





WINE REVIEWS

Words and photos by Krystina Menegazzo

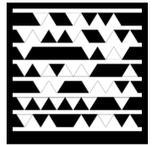


ABOUT KRYSTINA MENEGAZZO

La Donna del Vino is the pseudonym of this young lady from Melbourne who worked in wineries throughout Australia and Italy. After years of gallivanting she returned to Melbourne to market wine and share her love of all things vinous. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, gardening, drinking good vino and is a self-confessed Neb Head (someone really into Nebbiolo).

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(DETAILS ON PG. 3)



MOON STRUCK Pinot Grigio 2013

Strathbogrie Ranges, Victoria. RRP \$20

To be completely honest, I was not particularly fond of this label straight away. How could I be? There on the shelf was a hideous creature looking at me with a snarl not too dissimilar to those nasty goblins from Harry Potter. I suppose the moral of the story here is to not judge a book by its cover.

Moon Struck is produced up in central Victoria in the Strathbogrie Ranges. The Pinot Grigio grapes were supposedly harvested in the middle of the night at the witching hour where creatures like the one on the label obviously come out. Avoiding the gaze of the man on the label, I poured the wine for my partner and was surprised at the beautiful coppery hue. A little research explained that the team at Moon Struck has allowed the natural colouring of this grape to shine through in the winemaking.

This Pinot Grigio opens with aromas of rockmelon, pink grapefruit and dry pear cider. My partner summarised it like "a summer fruit salad in your mouth". The palate shows lovely fruit weight, which is a nice contrast to overtly lean styles of Pinot Grigio that you sometimes find. The texture of this wine was a highlight and proved to be generous enough to balance a mildly spicy korma curry dish. Delicious.

Stockist: King & Godfree

BENANTI Pietramarina Etna Superiore 2008

Mt Etna, Sicily. RRP \$87

The late Len Evans is an Australian wine legend and once wrote an interesting piece titled the Theory of Consumption, in which he suggested to the general public to drink wine often and drink well. I follow this theory out of respect for the great man, which helps as I have built up a pretty little wine collection over time. The good thing about Len Evan's theory is that it means you do not necessarily wait for the 'very special occasion' in which to open that particular bottle because, well, who knows what will happen tomorrow. Sometimes all we are looking for is an excuse. In the end, my excuse to open this expensive bottle of obscure Mt Etna volcano wine eventuated as I had had a great day and the sun was shining on the first day of spring.

Benanti is a pioneer for bringing the varieties of Mt Etna onto the global market. Pietramarina is made from one of Italy's most exciting and great native white varieties, carricante. It grows specifically on Mt Etna at high altitudes, in this case at 900 metres above sea level. The name

Pietramarina makes reference to the single vineyard site in the commune of Milo on the eastern slopes. Vineyards located in this unique commune warrant the designation 'Superiore' on their label because of the specific geography. On the winemaking side of things, Pietramarina sees no oak but rests on its lees for one year.

Tasting this wine has been one of the highlights of my year and I am rapt that I have one more bottle stowed away. It has a full, beguiling nose of powdered malt, crushed almond, pear and mandarin peel. There is nothing quite like it.

Pietramarina showcases carricante's characteristic high acidity, which balances nicely with the mid-palate pear and almond notes, but also offers incredible ageing ability to the wine. The 2008 is the current vintage and is as fresh as a daisy. Try this unique and beautiful wine with all manners of fish and shellfish.

Stockist: Enoteca Sileno

MAYHEM @ ANAKIE Three Feisty Femmes Pinot Noir 2012

Geelong, Victoria. RRP \$22

Mayhem @ Anakie is a wine venture combining the skill sets of Gus del Rio and two winemakers, John Durham and Doug Neal. Mr del Rio has the vineyards on the old volcanic slopes of Mt Anakie and is involved in all stages of the grape's and wine's progress, while Mr Durham and Mr Neal combine their years of experience and Yin and Yang personalities to create this Pinot Noir using both traditional and less rigid methods of winemaking.

At harvest, half the handpicked fruit was transferred uncrushed as whole bunches to closed fermenters to facilitate carbonic maceration, followed by indigenous yeast fermentation. The other half of the blend was crushed and fermented in a more conventional manner. After a fortnight the wine was left to mature in 1-5 year old oak barrels to minimise the effect of any new oak. The result is a wine that has personality and effectively speaks of the Geelong wine region. This characterful Pinot Noir has plenty of grit and earth with aspects of iron and a plush-textured, bloody flavoured palate at the fore. There are initially elements of pretty cranberry and raspberry fruit, but this blends into the soft, rounded texture of the wine and flows into the spicy rocket leaf finish. Drinking nicely now and was a surprisingly decent match to barbecued soy and ginger-marinated chicken thighs.

Stockist: Bottega Tasca