



WINE REVIEWS

Words and photo by Krystina Menegazzo



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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NARKOOJEE Pinot Noir 2009

Gippsland, Victoria. RRP \$24

I sat there gazing at the Pinot Noir before me, which at first glance had the appearance and hue of a deep, unfiltered Burgundy.

"Won't you take me to funkytown!" I sung to myself.

This steers away from the more ubiquitous style of primary fruit-driven Pinot Noir that you tend to find at this price range. In fact, I'd almost dare to say that it's a little naughty to be offering such chompy, boastfully-flavoured savoury goodness so cheaply.

How very Mrs Robinson!

What a pretty, feminine, magenta hue this presented. It was also coincidentally similar to the new Dior Rose lipstick I had purchased the day earlier.

The initial entry on this wine from Bruno Porro is one of softness. As it meanders through, an emergence of flavours rings true of sour plum and cranberry that are coiled in ivy.

It boasts an honest level of liquid power, whereby the lack of structuring tannins (a trait of the Dolcetto grape) means that the wine coats the mouth from the tip of your tongue to the back of your throat in one fell swoop. A pleasant sensation, if I do say so myself.

There is that typical Italian element of blanched almonds to the finish with a not-so-characteristic hint of cinnamon. How dandy. If you are keen to test the more serious side of Dolcetto, then this drop will do it for you quite easily. From Boccaccio Cellars.

TORZI MATTHEWS Frost Dodger Shiraz 2008

Eden Valley, South Australia. RRP \$30

I adore the way that grandparents recall their memories of a trip to 'the pictures' (Gen Y readers, that's 'the movies' to you). Turns out, it provides a fitting metaphor for the descriptive journey of this Eden Valley Shiraz.

Breathing in the wine puts you next to your grandmother whom you're standing next to in line for your tickets. Oh yes, she smells like peppermint and sage (fortunately not like mothballs). Giving the wine some air, you're

pushed forward to the candy department of the cinemas surrounded by scents of boysenberry ice-cream and red currant lollies.

As you enter the theatre, everything becomes a little sinister and darker where the palate speaks from more of a blackcurrant and sassafras base. Lucky that you're not here to see a horror movie, finding that the black-fruited goodness on entry mellows into savouriness and works well with a tannic structure boasting the perfect amount of grip.

The protagonist of the film is a Shiraz from the Eden Valley, who on appearance, operates incognito as a wine much bigger than it actually is. But all that gentleness on the palate, combined with those deeply flavoured components, work to highlight the subregion of the Barossa Valley as one that produces drops that are really worth supporting.

DOMAINE COTEAU DE LA BICHE Vouvray Sec 2009

Loire Valley, France. RRP \$26

I can't help it. Every time I think of the Chenin Blanc wines from the appellation of Vouvray, I think of Buble. Yes. Michael Buble. Vouvray Buble. It all started when I was talking with my local wine purveyor, Bottega Tasca, about what to have with an asparagus, sapphire blue cheese and porcini risotto I was preparing for myself that evening. We headed to their French section. Amongst all the Rieslings and the Chablis, there stood the wine I would take away. The Vouvray.

As soon as he suggested it, Michael Buble came soaring into my conscience, sashaying and singing 'Moondance', 'Sway' and unashamedly, my favourite, 'Just The Way You Look Tonight'.

Thank goodness that as soon as I got home and cracked the bottle (French white under screw cap - you beauty!), I was able to rid my mind of a crooning Mr Buble and instead focus on the swanking wine before me. A perfume of Royal Gala apples and yellow wintersweet florals enticed me to take the first sip, which had a rounded cotton candy creaminess to the finish but with a characteristic wired acidity to balance that big boy out. I must thank the lads for their suggestion the next time I see them, as it was fragrant enough to challenge the heavy aroma of blue cheese and with a cutting acidity, it wiped my palate clean too.