

Molly's BOTTLE CLUB - October 2022

red, red wine you make me feel so fine!!

it's officially FALL - the beginning of cooler nights, shorter days and more excuses to drink red wine! sooooo, here are few of my current fav's in order of lighter (could be chilled) to darker, richer

Jose Antonio Garcia 'Cubos del Paramo'

from: Páramo Léones, Castilla y León, Spain

winemaker/ farmer: Jose and Julia Antonio Garcia

grape(s): Prieto Picudo (a indigenous grape varietal)

facts & random info: 20-70 year old vines

Fermentation happens in stainless, cement & open-top barrels

This area has largely been abandoned with the vast majority of vineyards being ripped out of the past few decades. Luckily, a few brave souls are still making wine from the old vines and even grafting these indigenous varietals to save them from extinction!

Soil here is super rocky - kinda looks like the Rhone in parts! it is what they call 'poor soil' in the winemaking world - where the grapes have to struggle and roots must go super deep for nutrients and water. Thing is this creates vines that are capable of long-life and produce incredible fruit which, of course, makes wines that we really, really, really want to drink!!

you know how much we love the underdog, the unknown varietal here at Molly's so here's a great one for you!!

tasting notes: aromatic spices with ripe red cherries, cranberry and hints of black plums - some savory components like sage and rosemary. Dusty clay minerality keeps the fruit in check - this wine is super lively and fresh with a bright palate despite the dark color in your glass.

pairing ideas: some stinky cheese with those olive/fig crackers <insert drooly emotion here>

lamb chops with a cranberry compote

watching any Javier Bardem movie with chipotle popcorn!!

Poggio al Gello 'Agellus'

from: Maremma, Tuscany, Italy

winemaker/ farmer: Giorgio Chiarini & Alda Nelli

grape(s): Fogliatonda

facts & random info: when I first met Giorgio & Alda, it was at a wine fair in Italy and I was struck by how quickly Giorgio laughed and how Alda had a twinkle in her eye no matter how seriously she was speaking. All these years later, I am still enamored with these two amazing humans who are quick to find joy in all things..... to be ever curious and make really good wine! plus eating lunch at their house and walking in the vineyards and looking at their olive groves - visiting the cellar and sitting at their table is hands down one of the absolute best ways to spend a day! *Fogliatonda* is a native grape in these hills! rare and almost forgotten, there is a group of dedicated growers who are determined to keep from obscurity! and the label shows a photo of the leaf (which is quite distinct) which is a nod to the group and the grape. There's so much more to say about this grape and its history - from personal experience, it is making a comeback; however, i fear that it will be abandoned again in face of the ever-growing demand in the u.s. for chianti and/or sangiovese but hope springs eternal.

anyway, i'll leave the opinions behind for the sake of DRINKING THIS WINE!! and tbh - whatever you think about this wine in particular, we should, at the very least, preserve these old varietals lest they die out completely.

tasting notes: dark, ripe cherries with that slight tannic structure that leaves your mouth watering - hints of dried figs, hazelnuts (?) and blackberries! dried notes recall Brunello and some spice hints - white pepper & cinnamon.

pairing ideas: classic would be roast leg of lamb with rosemary! or roasted game bird - think pheasant or squab served next to a parmesan or pecorino rich risotto!!

Anne Pichon 'Sauvage'

from: Cote de Ventoux, Rhone, France

winemaker/ farmer: Anne Pichon

grape(s): Grenache Noir (red grenache - did you know there are other grenache grapes?!)

facts & random info: in the 1990's, Anne and Marc first came to Mormoiron (a small village in the Cote de Ventoux region) to build a life - "return to the land" in Marc's words.

They bought a very old & literally abandoned property and started restoring/rebuilding. 15 hectares is no joke and this was hard work!! Luckily, the land was pure - abandonment has its benefits, I suppose. It certainly made organics and then biodynamics was an easier choice. When Marc died a few years ago, Anne wasn't sure what to do - the wines were named after her but she wasn't really part of the winemaking. But it was what Marc loved so she did what a lot of us do - she figured it out! And carried on - learning as she went.

She and her team hand-harvest and destem all of the fruit - fermented in small cement tanks at low temperatures to preserve the fruit. 2ndary fermentation and aging happen in mixed containers - some in cement and some in very old barrels.

tasting notes: classic Grenache spice (think cinnamon, clove and white pepper) followed up with wild 'garrigue' herbs (see note below) - ripe, mountain blueberries, white pepper and Mediterranean herbs. A bit hot - as in too much alcohol - i recommend a decant or aging!!

"Garrigue" is a French term for the wild hillside vegetation that grows everywhere on the Mediterranean Coast. So instead of describing a single aroma in a wine, "garrigue" refers to a mix of lavender, juniper, thyme, rosemary, sage and is very similar to herbes de Provence (kinda a mix of green, minty-herbal and floral aromas).

pairing ideas: Paul Bert classic peppercorn sauce on a grilled steak! harken back to the time when I ate meat and was sitting at the sidewalk table drinking this exact wine (different vintage - duh!) and eating that steak with frites!! YES!!

although to be fair, I had this wine most recently with some well-ripened Harbison cheese and it was SOOOO GOOD!!

Famille de Boel France 'Assieges'

from: winery is in Lempdes, northern Rhône (between Lyon and Avignon), France

vineyards are in Saint Joseph, Cornas, Collines Rhodaniennes, Côtes du Rhône, Massif d'Uchaux and Sainte Cécile

winemaker/ farmer: Nelly France & Arnaud De Boel

grape(s): Grenache, Caladoc, Syrah & Carignan

facts & random info: this is a young winery started by Nelly & Arnaud who were already making wine in the region but decided to go it on their own in 2016. While Nelly was pregnant with their first child and starting a separate business - so you know over-achievers in the best way!!

Anyway, these two are now four with a baby girl who arrived in 2018.

With some purchases of old vines and planting new vines, they are building a pretty awesome life here in the Rhone!!

The Assieges is a blend of all their holdings in the northern Rhone.

Fermentation in stainless with settling in the same vessel - so no filtration but settling. Would recommend aging this wine for 5+ years

tasting notes: violets & peonies jump out of the glass with hints of herbs - the palate follows up with gorgeous black fruits and herbal notes in a dense explosion of blackberries, italian plum with more of that garrigue (see above) - the black fruit acidity is balanced with minerality and supple tannins

pairing ideas: grilled meat of any kind or roasted pork in plum sauce

tbh - I had it with blackberry pie and sweet cream ice cream which sorta blew my mind!