



Wine merchant remains bullish about future

TAURUSWines was founded on a farm in the heart of the Surrey Hills in 2001 by wine-lover Rupert Pritchett and his wife Fliss. Initially, it was a mail-order operation working out of a 17th-century cowshed (hence the name, the sign of the zodiac for the bull) with the shop opening a year later. Over the years, the business has picked up many awards and accolades, while concentrating on supplying the good people of Surrey and Sussex with great wines.

"Since lockdown, our contactless click & collect service has been extremely popular," explains Rupert. "It's simple and, most importantly, safe. But we can also deliver nationwide via our courier or locally using our own vans. We've been very fortunate in being allowed to keep trading and I'm delighted to provide some cheer, while helping other small businesses such as a neighbouring florist and pet food shop by delivering their goods with our vans."

After a successful crowdfunding campaign in 2017, Taurus Wines expanded into a beautifully renovated 400-year-old barn near Guildford with a bespoke cellar and climate controlled fine wine cabinet, as well as three state-of-the-art wine dispensing machines, meaning 24 wines are available to taste every day. This new space ushered in a roster of dinners, wine school classes and other private events.

"Once this is all over, I'm looking forward to getting our vintage Citroen H Van, Brigitte Bordeaux, back on the road," says Rupert. "She's converted into a wine and cocktail bar – and bound to get those post-pandemic parties started."

One bonus to being in the industry for so long is Pritchett's little black book of small growers worldwide. "I've been importing from some of these families for almost two decades," he says. "Their wines are second to none."

Take a look at his five favourites – you can order via tauruswines.co.uk – and see what you think.



FIVE BOTTLES TO LOCK HORNS WITH

1 Leftfield Albarino 2019 (£12.99, 13%)

The albarino grape is more commonly found in Spain and Portugal, but also thrives in Gisborne, New Zealand, crisply dancing with citrus and stone fruit. Like a 1er Cru Chablis (chardonnay) at a more affordable price.

its enticing aromatics of fresh lemon, nettle (yes nettle) and gooseberry.

2 Puech-Haut Rose 2019 (£16.99, 13%)

The Languedoc in south-west France can offer a better price-to-flavour ratio than its neighbouring Provence, as this shows; bone-dry with a pleasingly herbal finish. A very classy bottle shape, too.

4 Beauchene Premier Terroir 2016 (£13.99, 14.5%)

Coming from vineyards bordering Chateaufort-du-Pape, this is dense, rich and a little smoky, and something of a hidden gem for lovers of full-bodied Rhone reds.

3 Regis Minet Pouilly-Fume 2018 (£18.99, 13%)

This sauvignon blanc from the Loire Valley shows staggering attention to detail in the vineyard resulting in

5 Zuccardi Valles Malbec 2018 (£10.99, 14%)

The Uco Valley is Argentina's finest source of Malbec grapes – a variety that was brought there from France in the late 1800s. Deliciously concentrated plum and blackcurrant flavours are laced with baking spices. Fab with a steak.

● All wines available from Taurus Wines