

Molly's Bottle Club
September 2020

a mere 30 miles from Rome is a wine region so ancient that Etruscan relics are still discovered and remains of old vines feed the new ones.

With Lake Bolsena (the largest volcanic lake in Europe) creating a unique microclimate for the hills above, Lazio has been the OG of wine regions forever. It's interesting to me that we don't know much of Lazio in the US and I was shocked to find only a few producers making natural wine.

Sadly this region is being taken over and destroyed by Nestle who is buying up old vineyards and replacing them with hazelnut trees for Nutella. The locals are protesting and organizing against Nestle in an attempt to save this precious region so think twice before buying that jar of Nutella and maybe get a bottle of one of the following wines instead.

Abbia Nova 'Senza Vandalismi'

from: Piglio, Lazio, Italy

vigneron: Daniele and Pierluca Proietti

grape: Passerina

facts: clay & limestone

olive groves, herbs, walnuts, vegetable gardens, forests, fields & meadows surround the vineyards

50+ years old vines

cultivation, as well as the harvest, is done entirely by hand.

whole cluster fermentation

skin contact for 12 to 16 hours

fermented in stainless steel

aged on fine lees until spring then in glass demi-john for the final two months

unfined & unfiltered

tasting notes: stone fruit! apricot, peach, pear with hints of white flowers and wild herbs (thyme, sage)

Clean, fresh and lightly herbal on the palate. Ripe melon and floral notes that serve more as a background than the main event.

Light to medium bodied with a bright acidic notes that balance the floral hints - truly interesting wine that would be awesome with

pairing ideas: artichokes - preferably fried!! roman broccoli crisped up and served with bread crumbs - really anything simple veg first course kind of idea

random info: the cousins, Daniele & Pierluca have about 7 hectares of indigenous vineyards that average over 80 years and have been farmed biodynamically for decades. They are believers in the Fukuoka methods which eschews pruning and advocates for allowing a natural balance to exist.

They grow only indigenous & ancient varieties like Cesance, Passerina, Bellone, Ottonese, Nostrano and Fosco Peloso.

They believe strongly in letting the grape & land speak for itself in the wine.

Abbia Nova Rosado

from: Piglio, Lazio, Italy

vigneron: Daniele and Pierluca Proietti

grape: Cesanese di Affile

facts: clay, silt, sand & shell limestone

80 year old vines at 380-550 meters

cultivation, as well as the harvest, is done entirely by hand.

Whole cluster are mashed and sit with the skins for 12-16 hours then pressed off the skins.

The must is fermented spontaneously in the cement tank.

Aged on the fine lees (spent yeast) and then glass demijohns before bottling unfined & unfiltered

This wine was brought to the States just for Bottle Club!!

tasting notes: dark color in the glass showcases the pigment in Cesanese and there is a slight cloudiness from being unfiltered

all the red berries, dried herbs, and wet chalk backbone with hints of the medicinal herbs

bright acidity and while it may be a more serious rose, it is utterly chuggable as well definitely aerate it or decant it if you can

pairing ideas: prosciutto & hard cheeses for a first course would also be awesome with grilled salmon

Andrea Occhipinti 'Alea Rosa'

from: Gradoli, Lazio, Italy

vigneron: Andrea Occhipinti

grape: Aleatico

facts: soil is volcanic lapilli (*lapilli is a size classification term for tephra, which is material that falls out of the air during a volcanic eruption or during some meteorite impacts*)

this soil is hard and the vines must struggle which gives them character and depth 20+ year old vines

Aleatico is a native grape that's traditionally made into a dessert wine

Andrea Occhipinti fell in love with the vineyards of Gradoli while he was at the Agrarian University of Tuscia, so much so that they became the subject of his master thesis in 2004.

His 4 hectares of vineyards were planted in the 1990's and are located at 450 meters above sea level (1500 feet) on the volcanic slopes of Lake Bolsena

Andrea's objective to preserve and promote the local indigenous varietals, Aleatico and Grechetto Rosso. He is the first in Italy to experiment with a dry interpretation of the Aleatico grape.

Alea Rosa spends one night with the skins and 6-months in cement botti before bottling

tasting notes: more of a light red than a rose

violets and wild roses with lush raspberries and rainier cherries

super balanced with minerality for days plus silky tannins

such an aromatic and fun wine that is both playful and serious

pairing ideas: that awesome cherry, pistachio salad from the NYTimes!

Andrea Occhipinti 'La Caldera'

from: Gradoli, Lazio, Italy

vigneron: Andrea Occhipinti

grape: Grechetto Rosso

facts: soil is volcanic lapilli (*lapilli is a size classification term for tephra, which is material that falls out of the air during a volcanic eruption or during some meteorite impacts*)

this soil is hard and the vines must struggle which gives them character and depth
80+ year old vines

grechetto Rosso is a native grape that is rare these days

fermented in small cement basins

matured 18 months in a combination of stainless steel & large cement botti

tasting notes: highly aromatic with a lovely soft texture

red fruits - cherry skins and ripe rhubarb

earthy orange pith with wild, savory herbal berry fruit.

very fresh and pure with lively acid - well balanced tannin

easy drinking but also a bit complex with earthy, dusty tannins and cinnamon and spice that balance well with the red fruit

pairing ideas: hard cheeses served with preserves

grilled hanger steak with cherry compote