

## ROCK JUICE WINES ⚡ May 2019

*At the very least, all RJ wines are farmed organically/biodynamically (certified or verified practicing), fermented only with native yeasts, and produced with no additives except a small amount of sulfur (50ppm or less).*

### 2018 Blind Corner Pet-Nat Petillant \$32

Region: Margaret River < Australia

Grapes: Chenin Blanc w/ 1% Shiraz must added

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming, white clay/limestone/flint soils; grapes are foot trod, fermenting Shiraz is chilled to 4°C and almost-clear must is separated and added to Chenin barrels; wine is then blended and bottled where fermentation completes under cap; unfinned/unfiltered, no added SO<sub>2</sub>; 10.4% ABV

Winemakers: Ben + Naomi Gould

Ben and Naomi are pretty much the poster children of New Australia Wine. The first of Western Australia's Margaret River region (Aussie's Napa Valley) to combine biodynamic farming with minimal intervention in the cellar, the couple relies on extreme biodiversity (olive groves, veggie patches, 15 bee hives, and hundreds of chickens who roost happily in a rainbow painted caravan scattered between and around the rows of vines) instead of chemical farming -- they wanted their estate to be safe for their young children to roam free and play. They even started a biodiesel plant on the property to convert spent vegetable oil into fuel for their winery equipment (although there isn't much, as they don't pump, filter, or otherwise manipulate their wines). Glowing a brilliant shade of rose gold in the glass, this wine is a mix of Chenin with not-quite-fermented Shiraz juice, which provides the sugar for the sparkling fermentation in bottles.

We love the way Ben describes this wine and how they make it: "First, we take the pressings portion of the Chenin used for the Cremant and wild-ferment it in barrels. Then we freeze a bucket of Shiraz juice for good measure as well. Once dry, or really really close, we immediately add more juice, blend the barrels and bottle. This way the wine keeps fermenting, but finishes in bottle, trapping the CO<sub>2</sub> trying to escape and making it bubbly. The resultant wine is pink, super-fresh, bubbly & slightly cloudy. If someone calls it rosé, slap a glass in their hand and set them straight. It's fuzzy, like Kern's peach nectar, but there's a refreshing tartness to the peachy flavors, and a fermented tea-leaf herbal side, plus some slightly aggressive bubbles (just to be safe, open over a sink).

### NV Filippa Pato '3B' Blanc de Blanc \$20

Region: Bairrada < Portugal

Grapes: Cerceal, Bical, Maria Gomes

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming, 30-year-old vines planted on sand over clay-limestone; ferments in big barrel and stainless steel vats; minimal SO<sub>2</sub>; 12% ABV

Winemaker: Filippa Pato

Filippa Pato, daughter of Portugal's wine Jedi Master Luis Pato, worked alongside her dad for years, then channeled that experience towards making incredible, honest wines of her own. And judging by how fast we drained this bottle, it seems the force is very strong with this one. Her slogan is "without make-up", because the goal is to make wine that is honest, true and without all the tricks and additives available in modern winemaking. Take this pretty Brut Nature, a delicious and unpretentious sparkler made from a blend of coastal Bairrada's three traditional white (and high acid) varietals for a clean expression of the vineyards strong Adriatic influence. Bright and perky, with aromatic stone fruit, tangy citrus and racy acidity, this is a clean, fantastic (and affordable!) answer to all-occasion (and everyday!) bubbles.

