



WINE REVIEWS

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ABOUT KRISTINA 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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CASTAGNA Allegro Rosé 2009

Beechworth, Victoria. RRP \$34

"They've done studies, you know. 60% of the time...it works every time."

That may be a quote that I stole from the movie Anchorman - The Legend of Ron Burgundy [2004], but such a highly intelligent saying could also be applied to the wine style rosé. We are in the midst of a Rosé Revolution that hosts events through the month of November. However according to my standards of rosé appreciation and ridiculously good mathematical calculations, it is actually a beverage that has the capacity to be consumed during two thirds of the year, if not more. Melbourne weather permitting, I am referring to the period from the end of October to the start of May. "60% of the time...it works every time."

On November 10th, I celebrated the beginning of the revolution with this rosé from Castagna called Allegro, which easily confirmed its position as one of Australia's top rosé wines. What can I say? It is difficult to dislike such a pretty peach, salmon, blush hued wine. Well actually no. That was a blatant lie because if the wine did not perform and do wondrous things in my mouth then I would not speak of it so highly. Fear not, Julian Castagna has created a wicked rosé mistress of layered complexity like no other.

She beckons you forth by opening with a perfume of sweet pink musk followed by a gentle puff of smoke. Soft and playful on the palate, she kisses you with sugared almond lips dusted with vanilla icing. Texturally, Madame rosé has got curves in all the right places and in the right proportions with that final flavoured flush of rose water pinning you down for another glass. She brings an impressive 14.00% alcohol to the table, but with such a vivacious personality, it is no wonder that we are more than tempted to have a bit of a play with the alluring rosé.

LUKE LAMBERT Crudo Shiraz 2010

Yarra Valley, Victoria. RRP \$22

There comes a time in everyone's life when you have a little too much of a good thing. In winemaking, having too many grapes, or ample wine in barrel is not necessarily a good thing, especially if not all these sources reach the level of quality that you are striving for in your premium label. This is where an alternative label becomes useful. This Crudo Shiraz is part of a second tier within the range made by the laconic Luke Lambert in the Yarra Valley, who sure as hell makes up for his quiet demeanour with a roaring offering under his premium self-titled label using Syrah and Nebbiolo.

In the case of Crudo (Italian for 'raw'), it has been fittingly crafted in a very easy drinking style using no oak, wild yeast and a fair whack of whole bunches in the ferment. Ultimately, it promotes a gluggable red under the \$25 price bracket that did not go amiss for myself and a friend on a carefree mid-week dinner.

Dark berry fruited with spices of clove and a touch of pepper, this is cool climate Shiraz fruit at its most approachable. And it even gives a little at the finish. A lack of fining and filtration means you will discover a nice bit of sediment in the bottom of your bottle, which is just another less interventionist direction taken by this quality-focused lad. Forget the raw food eating fad. Any stomach would find it more inviting to jump on board the raw wine drinking bandwagon instead.

PROTERO Gumeracha Nebbiolo 2006

Adelaide Hills, South Australia. RRP \$63

Here is the ol' chap that deservedly won the Best Wine trophy at the Australian Alternative Varieties Wine Show held at the beginning of November. For an event that highlights and champions the planting of less known native European and other world varieties on Australian soil, it was wonderful to see such a poised, aged wine take the limelight and at the same time pay testament to the long-standing efforts as it was drinking so perfectly.

Being 2006 and a Nebbiolo, you expect that characteristic brick red tint when it is poured into the glass. There are still hints of those youthful fruits that would have been more prevalent a number of years back. Developing in their place however, there are flushes of dark chocolate, touches of delicate, black cherries and an aromatic lift of candied lemon on the finish that is reminiscent of some Piemontese Nebbiolo wines when they are in that cross-over phase from an adolescent into its more mature adult stage.

With age, the tannins have become more like soft Egyptian cotton sheets in mouth-feel compared to a more muscular sheet of linen that they would have been like in their youth. The delicateness of this mid-weighted wine is balanced in fruit flavours of red cherries and violets and earthen tones like truffles. This would match perfectly with home made Italian tajarin pasta and fresh shavings of truffle on top, even though those delectable, ugly balls of fungus will leave a perpetually distracting aroma.

The wine was crafted by Stephen Pannell who makes his own award-winning Nebbiolo in the Adelaide Hills under his S.C Pannell label. I unfortunately do not personally have a trophy to give the Protero, but would a gold star suffice?