



Montevecchio

Rosso
2011

Heathcote Victoria

Estate grown & made by the Chalmers Family

Wine of Australia

750ml



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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MONTEVECCHIO Rosso 2011

Heathcote, Victoria. RRP \$23.00

If this wine were a mix tape, it would inevitably be a hodgepodge of music sung in different languages. To the unsuspecting, that might seem like a confusing compilation, but in fact, it could not have been put together more professionally. The Monteverchio Rosso is produced by the avant-garde and grape-loving Chalmers family, now working out of Heathcote in central Victoria. It is a co-fermented field blend of shiraz, lagrein, nero d'Avola and sagrantino grapes, the latter three being Italian grape varieties that originate from completely different regions with their own unique dialects: Trentino Alto-Adige in the north, Sicily in the south and Umbria in the centre, respectively. Hence the hodgepodge comment.

Each component in this blend works to add its own magic. The shiraz offers a mountain of flavours that come across in a thick thread of violets, peppercorns and an unmistakable scent reminiscent of red meat slapped on the barbecue. These sit happily alongside the cooler plum of the lagrein, the juicy body of the nero d'Avola and a lasting black cherry element and dusty finish of the sagrantino. With a light tannic backbone to finish, this estate-grown and made style is eminently quaffable and fortunately not one to hurt the wallet either. Available from Bottega Tasca, Vintage Cellars CBD and Rathdowne Cellars.

OCCHIPINTI II Frappato 2009

Sicily, Italy. RRP \$65.00

I was drawn to this bottle because like so many things out there in Wine Land, I had never heard of nor tried the frappato grape before. Of course, being the geek that I am, I headed straight to my trusty wine books to get a better idea of what was in store. The red frappato grape grows in the southeastern end of Sicily near the town of Vittoria where it is commonly found in a blend for Sicily's only DOCG wine, Cerasuolo di Vittoria. Thankfully I didn't go straight to Wikipedia, which simply stated that frappato produces 'wines with a distinct grapey aroma'. Wow. Who'd have thunk it?!

Occhipinti is the label made by a young Sicilian lass named Arianna Occhipinti. She is already a star in her region and to be honest, I think I've developed a little bit of a crush after reading up on her. She studied winemaking over the last decade under the guidance of her uncle, Giusto Occhipinti, who operates

the famous COS winery in the same area. Her wines are produced from biodynamically grown grapes and produced in a minimalist, almost rustic manner, with natural fermentations and no fining or filtration.

I brought this along to a dinner at Vicasia in Albert Park, where my criteria was to 'bring a fragrant red'. I chose wisely. At least aroma-wise, I attempted to dig a little deeper than Wikipedia and pick up more than just 'grapes'. There were cranberries and forest floor aromas in this mid-bodied, bright acid red. Admittedly, the rusticity of the winemaking technique seemed to have spread to the final product with a playful whiff of horse. Looking beyond that though, I found the wine was overall wonderfully balanced, lively and with ample wild berry and mineral nuances to dominate the scene. Imported by Addley Clark Fine Wines.

HIRSCH Zöbing Riesling 2010

Kamptal, Austria. RRP \$38.00

A few months ago, I thought it sounded like a good idea to attempt an Austrian wine scholarship. The prize for the students who scored the best in the exam was a trip to Austria's famous wine regions. I did not come even close to winning, but the main point of my attempt was to stick my nose in a book and study up on a country I was not as familiar with (compared to say, Australia and Italy). The other enlightening tidbit I picked up from that experience was just how bloody delicious the array of Austrian wines are. The focus for the scholarship was on the white wines, which were generally either Grüner Veltliner or Riesling. We were given a range of wines to try that showcased their beauty hailing from all the different regions in their own unique style.

Months later and I have picked up this Riesling from the Kamptal region in Austria, located 70km north of Vienna near the Danube and an area more influenced by the rivers, thus experiencing hot days and cool nights. The Hirsch Estate was founded in the late 1800s and is today run by great grandson, Johannes Hirsch. Those Austrians sure know how to keep it in the family. Zöbing is the name of the village near the 15-year old vineyard where the fruit was sourced. This dry Riesling shows Tahitian lime acidity, wet stone flavours and a slatey finish. It is taut and mouthwatering, just like that other flexed Austrian export, Arnold Schwarzenegger, used to be. Bottled under screwcap.