

Molly's BOTTLE CLUB - September 2021 is it red or rose? skin contact makes a difference

Sanctum 'Stix & Bugs' red piquette

from: Lipoglav, Lower Styria, Slovenia

winemaker/ farmer: The Podkubovšek family

grape(s): Blaufrankisch, Zweigelt and Pinot Noir

facts & random info: French Carthusian monks settled in this northeast region of Slovenia in the mid-12th century and, lucky for us, planted some grapes!

The Podkubovšek family has been here almost that long and despite having the land officially taken by the Soviet occupation, they stayed and worked it.

When the Berlin wall fell and Yugoslavia was divided, they once again received the rights to the land.

Continental micro-climate on the steep hills and valleys of Lipoglav, located by the beautiful town of Loče in northeast Slovenia. All vineyards are located on steep 45° slopes with southern-exposure, ranging from 100 meters to 480 meters above sea level. Nights are refreshingly chilly, as the winds whip around the sharp hills and valleys. This place is magical!

Soil is marl, clay and sand.

what is piquette?

all the pomace (leftover skins, seeds, yeast, etc.) left from winemaking is soaked in water for 1-2 weeks and pressed again. This 2nd pressing then ferments naturally in the bottle into a refreshing frizzante beverage. It is a traditional no-waste method typically used to refresh the vineyard workers when water was dangerous and fermentation made it safe. The low-alcohol kept the workers hydrated but not drunk.

tasting notes: Wild berries and red plums. Balanced acid / tannins and a surprisingly weighty mouthfeel for a piquette! Not complicated and definitely not meant for overthinking - a super fun quaffer with low alcohol makes it perfect for picnics and day-drinking!

pairing ideas: picnics and day-drinking (teehee!)

seriously, I took this baby down to Miri's and drank some with friends while eating her delicious crispy cauliflower and I was in heaven!

Any beach or rooftop lunch would be great with this low abv wine so have fun!! that's what piquette is for - FUN!!

Botanica Wines 'Flower Girl' PetNat

from: Protea Heights Farm, False Bay, South Africa

winemaker/ farmer: Ginny Povall

grape: Cabernet Franc

facts & random info: Ginny fell in love with and moved to South Africa in 2008 and in spite of that sounding like a bad Hallmark movie, she has actually been a pretty incredible force for good in the False Bay community. Protea Heights was the first farm in South Africa to cultivate indigenous protea flowers and her team is composed largely of women which remains a powerful thing in SA. She farms and works in collaboration with the planet instead of against it and she lifts up all around her. She's just plain rad!

Vines are planted NW to SE with SW exposure

Soil is decomposed granite with high clay content. With pockets of Dresden (sandstone-derived soil with sandy clay loams) and Vilafonte (gravelly soil derived from shale), the vines have all the struggle they need!

No till farming keeps the mitochondria and biospheres happy while capturing co2 which keeps the entire planet happy!

Grapes are hand harvested, destemmed and left to cold soak for **30-hours**

Fermentation occurs in bottle allowing the bubbles to naturally become suspended in solution aka petillant naturale or pet-nat

tasting notes: red berry dance with peppery notes and the bubbles are almost an afterthought until you pull back from the glass and think - WTF? this is everything a Cabernet Franc from South Africa should be but it's sparkling. And then your brain gives up trying to understand and you just drink it!! or was that just me? seriously - this wine was a mind bender. It was just so hard for me wrap my over-thinking brain around this delightful red berry, pink peppercorn, bell pepper, fruity delicious wine that also happened to sparkling. But then I gave up trying to understand and just drank it which made me very happy so I wanted to share it with you!

pairing ideas: an ice bucket on the beach wrapped in a sweater next to a bonfire or slurping oysters and peeling boiled shrimp at your friends house or backyards, rooftop decks, front porch hangs enjoying the last bits of summer

is it red or rose? yes! it is both and it delicious

Uva de Vida 'Biografico'

from: Santa Olalla area of Toledo, Castilla la Mancha, Spain

winemaker/ farmer: Maria Carmen López Delgado

grape(s): graciano/tempranillo

facts & random info: Maria found natural wine in 2005 after beating a serious illness. She came to realize that working with the earth and all of its energy rather than against it could possibly remedy her own ailments - maybe even fix them. In her words "If we take care of the earth, we take care of ourselves. Life has given me a new opportunity."

RE: the label - the 8 pointed star references the Arabic & Jewish past of Toledo, which represents the connection between heaven & earth, the stable balance between spirit (cosmic) & matter (telluric). Also, it pays homage to the ancient Mediterranean civilizations that worshiped the sun, which they represented with 8 rays as a hallmark of spiritual realization, representing the sum of all aspiration, a symbol of life that inspires us.

Young vines! 6-10 years old so without deep root structure. This gives a bit more fruitiness and less minerality as the roots are more shallow.

Soil is clay & limestone

Grapes are picked in mid to late August

Cold maceration for **24-hours** in stainless steel begins fermentation and allows the skin color to permeate the juice just enough!

tasting notes: Super FRESH! there is a slight floral note followed up with mountain berries - thimbleberries, black cap raspberries and high elevation blackberries! wild strawberries and even hints of late summer raspberries
Spicy tannins and dusty earth balance the fruit keeping this yummy quaffer from being too fruity.

pairing ideas: that corn dish at Bakers!! grilled Halloumi with grilled plums and arugula (no joke - that was so good!)
steak salad or baked salmon with arugula blueberry salad!

is it red or rose? from the winemaker when asked if she considered this a rose or a red wine *"It is not a light and unpretentious rosé, it is a pure wine, with so little press that it becomes the best expression of the varietal in a perfect state of balance in its maturation. It is not necessary to cool it like the other rosés"*

for me, it is straddling the line - what do you think?

Miles Garrett Merlot

from: Willows Creek, Humboldt County, California

winemaker/ farmer: Miles Garrett

grape: Merlot

facts & random info: Willows Creek AVA was established in 1983 making it the most northern wine AVA region in California - it is also one of the oldest AVA (ironically, Augusta Missouri is the first in 1980 and Napa didn't follow for another year).

Willows Creek may have taken it's time getting registered as an AVA but they were planting grapes long before!

Mediterranean climate with sea breezes make for great grape growing

Free draining rocky shale & limestone let the vine roots go deep which contributes to minerality structure in the wines.

Vines are not grafted (own-rooted is how we say it in 'the biz'): no irrigation and of course, no spraying etc.

Miles Garrett was arguably the first truly natural producer in CA and for sure, in Willows Creek! He pays a living wage for all his workers (unheard of in this part of the world) and is stoked to have his daughter join the team this past year!

They allow cover crops and grazing animals in the vineyards for biodiversity and natural compost.

tasting notes: wild huckleberry, fresh blueberry and boysenberry - italian plums and hints of forest piney, herbaceous-ness. And chalky minerality, oh my! Then fruit and tannins and gorgeous acid all dancing the most beautiful dance! There is a concentration and intensity that surprised me while the wine remained joyful and absolutely crushable!

pairing ideas: grilled (or seared) hanger steak with grilled plum & a side of rosemary potato! Salmon done the same way (OMG!)

is it red or rose? what do you think? for me, when served slightly chilled, i found it to be more like a light, chillable red less like a rose. Served more at room temp, it was a bit more of a serious wine.

For me this wine is a red wine - although the color could give one pause! what are your thoughts?