



WINE REVIEWS

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ABOUT KRYSTINA MENEGAZZO

La Donna del Vino is the pseudonym of this young lady from Melbourne who completed her winemaking degree whilst being a gypsy working in vintages throughout Australia and Italy. Finally she decided to return home and sell wine instead. In her spare time she cooks, eats, drinks buon vino and is a self-confessed Neb Head (someone really into Nebbiolo).

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SHADOWFAX Viognier 2010

Goulburn Valley, Victoria. RRP \$25

In the big bad world of wine, Viognier struggles to compete with the big boys Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Poor Viognier is the wallflower waiting for Mr Right to come sweep her off her feet. Alas, she is often left waiting on the sidelines as the more common and popular ones are whisked away.

Lest we forget our dear Viognier.

Convivial winemaker at Shadowfax, Matt Harrop, isn't ever afraid to step out from the crowd and creates a small parcel of Viognier each year from the Tallarook vineyard in the Goulburn Valley of Victoria. White peach and white tea aromas meld with a soft lemon meringue-like quality on the nose. Come to think of it, this bears no resemblance to older, heavy, apricot-laden styles commonly found on the market. Instead this pretty lady stands tall and proud, beautifully fleshed out on the mid-palate with a refreshing, prickly attitude to the finish. Why wouldn't you want to whisk her away?

PENNYWEIGHT Gamay 2010

Beechworth, Victoria. RRP \$25

Pennyweight winery is one of our small guys producing a range of exciting wines. Their collection flows not only from classic styles such as Chardonnay and Gamay, but flies across into top-quality Fino, Oloroso and Amontillado sherry, as well as a range of Muscats and Ports, that is their way of paying homage to the great fortified wines of Australia.

This Gamay is produced by Stephen Morris and was a delight with a delicately sauced lasagna using pork and veal mince. Perfume-wise it was more of a ferric, pomegranate, raspberry and cherry cola combination, which embarrassingly made me commence singing Warrant's "Cherry Pie" from 1990. It is textbook Gamay with its juicy and perfectly weighted body with a warm vanillin finish. To complement the song in my head, that silky cherry fruit was dancing all over the tongue.

VAJRA Ruggeri Langhe Rosso 2008

Piemonte, Italy. RRP \$60

Albarossa is the name of the grape here. Not heard of it? Relatively new on the Italian winemaking scene, it is a cross of Piemonte's two most important grape varieties: Barbera and Nebbiolo. Interesting fact number two: Albarossa literally translated means 'red dawn'. Remember that for your next trivia night! The name 'Ruggeri' refers to the local priest and

long-term friend of the Vaira family, Father Constantino Ruggeri. Not only did Father Ruggeri use his artistic talents to design several of the family's wine labels and stained glass windows at the winery, he also has this wine named after him. And you thought your efforts for the church were sufficient? Pah-lease!

Before you go thinking that Albarossa may be similarly hued as Nebbiolo (ie: pathetically hued), stop, and think again. Pouring the Ruggeri into your glass, the first thing you or your drinking partner may exclaim is, "Christ! Check out that colour!" Yes, it is deep violet, and akin to a McLaren Vale Shiraz in tone. The resemblance is not halted there. Ruggeri is bold with lifted blackberry, black cherry and liquorice aromas. The flavour is rich and the tannins not as aggressive or as prominent as one would come to expect from a vine crossed with Nebbiolo. It's all well and integrated though with lovely length to the finish so overall it was a pleasant surprise to share.

FRANKLAND ESTATE Isolation Ridge Riesling 2010

Frankland River, Western Australia. RRP \$30

I've reviewed this wine once before but it was actually looking better this time around so here we go all over again.

This time I got hints of pear skin, with bone and white marble; scents that brought me back to the calcium formations of Pamukkale in Turkey. Unlike so many austere Rieslings, the Isolation Ridge surprises with its commanding balancing act of drive, yet without that overpowering lime-citrus flavour profile. Instead it has a tonic-like freshness, more white fleshed fruits and a steelier core. The length is always impressive in the wines from Frankland Estate and like any Riesling from a great site, picked on time and with its characteristic bold acidity, this wine has a long life ahead of it. Pair it with mussels cooked in white wine.

MOUNT HORROCKS Watervale Riesling 2009

Clare Valley, South Australia. RRP \$30

I've always found Riesling to be the wine of choice when you feel like a 'pick me up'. It's the acid that does it.

Produced by Stephanie Toole, this Riesling has more linear green apple acidity over the Frankland River. Its strongly lime-aligned citrus profile is more prominent but has excellent fleshy, clean fruit to balance that out. A tropical lychee lift adds a gentle touch to the finish.

Had Simon and Garfunkel been white wine fans, I'm sure their lyrics to the classic 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' would have read, "When you're weary, feeling small...drink some Riesling".