, it's because Marlborough takes so much of the oxygen of publicity. And to be fair, you know, it's obviously been a big role in, in making people awake to the fact that there is great wine in New Zealand in the first place. I think there is, there is a slight tension in, I'm sure they all get on perfectly fine, but there is sometimes a tension between the fact that Marlborough is so famous and such a great advertisement for New Zealand, and then the idea that there's some really, there's so much diversity and so much quality beyond what we know is as, as Marlborough, um, savvy B but yeah, it's, it's, it was really exciting as well. And there's, there's, the things I love about wine are, are when you have great stories. And I think that this winery has a lovely story from its name, Pegasus Bay, because the, the part of camp, they're just off the coast, off the Pegasus Bay, and it wasn't always called Pegasus Bay, it used to be called Cook's mistake. It's not a very catchy name for a bay. So Captain Cook obviously sort of famous explorer and I mean maybe Pirates, it wasn't these, these people are always quite morally dubious. But he had sailed around a lot of the coast of New Zealand and mapped it out. Off the coast of Canterbury, he made a mistake, which is that he saw, he was sort of sailing down the coast and he saw a bit of land off the coast and they thought, well that's an island. And then you've got some stretch of water and then you've got the coast and he sort of sailed on,

must have sailed past it. Actually, what it was was it was a very slightly submerged peninsula. So essentially he put a map that said Coast – Water - Island, but actually it was coast - big Sandbar - Island. These maps were widely distributed and in the 1800s there was a whaling ship that was sailing through this bay and was using his map. And fortunately they had come across the bay during the day and they got close to this supposed stretch of water that they could use. And they realized there was some land in front of them. So they were able to sort of turn around and not run around. And it became known as Cook's mistake. After this, uh, this slight pathological era. But the ship was called the Pegasus. And so at some point, I dunno who made the decision to sort of change the slightly mean name, but it became known as Pegasus Bay.

Janina Doyle 00:42:21 Love that. Oh, that's good. I love that. Now, after Pegasus Bay, you had to trade that in, but you came across the Bordeaux. So the last, are we still in Bordeaux?

Sam Povey 00:42:30 We are still in Bordeaux, yes.

Janina Doyle 00:42:32 Okay. Right. Yes. So we finish, we finish with Bordeaux. Okay.

Sam Povey 00:42:36 Yeah. So the next two wines are both from Bordeaux. The wine that, for which I traded the Pegasus Bay away was Chateau L'if. Again. Another one that I've had to work on the pronunciation of. Again, the thing that really got me about this wine was the sort of story behind it, and particularly the role of the sort of main proprietor, the owner who is Jacques Thienpont. So the Thienpont family are a very famous group of family of Belgian, originally Belgian wine merchants that have been involved in Bordeaux for a very long time. They're very important and they, they own some of, particularly the right bank's most iconic vineyards. And principle among this. So vineyards were in Bordeaux. They, they own some of their most famous, the, some of the right banks most famous Chateaux. But, uh, principle among this is, is Le Pin and it is one of these absolutely iconic Pomerol producers. Purchased in 1979, I believe. A fairly rundown, fairly kind of anonymous. And, uh, Jacques invested quite a lot of money into it and turned it into one of these icons of, of Bordeaux. And L'if is his sort of latest project. So in neighboring St Emillion. And again, the idea is basically the same. He purchased a fairly unknown, slightly unloved property and has put no expense, spared no expense, rather in doing it up. And particularly in, in the wine making. And the idea is to produce really small quantities of very concentrated age worthy, Merlot based wines.

Janina Doyle 00:44:20 Love it. And then you traded that to finish off with to your current situation with Chateaux Montrose. Hey. Chateau Montrose. There you go.

Sam Povey 00:44:29 You guys can't see this, but yeah, I, I have it in my hands.

Janina Doyle 00:44:32 Second growth of Bordeaux.

Sam Povey 00:44:35 Second Growth. Yes. So over to the, on the other side of the river, on the other side, the Girand on the left bank, so into kind of Cabernet Sauvignon country. And the thing that interesting me, I suppose about this wine is the fact that in 1855 there was this classification of all of the very top vineyards. And Chateaux Montrose was kind of a new kid on the block. 'cause they'd only started bottling wine under their own name about 40 years before that. So in 1850. And, and they were sort of ranked as a, as a second growth, and particularly the 2005 vintage, which is one of, along with sort of 2010 is known as, as one of these very, very, very top vintages particularly for the left bank, and

particularly in areas like St Estephe. And to have a wine that I know if someone wanted to, to have it and keep it would age incredibly well was too much to pass up. So I couldn't, I couldn't avoid, I, you know, I couldn't help getting my hands on on this wine. And again, it, it's, it's a wine that I've never tried. And I would love to. Now my understanding is that, so Chris, the guy who took L'if had, so the last bottle that he had of this, um, he tried at Christmas and he said it was, it was too young.

Janina Doyle 00:45:49 Wow. So it needs more time.

Sam Povey 00:45:50 It, it needs more time.

Janina Doyle 00:45:51 Love it. Right. And that is your story so far. Everyone needs to follow you.

Sam Povey 00:45:57 Well I might potentially be trading this for something later today, but I won't, I don't want to jinx it.

Janina Doyle 00:46:04 Let's see, let's see the story.

Sam Povey 00:46:06 What I'll say is maybe we'll be heading back to Burgundy.

Janina Doyle 00:46:09 To be continued.

Sam Povey 00:46:11 To be continued.

Janina Doyle 00:46:16 So as I finish this podcast, I can confirm that Sam is actually currently on a Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru, which is where you can find some of the best Chardonnays in Burgundy. So do follow Sam along on his journey, or if you happen to be a collector yourself, perhaps in the London area and want to help him reach his goal of a DRC, you know what to do. And so to finish off, I have a wine quote and it says:

“Collecting wine is not just a passion, it's a lifelong pursuit of the extraordinary.”

Now I don't know who said that, but I quite agree. Exploring the world of wine is an extraordinary adventure. And so join us next week as Sam helps us uncork the secrets of some of the wine regions to know about in the Languedoc in the south of France. And I shall take this as a moment to segue over to giving special thanks as always to my sponsor of this series, Wickhams Wine, which incidentally, I was supposed to tell you what award they won with the Decanter Retailer Awards a few weeks ago. And I didn't, because I want to say I was keeping you on your toes, but actually I forgot. So I'm pleased to say that they won best specialist retailer for the South and regional France. So, hey, after next week's episode, you know exactly where to go and you can use the code EATSLEEP10 if you want to get 10% off of your first order. And don't forget if you join the podcast, like share, review, all of this is gonna help the podcast become more discoverable. Now, as you sip your way through this week, may each glass give you its own extraordinary journey. I raise my glass to you, my wine friends. Until next week. Cheers to you.