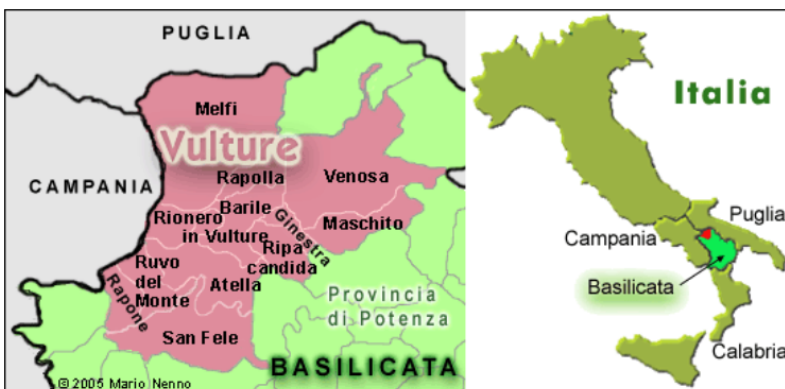


THE POPE OF ITALIAN WINE

Everyone has a different palate. I don't want you to take anyone's review of a wine as the end all be all, including mine. When it comes to Ian D'Agata almost like Robert Parker on Bordeaux, or Allen Meadows "The Burghound" on Burgundy, my ears perk up, I pay attention and I listen very carefully. Ian D'Agata, Scientific Director of the Vinality International Academy and Scientific Advisor to Vinality International, is an award winning writer and lecturer. His *Native Wine Grapes of Italy* was named 2015 Louis Roederer International Wine Awards Book of the Year. He's been named Italy's best wine writer, and one of the world's eight best international wine writers by Les Plumes d'Or in 2016. With the very hard work my wine sales supervisor and Italian Wine Buyer for ABC Fine Wine and Spirits, Paul Quaglini with the amazing help of Wine Importer Nadia Galati were somehow able to Source and Certify an Italian Wine that Ian D'Agata calls "Not only Italy's GREATEST Wine but maybe the WORLD'S GREATEST Wine", I had to buy it and review for my guests.

AGLIANICO DEL VULTURE



I have spoken many times in person and on this blog about Aglianico mainly from Taurasi in Campania nicknamed "The Barolo Of The South". In Basilicata where the ancient volcano from Mount Vulture, I usually don't speak about these wines because they are too unapproachable for years, too rustic, too tannic and in today's world, consumers want a wine they can drink today or over the next couple of years without the rustic edges.

MEET ELENA FUCCI





Their winery was founded in 2000 at a time when her family was discussing whether to sell the beautiful vineyards surrounding the house where she grew up. The vineyards were purchased in the 60's by Elena's grandfather Generoso, who chose to buy the highest part of the vineyard in "Contrada Solagna of Titolo" at the foot of Mount Vulture (an extinct volcano). Over the years that followed her grandfather and great-grandfather took care of the vineyards, selling the grapes after harvest and keeping just enough to produce some wine for personal consumption. 6 hectares of land is a lot of personal consumption and the family was going to put the vineyard up for sale but Elena couldn't do it. She convinced the family she was going to study viticulture and oenology and stake everything on this one vineyard which would be considered a Grand Cru if it were France. Located right smack dab near the volcano in the sub region stated above "Contrada Solagna of TITOLO" (Hence the vineyard's name.. "TITOLO") It is 600 meters high (2,000 feet above sea level) with soils composed of Volcanic Lava with layers of, ash, clay, loam and a lot of history. The ancient volcano is only about 3 meters away. The high altitude keeps it cool and it is a late harvest usually in late October and because of the composition of the soil in this Titolo vineyard, the ancient vines of 50-70 years old, the high cooling altitude, this vineyard not just the grape...the vineyard itself can be identified on blind tastings by experts like Ian D'Agata and soon ME!!.. This isn't your grandmothers Aglianico Del Vulture lol.

THE TITOLO VINEYARD





2016 ELENA FUCCI TITOLO

The Aglianico is de-stemmed and crushed in small batches and then fermented in stainless steel with a maximum temperature controlled to 22-24 degrees Celsius. (this may be the reason this wine is so aromatic and perfumed) Malolactic fermentation takes place within 100% new French oak barriques and matured for 12 months. (Recent vintages have been using larger Oak Vessels for aging) The wine is fined in the bottle for an additional 6 months before being released to the market. All the grapes are harvested by hand in small baskets. The production is small. Usually about 1,600 cases. It usually doesn't make it too far especially to the state of Florida in a Family owned Wine Store but again Kudos to Paul Quaglino with a lot of help from Importer Nadia Galati and Alberello Imports, we snagged 30 cases...30 cases...that's it... Very Similar to the Grand Crus of Burgundy or Bordeaux.

THIS WINE NEEDS TIME?

I SAY ...POPPYCOCK!!



Before I review this Sourced And Certified Wine at ABC, I was warned by everyone that this wine needs a lot of time..maybe even a couple of years? I gave it the same treatment I do with all my wines I review. 1 hour in the decanter, slight chill, let's drink and review. The color is a very deep dark ruby with glistening shades of purple on the outer ring. Like most Aglianico from Basilicata I was expecting that Rustic, Dirty Funk... It's not in this wine. Strongly Perfumed with bright cherry, blackberry preserves, violets and savory rosemary jumping out of the glass. If a single woman was wearing this behind her ears as a perfume, I would drop to my knees and propose marriage. 14% ABV. Medium plus on the body. The entire mid palate is explosive yet refined, juicy cherry, lots of minerals from the volcanic soil, rare beef juices. The acidity is balanced due to the cooler climate of the vineyard site, and still waiting for that VULTURE RUSTIC finish but I got tangy cranberry, integrated oak, not overused. Savory spices with a finish that was lip smacking good and no harsh or funky tannins. In fact the tannins were soft and polished. Day two the wine was maybe a smidgen softer and maybe in 1-2 years it will improve a tiny bit but the wine was a once in a lifetime bottle of wine for me that I will award 96 points to out of 100. You could if you plan on living that long easily age this wine for 30 years but you can easily enjoy this wine today with a one hour decant as I did.

THE SUMMARY

In usual Italian style, before I even reviewed this wine, I posted a picture of it on Instagram. Elena Fucci already reached out to me with a direct message saying "I would love you to visit Basilicata and Visit us...Let me know when"!! Ian D'Agata was right 1/2 of the way. I will not go as far as saying this is the WORLD'S Greatest Wine. With all due respect to the Scavino Family, Angelo Gaja, Fontodi, Biondi Santi, La Gerla, Dal Forno, Nicolis and the list goes on and on of great Italian Wines that I love. I will go out on a limb and say to all of you... (now listen to me like I listen to Ian D'Agata) at \$39.99 and \$10 off each \$100 with our ABC Loyalty card, if you are a fan of Barolo, Brunello, Taurasi, Chianti Classico, Barbaresco, You owe it to yourself to go without food for a week or so, rent a truck and go to every ABC in the State of Florida and buy every bottle they have which isn't going to be many. I can now say I have tasted in my several trips to Italy and working in fine dining, and being a Certified Sommelier Level 2... The Greatest Italian Wine I Have Ever Had in My Career. I don't need to interview any further applicants... TITOLO hands down is the winner. As Ian D'Agata said " YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF TO FIND THIS WINE".

Grape-fully yours, Larry



PUBLISHED BY LARRY THE WINE GUY

Certified Sommelier Level 2 with 15 Years Hospitality Experience from Restaurants to Wholesale To Retail.

[View all posts by Larry The Wine Guy](#)