### 2017 Cenatiempo Ischia Bianco \$24

Region: Ischia < Campania < Italy

Grapes: Biancolella, Foresteria

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming; high altitude (over 600ft), soils featuring the typical "tufo verde"; field blend of grapes that are co-fermented in concrete and stainless steel; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with minimal SO<sub>2</sub>; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Pasquale Cenatiempo

NEW VINTAGE ALERT! We seriously love volcanic soil whites, and Ischia is the ultimate volcanic island, dramatically jutting out of the Mediterranean, crowned by a dramatic castle. We recently had the pleasure of visiting the island, and the lovely Francesca & Pasquale Cenatiempo, whose family founded the present-day winery nearly 100 years ago, always guided by the notion that wine is made in the vineyards not the cellar. I won't lie, it was pretty dreamy -- we walked the steep, terraced vineyards and the 14th century cellar, ate a lovely meal and drank Pasquale's beautiful wines while talking global politics late into the night. I have a new appreciation for hard work and passion required to make wine here, as well as for the unique terroir that drives these wines. Biancolella and Foresteria are two native varietals that are grown and fermented together to make this classic island blend. Zesty, salty, and mineral-driven, with some citrus, white flowers and stone fruit. The best beach wine, boat wine, pool wine -- party people, stock up!!

### 2017 Suertes del Marques 'Trenzado' Valle de la Orotava \$24

Region: Tenerife < Canary Islands < Spain

Grapes: Listan Blanco

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: organic farming; volcanic soils; grapes come from several different plots of very old vines (100+ years) at 250-800 meters above sea level, many ungrafted; vines are cordon trenzado (braided arms); fermented in concrete tank then ages for 9 months in 500 liter used French oak foudres; bottled unfined/unfiltered with minimal added So2; 12% ABV

Winemaker: Jonatan Garcia Lima

The Canary Islands, located off the coast of Morocco, are technically part of Spain. The largest of the Canaries, Tenerife, is dominated by El Teide, a volcano that is the highest peak in Spain, and whose steep slopes are home to sturdy vines on all sides. The area escaped the blight of Phylloxera, so the vines are own rooted and extremely old – some more than 200 years! Many of the vines are trained according to a traditional method called Cordon Trenzado where the vines spread out in long braids of wood, some up to 15-20 feet from the mother trunk -- because they don't have a true winter, this forces the wines into dormancy for part of the year. All of this extreme viticulture makes for some crazy cool wine, like this Listan Blanco from the small, family-run Suertes del Marques, that smells like pristine white Burgundy, and tastes sort of like that, with the green apple and peppery minerality. Only this is smokier and saltier, as if the Chardonnay were planted on volcanic soil and getting a nice drenching of salt spray daily. There is texture and grippy acid and gravitas, reminding you that this wine is special, but the finish is joyful – like the sensation of sea spray hitting your face on a fast boat. Wheeeee!

### **2017 Clos Fomelli La Robe d'Ange Blanc \$25**

Region: Cap Corse < Corsica < France

Grapes: Vermentinu (aka Vermentino)

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic farming; soils are decomposed slate with river stones and clay; elevage in a combination of 600-liter old demi-muid barrels and cement eggs for six months; bottled unfined/unfiltered with minimal added So2; 13% ABV

Winemaker: Josée Vanucci

I had the pleasure of visiting Corsica, a magical island next to Sardinia, last summer. I was amazed by the diversity of its geology, from red rock formations a la Thunder Mountain (the Disneyland ride), to Yosemite-esque peaks and forests, to cliffs and arches built of gravity-defying rock piles that recall a Dr. Seuss landscape. Nowhere else has NATURE been so present – around 95% of the island is undeveloped, designated a natural park. It is also a wonderfully sunny island (sunnier than mainland France) that produces a fair amount of wine, most of which is consumed locally, and most a bit bigger and rounder than we love, thanks to said sunshine. But Josée's vineyards are high altitude, on the terraces of the Bravone River, where the nights are typically cooler than the more famous wine regions on the west side, and the sharp rise of the mountains from the sea cuts the sun off early and lets the cold in to help etch aromatics and texture while highlighting the rocky minerality in the wines. You see this very clearly in Vermentino, a chameleon grape that happens to be an über transmitter of terroir. Here, with her fantastic, acidic soils and cool climate (at least for Corsica), Josée's Vermentino turns out lean, bright and elegant, with citrusy acidity, salty minerality and that distinctive coastal freshness. There is not even a hint of wood in the wine, but you can feel it in the shape – a soft edge to the angles, thanks to the proportion spent in barrel. Such a pretty wine – and utterly transportive. Drinking it, even here in SF's rainy May weather, I feel the charm and warmth of Corsica. There isn't much to go around, sadly, as most Corsican wine is consumed on the island, so grab some now before she's gone.

