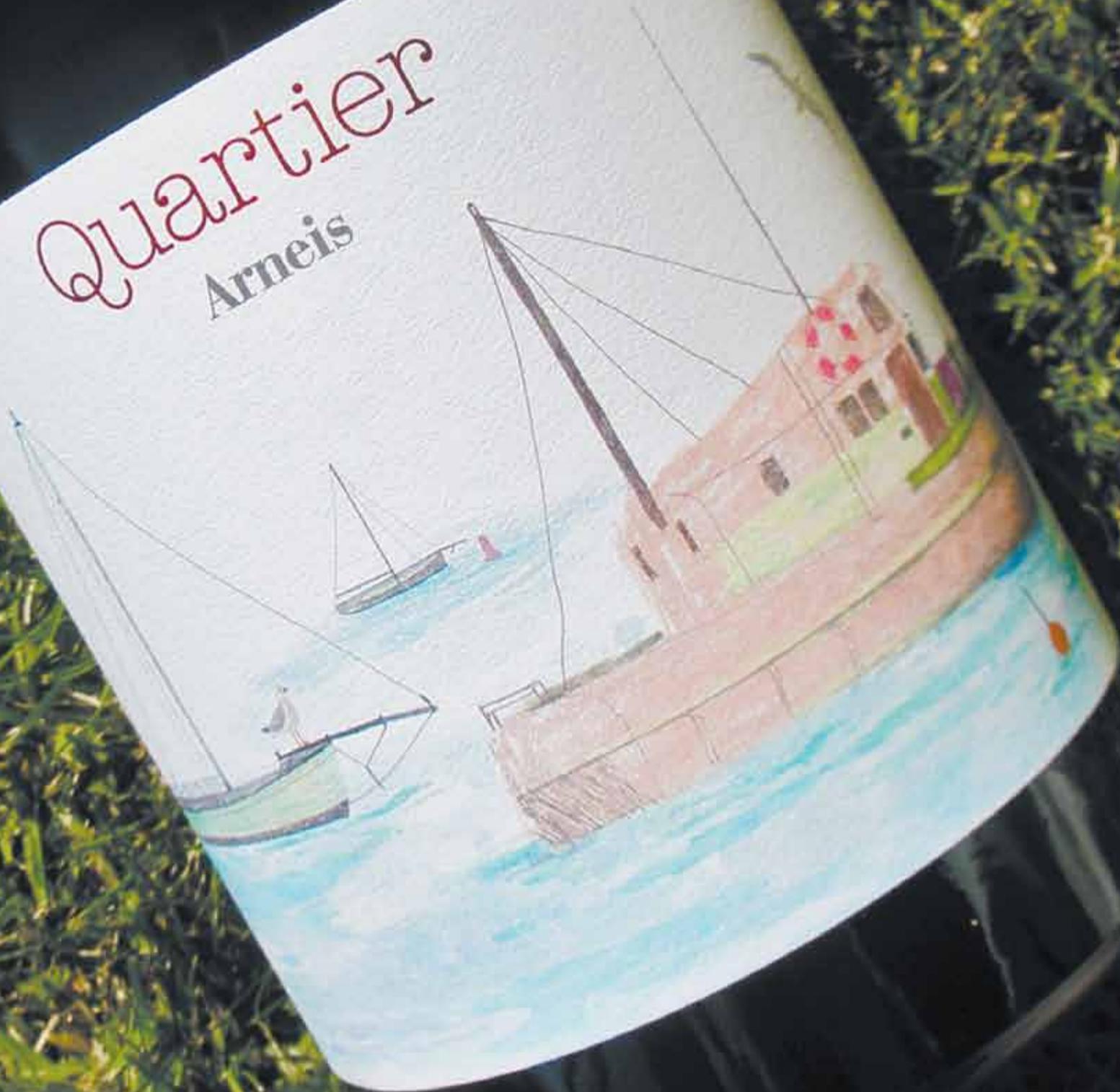


Quartier

Arneis





WINE REVIEWS

Words and photo by Krystina Menegazzo

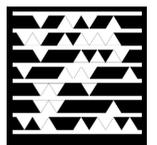


ABOUT KRYSTINA MENEGAZZO

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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(DETAILS ON PG. 3)



QUARTIER by Port Phillip Estate Arneis 2011

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. RRP \$30.00

People tend to match wine with food and vice versa. It is an aspect of working with wine that I adore. Food AND wine? How could you not? However I also have an alternate matching battle going on in my head. Not only am I constantly thinking about food, but my mind has the habit of immediately wondering which song might suit the style, the flavours and the whole package of the wine before me. I'll admit, it's a bit strange.

