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HAWKSHEAD WINES

NEW ITALIAN REDS

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Southern Italy is a land of volume wine production, akin to that of France's Languedoc. And like the Languedoc region, the vast swathes of vineyards are punctuated by pockets of premium quality that stand out from the rest. Most of this uniqueness is blended away into bulk wines destined for supermarkets throughout Europe. In places however, through careful selection, quality focused winemakers are experimenting with ways of bringing together traditional ideas with modern, innovative thinking. We have blends combining international varieties with the best local ones and in the case of Miopasso's Nero d'Avola, the transfer of northern Italian wine making methods to the far south.

This focus offer highlights four of these wines that are brand new to the UK and three of which we have imported ourselves. Though we have somewhat extended the geography of southern Italy to include Abruzzo, these wines are united by the fact that their producers are seeking to make something better and more exciting than is usual in their particular region. Their efforts deserve to be better recognised and so we strongly recommend you try these impressive wines.

Carlo BOTTER
'La Botte' 2009

MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO 12%



Luca Botter is now the third generation of his family to run this dynamic producer, founded in 1928. The company began as a retailer of wine in casks and demijohns before moving on to bottled wine in the 1950s. Gradually sales increased and the production from the family estate was supplemented with grapes from other vineyards. In time this extended to the whole of Italy, including Puglia in the south and Abruzzo, the source of this wine.

The Abruzzo region is situated on the Adriatic side of Italy, east across the Apennines from Rome. Montepulciano is the most famous red grape and Luca's wine has the characteristic vivid cherry fruit flavours and fresh acidity that you would expect. This is very much a food-orientated wine, so enjoy with roast meats, pasta and game.

Spicy cherry aromas with a touch of raspberry. Juicy mouth-watering red cherry, redcurrant and sweet liquorice flavours, good freshness and long finish. Attractive wine.

At Peak Now - 2013

IT1309R £6.49

MIOPASSO
Nero d'Avola 2008

SICILIA IGT 14%



This innovative red shows just why Sicily is such an exciting place for wine. It is made by the co-operative at Santa Ninfa in western Sicily from the native Nero d'Avola grape. What makes it so special is that a proportion of the grapes, around a quarter, are picked 10 days early and then dried on mats in the Sicilian sunshine. This 'passito' method concentrates the flavours in the grapes whilst preserving the acidity. This results in a full-bodied and powerful wine with more depth than you would normally expect from this variety.

In Valpolicella where the method is more usual, this is called 'Ripasso' and hence 'Miopasso' for the name of this wine. This is a great example of modern Sicilian winemaking.

Intense spicy aromas of red cherry, raspberry and damson. Full bodied with plenty of cherry kirsch and ripe plum flavours balanced by good freshness and soft tannins. Despite the power this wine is surprisingly elegant.

At Peak Now - 2013

IT1228R £7.99

SANTORO
Primitivo Merlot 2008

TARANTINO IGT 14%



The label on this blend of Primitivo and Merlot shows how complicated Italian wine regions can be. Centred on the small town of Taranto, Tarantino is a sub region of Salento, which is itself a sub region of Puglia. The wine might have gone by the name of Manduria, except that appellation is only for Primitivo. Then the wine itself is actually produced by Angelo Rocca but they have chosen to release it under the Santoro name.

What really counts however is the contents of the bottle and that is excellent! The exuberance, power and typically high alcohol of Primitivo has been moderated by the addition of around 30% rich plummy Merlot. Unoaked but fruit-filled this ripe, generous wine is full of Puglian sunshine.

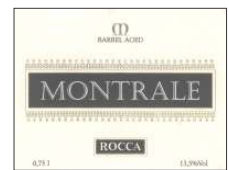
Deep colour with lively, spicy aromas of cherry, pepper and plum jam. Full-bodied with generous plum, ripe blackberry and spicy liquorice flavours, soft tannins, a touch of sweet vanilla and a slightly peppery finish.

At Peak Now - 2014

IT1258R £8.49

Angelo ROCCA
'Montrale' 2006

SALENTO ROSSO IGT 13.5%



Montrale is the flagship wine of family producer Angelo Rocca. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and native Negroamaro, it could be described as a super-Puglian wine like the super-Tuscans of Chianti, though much cheaper! Made only in exceptional vintages, the best grapes from the family vineyards in Salento are fermented separately then blended and aged six months in oak barrels.

The richness and intensity is as you would expect from this sun-soaked part of Italy, but there is also a finesse and elegance that is almost unknown in Puglia. If a wine of this quality was produced in central or northern Italy it would certainly be a lot more expensive!

Perfumed aromas of black cherry, damson, liquorice and vanilla spice. Silky ripe bramble fruit flavours with plum, cherry and mocha and long, aromatic and lightly spicy finish. Lovely mouth feel with supple fruit, good tannin balance and attractive use of oak.

At Peak Now - 2014

IT1266R £9.99

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