### **2018 Mas des Caprices Avis d'blanc Frais \$21**

Region: Leucate < Languedoc < France

Grapes: Grenache Blanc, Macabeo

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic & biodynamic farming (Biodyvin); limestone soil; stainless steel ferment; bottled unfined/unfiltered with minimal added SO2; 12% ABV

Winemaker: Mireille and Pierre Mann

Husband and wife team Mireille and Pierre Mann, both children of Alsace winemakers, had been running their own restaurant in Alsace but gave it up to start Mas Des Caprices and make wine in 2003. Their estate, certified organic and biodynamic, sits outside the dreamy town of Leucate on the Mediterranean coast in France's AOC Fitou region. And this wine, whose name translates awkwardly as "notice of fresh white" is the very definition of a coastal wine, evocative of foam, sea spray, and sun-heated stone. It's light, dry and refreshing, somewhere between salty lemon water and pebble juice, with a chalky, slightly bitter finish (pomelo) and bracing acidity. Pairs with yacht rock and Lemonheads.

### **2017 Blind Corner Blanc \$18**

Region Margaret River < Australia

Grapes: Semillon, Sauv Blanc, Chenin Blanc

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming; white clay/limestone/flint soils; fermented and aged in stainless; minimal added So2 at bottling only; 11.9% ABV

Winemakers: Ben + Naomi Gould

Ben and Naomi are pretty much the poster children of New Australia Wine. The first of Western Australia's Margaret River region (Aussie's Napa Valley) to combine biodynamic farming with minimal intervention in the cellar, the couple relies on extreme biodiversity (olive groves, veggie patches, 15 bee hives, and hundreds of chickens who roost happily in a rainbow painted caravan scattered between and around the rows of vines) instead of chemical farming -- they wanted their estate to be safe for their young children to roam free and play. They even started a biodiesel plant on the property to convert spent vegetable oil into fuel for their winery equipment (although there isn't much, as they don't pump, filter, or otherwise manipulate their wines).

This is their take on the classic Semillon/SB blend, which has the crisp/dry/spicy thing you expect from these grapes in this soil, but also a funkier side that you don't. Like a little Kimchi juice was mixed it for pizzazz. Fresh and easy like a summer breeze, but quirky enough to keep you from getting bored. And inexpensive enough (for certified BioD!) to crush every day.

#### **2017 Dormilona 'Skinie' Sauvignon Blanc \$27**

Region: Margaret River < Australia

Grapes: Sauvignon Blanc

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Purchased grapes from biodynamic farming; winery certified organic; fruit is crushed straight into a combo of amphora and open top bins, then left to hang out on skins for a full six weeks before bottling unfined/unfiltered with no additions of any kind; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Josephine Perry

Jo Perry spent years as a wine consultant in Spain before returning home to Oz to start Dormilona (her nickname, which means "lazy bones" in Spanish slang) with her family, making edgy wines in the very traditional Margaret River region. And the Aussie's are taking notice -- she was named Australia's "Young Guns of Wine" Winemaker of the Year in 2016. We've fallen for her wines as well, like this fascinating take on Sauv Blanc. Here Jo plays around with amphora and extended skin maceration to push the (often boring) grape into the realm of the weird and wonderful. But she manages to round out the tannins beautifully, avoiding the bitterness and tannin you often get from the lengthy skin contact. It looks and smells like a fuzzy peach cocktail, but once in your mouth the herbaceous-ness of the Sauv Blanc starts to emerge, a bouquet of cilantro and dill that soon gives way to Kimchi and grapefruit and fuzzy peach skin. Somehow this odd combination works -- the result is intriguing and refreshing, textural and slightly addictive, pleasantly funky in a spicy Korean-food kind of way. Totally our jam.

