





WINE REVIEWS

Words and photo by Krystina Menegazzo

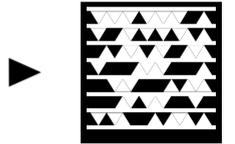


ABOUT KRISTINA MENEGAZZO

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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(DETAILS ON PG. 3)



SHADOWFAX Minnow 2011

Estate grown in Werribee South, Victoria. RRP \$27.00

The bottle of Minnow sat on the table with its retro Space Invader-like colours flashing back at me as I stared at it intently. I was trying to figure out the wine before I had even cracked its seal. "Would you be small and of little power?" I wondered, "or was there something a little fishy going on?"

The team at Shadowfax and winemaker Matt Harrop decided a few years ago to rip out a section of shiraz vines and graft over them with red varieties typically found together in southern France. The new kids on the block were cinsault, mataro, carignan and grenache. Wine was made from these vines not long after. The blend has proven to be very successful as a lighter style made from the rich red soils of Werribee South.

In the wine glass it is coloured the palest but prettiest ruby. The aromas are a delectable concoction of spices, bay leaf, wild berries and cranberries, with a touch of pink peppercorn from the vast amount of uncrushed whole berries in the ferment. Harrop was adamant from the start that the wine would be matured in old oak. The end result is this magnificent medium-bodied wine that makes for some very easy drinking. So much so that not long after opening the bottle, it was already empty in my hand. Aha! I knew something fishy was going on. You have been warned. Available to purchase at Shadowfax cellar door, The Wine House, or even by the glass at Taxi Dining Room.

QUEALY Friulano Amphora 2011

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. RRP \$27.00

July is salami season. By the time you read this I will have already spent one Sunday on the Mornington Peninsula shivering in the early morning air and getting my hands dirty producing a variety of cured meats. Fingers crossed my session is a success! The salami season got me pondering winter whites. I wanted to find a white wine that could be eaten with salami and other rich foods. I ended up discovering something that would accompany Italian-style smallgoods so deliciously that it would have been folly for me to look any further.

Friulano is a staple variety of the north-eastern corner of Italy in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region. The grape now has one pioneer winemaker, Kathleen Quealy, giving it a turn on Australian soil. Quealy crafted the Friulano wine in the Mornington Peninsula at her Balnarring vineyard.

Not one to shy away from unusual grape varieties, she gave the grapes 24 hours of skin contact before fermenting the juice in large 800 litre terracotta amphorae. The result is a deep yellow wine with a delicate and generous feel in the mouth. It also has some of the most intriguing flavours I have tasted for some time. I was hit with papaya, bay leaf and a prick of chilli with a warm almond finish. With its gossamer-like texture and that combination of crisp acidity and creamy mid-palate, I swooned. I had found my charcuterie white match at last. Available in retail at Europa Cellars and Bottega Tasca or even try it at bars like Casa Ciuccio in Fitzroy.

ALAIN GRAILLOT Syrocco Syrah 2009

Product of Morocco. RRP \$32.95

I have wanted to travel to Morocco for a while now but the timing has always been a little off. So there was no hesitation on my part when I stumbled across this bottle in South Melbourne's Prince Wine Store...a little something to whet my Moroccan appetite. Morocco might not have the most recognised reputation for wine, but when such a reputable name is behind the project, you can be assured it will be a fine example. The reputable name I am referring to is French Rhone winemaker Alain Graillot. I would love to say the story unfolded with the classic, 'A Frenchman and a Moroccan walked into a bar...[insert incredibly witty joke here]. However, the actual tale of how the wine was eventually born came about when Graillot went cycling in Morocco and came across the Domaine des Ouleb Thaleb winery. The image of the two men atop a tandem bicycle next to a palm tree that adorns the label is a charming representation of this joint venture.

The Syrocco uses the syrah grape and offers a thick, jooby wine full of freshly picked blackcurrant and blackberry aromas. The palate is relatively soft, but surprisingly dense due to these bolder flavours and some blood plums also add depth. Despite the gentle entry, the finish has a firm, rustic grip, almost like shaking the old worn hands of a farmer like my dear grandfather.

So I may be hopeless at creating jokes, but at least drinking this wine has not deterred me from making the trip to Morocco in the hopefully not-too-distant future. It is the Moroccan culture, scenery and food that I am ultimately after, but who knows, I may find myself trying more of their wines too. Available online at International Fine Wines.