

Terry's Tastings – It's All About Taste

Appassimento and Ripasso: Amarone is a typically rich Italian dry red wine made from partially dried grapes of Corvina, Rondinella, and Molinara, sometimes with the addition of Corvinone. The grapes are harvested in early October and then allowed to dry on racks, typically bamboo, in the Appassimento process, for up to 120 days or until they have lost 30 to 40% of their water content. They are then crushed and go through a dry fermentation of 30-50 days. The wine is then aged in barriques of French or Slavonian oak for up to 5 years. A well-made Amarone has the potential to age for 10 to 20 years after release and some wine experts estimate that they only reach full maturity after 10 years. In the late 20th century a new style of winemaking known as Ripasso (meaning repressed) emerged. In this technique, the pomace of leftover grape skins and seeds from the fermentation of Amarone is added to a batch of Valpolicella wine for a period of extended maceration. This process boosts the alcohol level and body of the wine while adding to the colour, flavour, and texture. The first Valpolicella producer to commercially market a Ripasso wine was Masi in the early 1980's. Currently, most producers of Amarone make a Ripasso Valpolicella as well as a regular Valpolicella. These methods of winemaking are now being used by the Australian winery Nugan Estate with Shiraz grapes, making a Second Pass Shiraz and a Dried Grape Shiraz in the Appassimento and Ripasso styles.

Wine picks:



Pasqua Amarone – Italy

\$35.50

Rust-red in the glass, this is a full-bodied wine with earthy, spicy aromas and flavours of cherry and plum. Great with pot roast, pasta with meat sauce, and aged cheese such as Asiago.



Folonari Valpolicella Ripasso – Italy

\$18.50

This wine is medium-bodied and smooth, with aromas and flavours of red berries and cherries. An excellent pairing for roast beef, stew, and of course, pasta with meat sauce.



Nugan Estate Alfredo Dried Grape Shiraz – Australia

\$24.75

Deep purple in colour with aromas and flavours of dark fruit, plum, and a touch of spice. This is a full-bodied and complex wine which will complement grilled meats, prime rib, lamb, and aged cheese.



Nugan Estate Alfredo Second Pass Shiraz – Australia \$16.50

Earthy aromas and flavours of blackberries, cassis, and plums. A full-bodied wine which pairs well with savoury pork chops, roast beef, aged cheese, and chocolate.

Until next time! Please send comments and questions to Terry Tait: terry@liquoronmcleod.com