#### **2017 Si Vintners 'Sophie' Rosé \$21**

Region: Margaret River < Australia

Grapes: Pinot Noir

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming; 40-year old vines on Karri loam over decomposed granite/white clay soils; whole cluster pressed then fermented in concrete eggs, followed by 8 months ageing in old French barriques; battonage for the first 3 months; bottled unfined/unfiltered with minimal added SO2; 90 cases; 12% ABV

Winemaker: Iwo Jakimowicz and Sarah Morris

Polish-born Iwo Jakimowicz and Sarah Morris spent over a decade travelling the wine world, from new to old, working back-to-back harvests in Europe and Australia before settling down on a 30-acre property just 10 minutes from Margaret River in 2010. Their mature vines, planted in 1978, are now farmed along biodynamic lines -- pretty rare in this very conventional wine region best known for the massive Shiraz of Aussie infamy. This lovely rosé, or a short-macerated skin contact pinot noir, depending on how you look at it, is fresh and complex, with layers of tart strawberry, savory herbs and crushed rock minerality. Super delicious and versatile. To (mis)quote the legendary Dr. Suess, I would drink this in a car, or in a bar, on a rock or without socks. In other words, it goes anywhere, with anything, quite seamlessly.

#### **2018 Oenops Aplá (Απλά) Rosé \$17**

Region: Drama < Macedonia < Greece

Grapes: Xinomavro, Limniona, Cab Sauv

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming; whole-cluster Xinomavro + Limniona free run juice fermented in stainless and concrete; cab fermented in amphora; juice rests in large neutral oak barrel until bottling unfined/unfiltered with minimal added SO2; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Nikos Karatzas

From a newish winery in near the coast in Macedonia from a winemaker leading the charge against the new oak/Robert Parker style of wine to which much of Greece had fallen victim. He has abandoned the PDO and PGI regulations to focus on exploring the different terroirs of his homeland in an effort to bring out the character of the varieties with minimal intervention in the winery. This is fresh and breezy Provençal-style rosé, with Mediterranean herb, tomato and savory notes and a kiss of salt spray on the finish.

#### **2017 Vinateros Bravos 'El Tunel' Cinsault \$23**

Region: Itata Valley < Chile

Grapes: Cinsault

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming; dry-farmed 65 year-old bush-trained vines on volcanic soils; whole cluster fermentation and aging in cement vats for 14 months; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with 10ppm So2; 13.4% ABV; 120 cases

Winemaker: Leonardo Erazo

Itata Valley, on Chile's Pacific Coast, is a historical winemaking region (from the 16th century) that is now home to a group of small-scale natural producers who are bringing back old-school, hands-off methods to make fresh, honest wine that tastes of the igneous rocky soil (from cooled volcanic magma!) and nearby sea that defines its terroir. Like Leo Erazo, who studied around the world but returned home to Itata to start his wine project. His Cinsault, from a tiny .4 hectare plot, is honest, clean and herbaceous, with bright red fruit and a subtle saline finish. It smells like amaro, and tastes like a breezy stroll through a Eucalyptus grove. So easy to drink, especially with a slight chill, this wine begs to be enjoyed outside, on a deck or in the backyard, with bare feet, a BBQ, and a squad of friends. One of the truest, most delightful, expressions of Chilean terroir we've come across.

