

# Fine wines are just a click away



**Blake Creedon**  
grapevine

IRELAND'S latest online wine retailer, Curious Wines, has certainly gotten off to a flying start.

Launched late last year, from day one their online presence has been an easy-to-use, friendly and comprehensive site. It may be obvious that a website should, uh, work. But it would surprise you how many big, rich, high-profile firms get it all wrong with wonky links, incomplete data and hilariously out-of-date information. Not to mention one-man-band blogs that start up and then pause, like the one run by someone I could name (all right, I mean me).

No such omissions on the Curious site. You can easily browse wines by price, grape or country and get pretty comprehensive information. And, of course, you can buy online, with free nationwide delivery for a case of 12. Founded and run by brothers Michael and Matt Kane, Curious also has a retail warehouse outside Bandon Co Cork. But location don't mean a thing online. So Curious Wines joins the growing band of good Irish wine retailers who park their vans as far apart as Crossegar Co Down and Carrigaline Co Cork — but whose shop windows are all as close as your computer screen.

Another way Curious has impressed from the get-go is its propensity for mixing it up with cus-



Rebecca McCauley and Dee Geaney enjoying Curious Wines' first wine tasting event.

Picture: Pascal Ungerer

So what was on offer? Lots. The whites held most interest for me — every one of them was very good, and all were at relatively accessible prices.

They also provided some good answers to the dilemma, real or imagined, facing white wine drinkers. Broadly speaking, our perception of chardonnay tends towards the plump and ripe, while the nervy acidity of fresh sauvignon blancs can be perceived as too bracing.

Each in its own way, the beautifully-wrought prosecco, trebbiano and albariño provide interesting answers from the middle ground. Oh and we'll be taking a more in depth look at The Ned and its fellow wines from New Zealand next week.

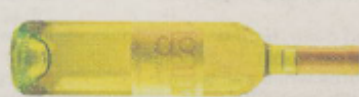
See [www.curiouswines.ie](http://www.curiouswines.ie) or visit their warehouse shop in Bandon Bypass Business Park, Tuesdays to Saturdays from 11am to 6pm.

tomers. In a few months' trading it's already held two public tasting events. Sure, it's business-sevvy promotional activity. But organised properly and with decent wines and a bit of wit, these wine tasting things are one of the best value nights out you'll find. Everyone's a winner.

The wines I'm highlighting below were among the line-up at the latest Curious tasting at Hayfield Manor in Cork City. By time I left, it seemed to be shaping up to be a great social night. Who knows, they may be there still....



**Borgo Magredo Prosecco Extra Dry NV** €19.99. This is a star of the Italian sparkling tradition — it's a crisp, fresh sparkler with just the lightest touch of sweetness and a distinct fresh-fruit succulence.



**Lugano Tenuta Maiolo 2006 Provenza DOC** €14.99. It's structure you want in your wine, not flab: This one is easy-drinking, but gets an honours mark for its lifted floral scent and lovely, slightly waxy texture.



**Valdamor Albariño 2007 Rias Baixas** €17.99. This example of the hippest grape in the cellar emphasises albariño's coolness and elegance — but is overlaid with flashes of saucy ripe tropical fruit.



**The Ned Sauvignon Blanc 2008** €14.99. New Zealand sauv blancs can be too assertively grassy for some palates, but this one brilliantly claims the middle ground: Green freshness, flashes of tropicals — but yet so eminently accessible.



**Chateau Bauduc Clos Blanc Sec 2007** €16.99. 'Sauvignon' it says on the label, an epiphany in conservative Bordeaux. Here the grassy zest of the sauvignon is beautifully complemented by a very assertive rich round semillon. My favourite.



**Heartland Dolcetto Lagrein 2007** €15.99. Italian grapes thriving in the hands of Australian high-end specialist Ben Glaetzer: Lovely savoury herbal aromas, a hint of fresh cherry and suede tannins... I'd be thinking roast lamb. Yum.

Got a comment or question? Email [blake.creedon@examiner.ie](mailto:blake.creedon@examiner.ie). Also see [www.blakecreedon.wordpress.com](http://www.blakecreedon.wordpress.com).