





WINE REVIEWS

Words and photos by Krystina Menegazzo

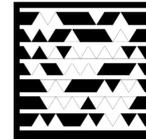


ABOUT KRYSTINA MENEGAZZO

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)



CRITTENDEN ESTATE Los Hermanos Saludo al Txakoli 2012

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. RRP \$25

I love it when a wine surprises me, especially when I know nothing about it upfront. The Txakoli from Crittenden Estate was exactly that type of wine. Txakoli (pronounced shark-o-li) is a classic white wine of the Basque region in northern Spain. In this area the locals will spend their evenings sipping Txakoli (typically a blend of three more obscure varieties) while eating at Pintxos bars. Crittenden Estate has used one of the varieties, Petit Manseng from the King Valley, to replicate this style of wine with the aim being to make a wine more for enjoyment as opposed to analysis. While I was unable to replicate the true experience of sitting in a Pintxos bar, I did my best and sat on my balcony and sipped away under the evening glow of the warm setting sun.

The first thing that caught my eye was the light spritz effect in the glass followed by lemon and mineral sea shell freshness with lingering elderflower aromas. Upon tasting it you have this dry, crunchy acidity that is crying for some oily, bite-sized seafood nibbles. The final tickling effect of the spritz was absolute joy in my mouth. In saying that, I sincerely doubt one bottle of Txakoli would go far among my friends on a warm summer's evening.

Stockists: Retail outlets such as Toorak Cellars or Carwyn Cellars in Thornbury, or on pour at Bishop of Ostia and Movidia Acqui

JOAQUIN 110 Oyster Greco di Tufo/Falanghina 2008

Avellino, Campania, Italy. RRP \$70

The first thing that came to mind when I saw this wine was, "Why on earth has this Campanian producer Joaquin called its wine 'Oyster'?" My confusion stemmed from a realisation that the Avellino area, where the wine is produced, is located inland and more than 50km away from the sea. An oyster could not be that ubiquitous in such an area, could it? Never one to shy away from a good story, I probed and prodded until Raffaele, the winemaker, divulged the details albeit in a partially mistranslated Italian/English manner. The team at Joaquin had initially wanted to call its blend of the native white Greco di Tufo grape (95%) and Falanghina grape (5%) 'Perverse', primarily because it was considered a perversion to make a wine so full yet with such marked acidity and an extreme use of battonage (periodically stirring the spent yeast in the barrel with the

wine). Thankfully, a quick search on Google Translate highlighted the negative connotations associated with the word 'perversion' (really, where would we all be without Google?) and instead 'Oyster' was chosen as to the team it represented a kind of luxury that was not had very often but still extremely fresh. A bit long-winded I know but a satisfying explanation nonetheless.

This is one of the most complex southern Italian white wines I have tried. Its colour is a deep golden yellow and it has a pervasive nose of yellow peach, butterscotch, dried Christmas cake fruit, overripe oranges, smoke and baklava buttered pastry with hints of whisky. It is fresh and fruity yet with an unravelling depth. The palate has a smooth entry followed by a warming sensation, not unlike drinking brandy, then strikingly at the finish, there is ample mid-palate richness and surprising acidity. Joaquin has used ancient Italian grapes with an intricate web of flavours that will take you on one hell of a journey.

Stockist: D.O.C. Delicatessen, Carlton

SAVE OUR SOULS (SOS) Rosé 2012

King Valley, Victoria. RRP \$20

You realise how small the world is when you work in the wine industry. Not too long ago I was browsing the shelves of an eyewear store in Prahara and chatting with the owner when we somehow managed to branch off onto the topic of wine (ahem, typical me behaviour). Give or take a little chit chat, I came to the quick realisation that the man I was speaking with was Jason Searle, a savvy eyewear aficionado and one part of the wine-loving duet alongside acclaimed winemaker William Downie from Save Our Souls wines. This pair has crafted a rosé perfect for antipasto and easy-going spring/summer situations. It is made from Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon fruit out of Victoria's King Valley and caught my attention with its pale Bloody Mary hue. It has a typical strawberry cream nose playing against more quirky aromas of tomato skin and mint. The wine is made to be a super dry style with a nice textural mid-palate, not unlike a southern French rosé. It has a fairly tart acidity that is balanced by a creamy kick to the finish. All this serves to make it the ideal choice the next time you find yourself in the sun with plenty of picnic fare.

Stockist: United Cellars