### **2017 Finca Parera 'Fosc' \$20**

Region: Penedès < Catalunya < Spain

Grapes: Sumoll, Garnacha, Ull de Libre, Syrah

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Demeter certified organic and biodynamic; limestone/clay soil; fermented in concrete; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with no added SO2; 13% ABV

Winemaker: Rubén Parera

From the coastal region of Penedès, south of Barcelona, Rubén Parera is making some of the best crushable, zero-zero wines we've come across. We first met Rubén at a natural wine fair here in the Bay Area, and were immediately smitten. In a sea of faces, his stood out – brimming with enthusiasm and a big grin that stretched from ear to ear, despite jetlag and most likely a raging hangover. As he poured his delicious wines, some of the best we found that day, we learned the story of Rubén and his father, Jordi, who worked together to convert their entire family farm, which also is home to almond and olive trees, a cherry orchard, and a vegetable garden, to organic and then biodynamic viticulture, finally becoming certified in 2013. It was only then that they bottled the wine under their own label. Their dedication to their terruno (terroir) includes maintaining native varieties like the Sumoll here, and then using only cement, clay and stainless steel in their cellar – no oak. The joy Rubén exhibits when talking about his wine is also evident in the bottle. Pale red, almost like a dark rosé, the 'Fosc' (which means shadow) is savory and textural with tart red fruit and an exotic spice note anchored by chalky tannin and beautiful acidity. Chill it ever so slightly, and drink with abandon.

### **2018 Valentina Pasalacqua 'Sovrachiario' Falanghina 1L \$23**

Region: Apricena < Puglia < Italy

Grapes: Falanghina

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming; rocky marble soils with calcified seashells; fermented in stainless with no temperature control, and bottled unfinned/unfiltered under crown cap with zero-added SO2; 10.5% ABV

Winemaker: Valentina Passalacqua

Valentina Passalacqua is a trailblazing young natural winemaker in Puglia, a region not exactly known for biodynamic, no sulfur wines. She took over her family's land (used only for cattle grazing since 1900), located inside Gargano National Park, to create a diverse farm that includes indigenous grape varieties. Her family considered the land too difficult, too poor, for crops, not realizing that they were actually sitting on a precious marble mine – or soil that happens to be amazing for vines. The rocky, mineral-rich soil does not retain water (also great for vines), and proximity to the sea means cooling breezes and ventilation (another plus). Valentina's wines are pure, elegant, never soupy as you sometimes see in wines from Puglia (it's hot there). Because, she is careful about canopy management (to ensure grapes don't get cooked) and picks early to retain freshness and acidity. This is her fun Puglian take on glou glou: liter bottles of liquid sunshine, that tastes like lemon kombucha with a salty kick. With a crown cap, no added So2, biodynamic certification, an adorable label designed by Valentina's young daughters, and 10.5% ABV – how can you not love this wine? Yaaassss!

### **2018 Valentina Pasalacqua 'Mezzarosa' 1L \$25**

Region: Apricena < Puglia < Italy

Grapes: Montepulciano

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming; rocky marble soils with calcified seashells; grapes are hand-harvested and macerated on skins 12 hours before being pressed (one of Valentina's tricks); fermented in stainless with no temperature control, and bottled unfinned/unfiltered under crown cap with zero-added SO2; 11.5% ABV

Winemaker: Valentina Passalacqua

Valentina Passalacqua is a trailblazing young natural winemaker in Puglia, a region not exactly known for biodynamic, no sulfur wines. She took over her family's land (used only for cattle grazing since 1900), located inside Gargano National Park, to create a diverse farm that includes indigenous grape varieties. Her family considered the land too difficult, too poor, for crops, not realizing that they were actually

sitting on a precious marble mine – or soil that happens to be amazing for vines. The rocky, mineral-rich soil does not retain water (also great for vines), and proximity to the sea means cooling breezes and ventilation (another plus). Valentina's wines are pure, elegant, never soupy as you sometimes see in wines from Puglia (it's hot there). Because, she is careful about canopy management (to ensure grapes don't get cooked) and picks early to retain freshness and acidity. This is another in her new series of glou glou Puglian wines – 'Mezzorosa' (half pink, in Italian) is Montepulciano that gets 12 hours of skin maceration to impart the gorgeous dark pink hue and kiss of tannin. So, is it rosé or baby red? Does it matter? It's super delicious and comes in a liter bottle, with a crown cap, no added So2, biodynamic certification, an adorable label designed by Valentina's young daughters, and 10.5% ABV – just say yes!