Unashamedly, it turns out that my choice of Caribbean-style melody and dance seen in Kaoma's 1989 version of 'Lambada' was the perfect accompaniment. This may seem non sequitur, considering that we are talking about the locally grown Italian white grape called Arneis, but allow me to explain as there is always a method to my madness.

Lambada, meaning 'strong slap', is a Brazilian dance where the dancers' abdomens touch, moving together in a sensual wave-like motion. The Quartier Arneis acted just so with its whip of refreshing acidity, playful herbal edge, pineapple juice tartness and a light creaminess spinning through the middle that left me in a delightful state of perpetual gaiety. I suppose it was the combination of these effects on a balmy autumn evening on the terrace at Madame Brussels alongside the fun packaging seen in the artwork's swirling seascape and lilac-hued closure. Who knows what your song would be, but if this zinging wine can transport me to the Caribbean when it hits my lips, I'm not going to complain.

ULITHORNE PATERNUS Cabernet Shiraz 2008

McLaren Vale, South Australia. RRP \$45.00

The Ulithorne Paternus is a beautifully blended mix of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32% Shiraz. This is exactly the sort of wine I grew up drinking with my Dad. Of course these were homemade versions fermented down in a shed on our farm. After a solid ten year winemaking period over various vintages, my dad realised he had accumulated enough homemade wine to last him through the next five winters and our little family hobby came to a close. However it all worked out in the end when I, his daughter, became obsessed with wine. Problem solved. A never-ending supply of wine in the house. Having grown up with these blends I tended to steer clear from them in wine stores, only because I felt that I should be trying something different. That certainly was a silly way of thinking as I have now come to realise what I have been missing out on.

This wine brings memories of our farm flooding back to me when there used to be a paddock behind ours filled with a herd of dairy cows. Now, I just want to clarify that I love cows and I am by no means trying to suggest this wine smells or tastes like any offensive by-product of a cow. On the contrary, it is the more likeable elements of cowhide leather and salt block that are infused with bitter chocolate and a potent lift of black currants and cinnamon, that make this wine so delicious and reminiscent of cattle. The superfine tannins edge their way along the mouth and are followed by a delectable savoury edge leaving you with a wonderful saline finish.

I recall trying this at the tasting I went to and immediately started thinking of food I would like to eat it with. Hmm. A beef burger would not go astray...

PLAN PÉGAU Sélectionné par Laurence Féraud Lot# 2009

Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Southern Rhône Valley, France. RRP \$28.00

The Southern Rhone Valley region in the south of France is home to the highly acclaimed and expensive Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines. This Plan Pégau red comes from a collection of the vineyards in this renowned area, but is labelled merely as a French Vin de Table (table wine) and costs a smidgen of the price. I just patted myself on the back for discovering that little nugget.

Like its more sophisticated brother, this is a blend of a great number of red varieties, but includes other 'foreign' grapes as well. The majority is made up with Grenache, then smaller amounts of Syrah, Carignan and the balance a haphazard concoction of Mourvedre, Merlot, Alicante and Cabernet Sauvignon. The four-digit 'lot number' on the label manages to sneak its way around the strict French wine laws which dictate that Vin de Table wines can not list the vintage date on the bottle. Take THAT, Frenchies!

This is an easy-going red that is well suited to end any type of festivity that involves feasting, particularly when the thought of putting any more food in your belly is more offensive than opening a bottle of red wine. This is exactly how the Plan Pégau ended up on my lips on Easter Sunday. It is medium-bodied, with loads of cherry fruit and a floral lift that reminded me of picking one of my mother's burgundy roses in the rain and then accidentally dropping it in the mud. So pretty, yet with a distinct rustic element, or as some might call it, a touch of Châteauneuf funk. This is a delicious wine and a good entry point into the Châteauneuf-du-Pape style. If you are the type of person who is not afraid of a bit of funkiness in your wine, then this is the perfect place to start.