

Molly's BOTTLE CLUB - December 2021 a few of my favorite holiday wines

L'Archetipo Brut Nature

from: Castellaneta, Apulia, Italy

winemaker/ farmer: the Dibenedetto family

grape(s): **Maresco (an Apulian indigenous varietal)**

facts & random info: the *quote* that follows is a translation so it cannot be said that is a direct quote. Sometimes Italian words do not have a direct translation to English. But you get the gist:

“Has it ever occurred to you what happens when we plow our land? It’s like if someone with a big bulldozer come to our house to destroy it. How can we think to continue our lives, grow our children, without home? Every living thing on this planet, has a home. From the simple worm, a simple spider, and innocent ladybug, the den of a mole, etc. all have a house built, in their own way, in the ground. We plow and observe what happens to a rich soil microflora and micro fauna, flora and fauna: the greatest of all tragedies. Can the AWARE MAN continue in this darkness?”

The Dibenedetto family follows the teachings of both Rudolf Steiner (the father of modern biodynamics) and Masanobu Fukuoka who advocates no-tilling, no pruning - really just no intervention in the garden / vineyard. To let the plants grow as they wish so that aside from planting them, we humans do not intervene. This allows a truly symbiotic relationship to form and creates a unique micro flora specific to the area. Kinda takes biodynamics to the next level!

while the teachings of Fukuoka are extremely hard to follow exactly these days, the farmers & vineyard growers who practice no-tilling are making some incredible wines; including the Dibenedetto’s.

If you wanna get even more info about tilling and its affect on the planet, watch ‘Kiss the Ground’ on netflix.

tasting notes:

pure apple & pear fragrance upon opening with some slight notes of meyer lemon. Very fresh with hints of toasted brioche slathered in apple butter! Savory notes with some minerality allow the bubbles to move with agility without sacrificing liveliness, softness and roundness. A simple and delicate wine, which stands out for its liveliness.

pairing ideas:

When the sun begins to peak out more regularly and you start having lunch on the terrace, Marasco is the perfect late-morning wine to drink while setting up or cooking Sunday lunch.

Until then this is the perfect Sunday sipper while gathering your courage to visit the Sunday market in the rain!

honestly, it is absolutely the perfect aperitif for all occasions!

Vigna San Lorenzo 'Milu'

from: Caldesora, Italy

winemaker/ farmer: Marta & Alberto

grape(s): a blend of six grape varieties; including Perera, Verdiso, Boshera, Bianchetta, Grapariol and the more familiar Glera (also known as Prosecco)

facts & random info: I struggle with how to describe this place; let alone to describe Marta or Alberto. I've never met any one quite like them and certainly not in Italy! they are deeply passionate about the relationship between humans, the land and the vines. They are vegetarians and travel frequently to India for mediation retreats. They are so kind and strong! I feel lucky to know them for sure!

And calling their farming 'organic' or even biodynamic is not entirely accurate and certainly does not describe how each vine is being cared for and treated with homeopathy - they measure the energy throughout the vineyard, burying amethyst stones in the parts where the levels are low.

This attention to detail continues into the winery, where they use copper 'trees' to channel energy in, all of which helps the spontaneous (and sometimes very long) fermentation. And I'm not kidding - seems crazy but then you taste the wines and you're like "hot damn, it works!!"

It may be more accurate to call them stewards of their land rather than winemakers and I can tell you from first-hand experience, they are constantly working tirelessly to keep the land and the vines as healthy as possible. vineyards are 450m above sea level, in the foothills of the Dolomites - the native flora fills the land between the rows!

vines are all the old, traditional grapes of this region and the vineyards are surrounded by woods, olive trees, hedges and fruit trees, to increase biodiversity as much as possible (in fact it is a territory rich in wildlife).

The grapes are harvested manually when they are completely ripe usually in October.

The pressed juice spends a small amount of time on skins, ferments naturally and never has any sulphites added.

The Milu joins the original sparkling wine (Col Tamarie) as the second wine produced by Marta & Alberto and is named after their cat.

tasting notes:

Bright meyer lemon oil and orange peel mingles with fall apples & cedar sap in the spring (have you ever tapped a cedar tree in the spring?) well it smells like that! (also you should really try tapping a cedar tree - powerful experience!) Aromas of white flowers and aromatic herbs (thyme and mint) balance the citrus notes. The tingle on the tongue is classic of this place and while the wine is not sparkling, it is alive!

pairing ideas:

pear/parsnip soup with a lovely glug of olive oil & herby toasts - sooo good!!
fall days wrapped up in sweaters soaking up the last bits of sun at Golden Gardens with a great friend or love!