### **2017 Vino di Anna Palmentino Rosso \$30**

Region: Mt. Etna < Italy

Grapes: 87% Nerello Mascalese + a smattering of Nerello Cappuccio, Alicante (Grenache) and local white grapes

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming; super high elevation, older vineyards (80- 110+ years) on mineral-rich soil of decomposed lava; some of the grapes were destemmed by hand and the rest left as whole bunches; the lot was foot trodden over 4 days, then fermented in a combo of Palmento, (the traditional open-top stone vats of Etna, now "technically" illegal in the EU) with some in tank and old oak foudre, then aged for 7 months in another cocktail of tank + foudre + Qvevri (clay amphorae buried in the earth); bottled unfined/unfiltered with minimal So2; 14% ABV

Winemaker: Anna Martens

NEW VINTAGE ALERT: we've worked with the past two vintages of Anna's Etna Rosso, and are thrilled to bring it back with the 2017! Anna Martens cut her teeth in Australia and Tuscany before starting her own project on Etna. While fairly new to the scene, she's already made the short list of best natural winemakers on the mountain, known for her pure, unadulterated expressions of Nerello Mascalese. She calls this bottling Palmentino, an homage to the traditional Etnean wine cellar with stone troughs for crushing grapes by foot – the old (and now, technically, illegal) style in which this wine was made. It's classic Etna but lighter, juicier and more energetic than most of the wines from the mountain. Tart and savory, with blood orange, Campari, raspberry and an elusive umami quality. If you like the Frank Cornelissen Contadino (another Rock Juice staple), you'll love this – they're like brothers from another mother. Serve slightly chilled.

### **2018 Troupis Moschofilero 'Hoof and Lur' Wild Ferment \$20**

Region: Mantinia < Macedonia < Greece

Grapes: Moschofilero

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming; clay-rocky soils; 5-6 hour skin maceration then fermented in terra cotta spheres; lees stirring; bottled without fining or filtering with minimal So2; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Yiannis Troupis

Troupis is an ambitious young winery on the high plateau of Mantinia, on Greece's Peloponnese peninsula. They're small, family-run, quality-focused, and dedicated to the Moschofilero grape – but doing it in a fresh new (low intervention) way, with skin contact, native ferment, no fining or filtering and super low So2 additions. This is all pretty unusual in the area, so it's no surprise that this wine was rejected by the Mantinia appellation for being "untypical" – and also that we love it. As Yiannis Troupis says, "this is Moschofilero as our fathers and grandfathers remember it, skin contact, spontaneous yeast fermented, unfiltered with only the barest amount of sulfites... our homage to the wines native to high plateau of Mantinia for millennia." Here, the rustic skin contact fermentation somehow feels gussied up here thanks to the floral, aromatic quality of the pink-skinned, pink-fleshed Moschofilero grape. Pinky-orange, cloudy and bone-dry, with floral aromatics, a light prickle on the palate, exotic fruit, fuzzy peach skins and a vibrant, peachy finish. While this is highly experimental for these parts, in our book it is extremely well-behaved, delicious and drinkable to the last drop, even on day 4. A skin-contact wine even your mama would love.

### **2016 Cherchi Cannonou \$26**

Region: Alghero < Sardinia < Italy

Grapes: Cannonou

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming, clay soils on a hilly vineyard site located at about 200 meters above sea-level. Hand harvested, destemmed, gently crushed and soft-pressed, 8-10 days of skin contact, aging in mostly steel tanks, some in big wooden casks for 6 months; minimal So2 at bottling only; 13.5% ABV

