

EXPLOR



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AZIENDA AGRICOLA RONCHI 2018 "IN AMPHORIS," LANGHE BIANCO, BARBARESCO, ITALY

For more than four generations, the Rocca family has lived surrounded by the vines of the 'Ronchi' cru in Barbaresco. The vineyards are part of the family; winemaker Giancarlo Rocca can walk from his breakfast table to his vines in less than a minute. Needless to say all work is performed by hand, and as sustainably as possible. No herbicides or pesticides are used.

Grapes are harvested by hand, destemmed, then fermented in temperature-controlled, stainless steel tanks. Wines are aged, depending on the cru, in either Slavonian oak casks or a combination of French oak barrel and cask. In recent vintages, Giancarlo has been experimenting with aging wines in terracotta amphorae. All wines are bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

This particular bottling is a more profound and thrilling take on Piedmont's native white grape, Arneis. Like with his Langhe Nebbiolo, winemaker Giancarlo Rocca ages his white wine in terracotta (clay) amphorae for a few months, for more texture and flavorful depth. This is a medium-bodied, silky, beautifully made wine.

Try pairing this 100% Arneis with light chicken or mushroom based dishes.



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FATTORIA ZERBINA 2014 “TORRE DI CEPARANO,” SANGIOVESE SUPERIORE RISERVA, ROMAGNA, ITALY

Produced by Cristina Geminiani, in the Marzeno valley, on the clay and limestone hills of the district of Faenza, this is a wine that combines both technical precision and the hallmark characteristics of the Sangiovese varietal.

The winery is now run by Cristina Geminiani, who took over its reins in 1985, inheriting them from her grandfather Vincenzo. Fattoria Zerbina and Maria Geminiani have made, and are still making, the history of quality in Romagna, giving way to know the area and acting as an example to many young winemakers in the region. Fattoria Zerbina continues to represent the excellence of the terroir of Emilia Romagna, bringing up the name of this beautiful area.

This wine is a blend of 98% Sangiovese with 2% of the rare, local Ancelotta grape and is aged for 12 months in barrique. The wine is a dark ruby red with hints of violets, cherries, red fruits, coffee and damp earth on the nose. On the palate this Riserva is fruity and fresh, with balsamic and spicy aromas alongside a welcomed, dry tannic finish.

Pair this Sangiovese with hearty, slow braised meat dishes.



JUNE 2021

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GRAMERCY CELLARS 2016 SYRAH “LAGNIAPPE,” RED WILLOW VINEYARD, COLUMBIA VALLEY, WASHINGTON

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A Manhattan-based sommelier tastes some Washington State wines and is so inspired, he sells everything to move across the country to make his own. That’s the start of the story of Gramercy Cellars, where a close eye on the grapes (picked for almost-peak ripeness, mostly organic), matched with minimalist wine making techniques (no or little new oak, no additives) and a lot of time (extended aging) has created wine that’s considered some of the best that Washington offers.

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The Harrington family moved to Walla Walla, Washington in 2005 to make a specific kind of old-world-meets-new Rhône and Bordeaux varietals. Their goal was to utilize the near perfect growing conditions near Walla Walla to create some of the best-reviewed wines from the region. The results are intense, yet restrained; elegant, yet earthy.

This kind of balance starts with the vineyards. The Walla Walla and surrounding AVAs offer the perfect climate and soil conditions for the kind of wines they wanted to make. Gramercy farms its grapes from old vines, carefully tended. It owns three estate vineyards, and controls several others, to ensure the grapes are grown and picked for the specific profile Gramercy is trying to achieve. Many of its wines—particularly its Rhône— are single-vineyard estate wines.

The release of the 2016 Lagniappe is a historic release for Gramercy. They first made Lagniappe in 2005 with the intent of blending Syrah from the Yakima Valley with Syrah from Walla Walla, primarily Forgotten Hills.



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GRAMERCY CELLARS 2016 SYRAH “LAGNIAPPE,” RED WILLOW VINEYARD, COLUMBIA VALLEY, WASHINGTON

But a chance meeting with Mike Sauer of Red Willow Vineyard in 2010 changed the trajectory of the wine.

Gramercy now farms about 5 acres at Red Willow. The coming years saw increased percentages of Red Willow in the Lagniappe blend, but the Gramercy team still considered themselves a “blending house” at that time. However, after the 2014 and 2015 vintages, they realized that a few vineyards that demanded a single vineyard bottling. For the first time, they presented the 2016 Red Willow Lagniappe Columbia Valley Syrah.

Gramercy farms a few different blocks at Red Willow for Syrah. The basis for the wine always is the ‘Chapel Block’. This block is magic - bringing deep red fruit, smoke, earth pepper, and most importantly, structure and intensity. The Marcoux block, across the property with a more gentle slope, complements the steeper block by adding mid palate and aromatic complexity. These are yin-yang blocks, each making the wine better.

All Red Willow blocks are fermented predominately in large 1500 gallon concrete fermenters. Concrete adds another dimension of minerality and aromatic complexity, which is readily apparent in the wine. The 2016 Red Willow was fermented 80% whole cluster with native yeasts. It was aged in a combination of 16HL Stockinger cask and neutral 500-liter puncheons for 18 months.

While drinking well right now, this Syrah will reward some time aging, but for those unwilling to wait, consider decanting for a couple hours before enjoying. For a recommended food pairing, try lamb shanks, smoky pork based dishes, or BBQ.

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