La Casa Vieja Mission

from: San Antonio de las Minas, Baja California, México

winemaker/ farmer: Humberto Toscano

grape(s): Mission

facts & random info: Humberto grew up here, left to get married & raise his kids but then returned in 2003 to nurse the land and vineyards back to health. They had been abandoned and had grown pretty wild. He thinks it was good for them - I'm just grateful that no one sprayed them or tried to beat them into submission while he was away.

The vineyards are only 5-miles or so from the Pacific Ocean (as the crow flies) and about 1,066 ft above sea level - sandy loam and granite soil provide minerality and the ocean breezes provide some cooling during HOT days! Humberto's family property has never used commercial yeast and the winemaking is straightforward. Grapes are harvested by hand. The old vine grapes are de-stemmed by hand using a wooden zaranda (ask me about it! it's so cool).

When asked about using oak, he responded "what oak? are we termites?" LOL! So, he utilizes stainless steel, concrete tinaja, glass carboys, and very old, neutral oak. Honestly, if you ask him, he will tell you it's just the simple and honest way he was taught to grow grapes and make clean wine. Fun note - Mission grape is the earliest vinifera variety to be cultivated in the Americas! And it's known as País in Chile and Listán Prieto in Spain.

from Humberto:

"The Mission vines are 120+ years old (some have speculated older), while there is a 150+ year old 'Mother Vine' that anchors the property. The vineyard goes up a gentle slope on the back of the estate. Harvest starts mid September and lasts about a month. Grapes destemmed by hand by massaging bunches over the wooden *zaranda* I showed you. We crush the grapes by foot and transfer them to plastic drums and the (450 liter) concrete egg for fermentation and maceration. After (native yeast) fermentation- about 2 - 3 weeks- we press the juice off with a small, wooden, 55L, hand crank basket press and rack into to neutral, 225 L oak for 6-8 months. Before bottling, the wine is transferred to glass carboys. Everything is racked and nothing is filtered or fined. The entire bottling process, down to labeling, is done by hand. No sulphur is added at any time. You know I'm allergic!"

tasting notes: Earthy, wild, and musky but fresh and light on its feet with black cherry, dark plums, super ripe blackberries and warm spices rounding out the palate: bright watermelon with hints of under-ripe strawberry acidity bring balance and tiny hints of violets tease your palate

pairing ideas: za'atar roasted chicken, crunchy acidic salad of chicories! crispy-skinned salmon with a dark fruit glaze or sitting in your backyard in that brief moment of not-rain watching your dog run around while eating some Harbison from Jasper Hill Farm!! that cheese is crazy funky good with this wine!!

Les Clos Perdus 'Project 108'

from: Peyriac de Mer in the Corbières, France

winemaker/ farmer: Paul Old

grape(s): Mourvèdre, Carignan

facts & random info: Les Clos Perdus translates to 'the lost vineyard'

Paul and his team created a small winery in the village of Peyriac de Mer in the Corbières after the discovery of isolated old vine parcels 'lost' in the Haute Corbières and Vallée de l'Agly. Many of these small vineyards had been disregarded because of their low cropping potential and inability to be machine worked and Paul felt it was important to let them tell their story before being completely lost.

Nothing added and nothing taken away is the motto of Les Clos Perdus and Project 108 makes it way from the beautiful Domaine des Phénix vineyards with gravity and a prayer!

"108" is also an interesting mystical number often used to represent duration or end of a cycle. At one point in history, it was thought that the distance of earth to the sun was 108 times the diameter of the sun. The same was thought for the diameter of the moon. Plus 9 times 12 = 108 - 9 Liters in a case of 12 bottles so all the weird/ fun vibes!!!

Hand harvested! Maritime climate - heavy clay soils! Vines struggle here and it shows in the amazing grapes they produce!

tasting notes: highly recommend you let this baby open up! it's tightly wound with some pretty intense hints of wet earth and sea. But give it a good swirl or 5 in the glass or a solid decant and the black fruits start to emerge. Honestly, I opened it the first night and was a little "hmmmm" but when I revisited the next afternoon, I was blown away by the black fruits - italian plum, blackcap raspberries & dark black cherries. The clay soils really show through here with hints of iron and minerality - the acidity is underlying and almost forgotten until you realize your mouth is watering and you want another sip! sit with this wine - let it show itself to you over the course of a few hours or even days although I'll totally understand if you drink it all down with a great steak!

pairing ideas: anything meat based! grilled especially - but braised would be amazing too! I loved it with a strong, aged cheese too! I smoked some mozzarella and had it on a flatbread with cherry compote and the 108 sang along side!!!