Winemaker: Giovanni Cherchi

Sardinia's most famous red grape, Cannonou, has been found to have the highest levels (2-3x) of polyphenols like Resveratrol (healthy antioxidants) of any grape. And Sardinians have some of the [longest lifespans](#) on earth, thanks in part to their healthy Mediterranean diet that includes an average of two glasses of wine (like Cannonou) per day. Both of these facts make us love the Cannonou -- and want to move to the island of Sardinia. But Sardinia is hot and dry, and much of the local Cannonou harvest is picked later, meaning they're on the vine soaking up that island sun longer, growing fat, sweet and boozy. Which we don't love as much. Giovanni Cherchi doesn't either, so he's vigilant about picking early to keep retain the freshness and acidity, and steering clear of wood and other interventions that prevent the glorious Sardinian terroir from shining through. His version of Cannonou is light and breezy, garrigue-y and red-fruited, taking

us immediately to the Sardinian coast. Blue sky, scrubby sage brush and sandy soils – we get all of that in the glass. Plus, red cherry, tart cherry, herbs and spice. We're happy to drink our daily dose of antioxidants in this glass of Cannonou – best way to get your vitamins, ever! #healthyish

### **2017 Gurrieri Frappato \$22**

Region: Sicily < Italy

Grapes: Frappato

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: certified organic farming, 5 ha of vines, limestone and red clay soil, fermented and aged in stainless steel tanks for 9 months. Unfined and unfiltered; 13% ABV

Winemaker: Giovanni Gurrieri

CRISTIN HERE: Ok, so after Gamay, my love for Frappato knows no bounds. There's just so much *less* of it – the good stuff anyway – that we don't drink it as much as we would like. Red wine to pair with seafood? Check. Red wine for food on the grill? Check. Red wine that to bring to a party that will be fought after and finished in under 20 minutes? Check. Frappato is chillable, but also semi-serious and we are psyched to find that this new import from the Gurrieri family checks all those boxes and more. Sweet fruit with tangy white strawberry, tangerine and floral notes meld with a smoky spice that makes it irresistible, especially as an aperitivo. Hailing from the southern tip of Sicily, where the Gurrieri's had been organic table grape growers for three generations until son Giovanni rallied them to winemaking back in the mid-90s. He surveyed the family's 20 hectares of land in the Vittoria area of coastal southeastern Sicily, and picked out just 5 with the best soil, exposure and climate – meaning, cooling Mediterranean breezes and a 25 degree (Celsius!) diurnal temperature shift between day and night. They've been farming their land organically forever but became certified for wine production. They pick every grape and individual plot by hand, at peak ripeness, starting in the middle of the night to ensure the grapes come to the winery cold. After that, cellar work is minimal and so you've got nothing left to bottle but pure, Sicilian terroir!

### **2017 Il Torchio 'Il Nero' \$24**

Region: Liguria < Italy

Grapes: Vermentino Nero

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: organic farming, 12 continuous hectares, 9 planted to vine, 35 year-old vines. Sand, silt and skeletal soil on steep slopes, fermented in stainless steel, aged in stainless steel for 6 months; bottled unfined/unfiltered with 15ppm So2; 13% ABV

Winemaker: Edoardo Tendola

You'll remember this up and coming estate from their white wine, a Vermentino, featured in last December's selection. Since then we've had the chance to hang out and drink beer with Gilda and Edoardo, darlings of the Italian natural wine world, both here in SF and also at their GORGEOUS property in Liguria, with views of the Mediterranean just a couple miles away. The property rises above the sea on a steep hillside and a public path skirts it that leads hikers to and from the sea and the mountains above them. Getting to know them has made us even more passionate about their progress to date, and bright future. Their 'Il Nero' (made from 100% Vermentino Nero, the rare-ish black version of the Vermentino grape, which was all but extinct until a few local farmers resurrected it in the 80's) is a fresh, breezy red that just begs to be chilled. Crunchy, mouth-watering and fruit-forward, with a little tang and a little black pepper, this fun bottle takes the traditionally Tuscan grape and gives it a coastal spin. And, as a red from white wine country should, it slays seafood, but is equally good with poultry and veg dishes. Most growers would have replaced it by now, but due to a fortuitous break in the wine making chain (it skipped a generation from Gilda and Edoardo's grandfather to them), these old vines are still around. Lucky us, as this is a red we want to drink all summer!