

Wine and Food Pairing

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A Beauty from Sicily - Anthilia Vino Bianco by Donnafugata



The Wine: Negronis, oh you got me, that's not a wine, it was "un bel vino bianco, Anthilia da Sicily" \$\$

The Food: Delverde farfalle with baby bella mushrooms, pancetta, arugula and parsley with buratta, EVO and pecorino romano

The Place: La Casa Conway Polack, "al nostro tavolo della cucina"

Like most great things of Italy, Donnafugata Anthilia, has an intriguing history. Two stories in fact, a tale that goes back to invasion of Italy by Napoleon in the 1800's and our own story of discovering this favorite wine.

Our evening did start with perfect Negronis made with my special recipe, you can see that below.

They were just right to warm our chilly bones as the long winter of 2013 lingers on into the tentative spring.

My night to cook, and it had been a week without pasta so Italian it was.

The dish was one of my classics, sautéed mushrooms, onions, pancetta and pasta, with infinite variations depending on what is in the refrigerator.



The Wine

A fresh Mediterranean style wine it has bright open flavors and depth that remind me of the bright golden sun and rich blue sky and sea surrounding Sicily.

Made of the indigenous Catarratto grape, with other local varieties it a perfect spring and summer wine to sip or quaff with Sicilian cheeses, olives, seafood dishes, chicken, pork sausage or pastas.

A great fresh alternative to Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc.

The Story and the Place

It's name comes in part from the era of Maria Carolina of Austria, Queen of Naples and Sicily as the wife of King Ferdinand IV & III.



The Royal Family of Naples by Angelica Kauffman

In the 1800's Maria Carolina fled Naples to Sicily upon the invasion of Napoleon's troops. She found kind refuge at the estate of Prince of Salina a place that came to be named Donnafugata, literally 'woman in flight.' Remember the book and great movie *Il Gattopardo* (The Leopard)? The Sicilian author Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa gave the name Donnafugata to the country estates of the Prince of Salina which is where the vineyard and wineries now stand.

The name Anthilia remembers an ancient Roman city called Entella on the crest of the Rocca Anthili in the territory where the wine is made.



The creators of this wine are Giacomo Rallo his wife Gabriella, daughter José and son Antonio. The Donnafugata adventure began in the Rallo family's historic cellars in Marsala in 1983 and at its Contessa Entellina vineyards in the heart of western Sicily in 1989. They have many good reasons to be happy.



Our story began when we first tasted this wine over 14 years ago in the wine cellar dining room of Il Buco in New York, celebrating a birthday to remember.



I knew little of Sicilian wines back then, at the time they were still just establishing their new place in North America. The wine was fantastic, perfect for the moment and beautiful omen of the delightful Sicilian wines and years to come. Fast forward a decade or so and here we are having enjoyed this wine again and again and again.

The Food

I love to make simple pastas they way the do in farmhouse kitchens and the little trattorias all over Italy.

I pick a pasta shape, survey my available ingredients, buy a few on the way home from work and create. A favorite is one with baby bella mushrooms, onions, pancetta and what ever else I might have to add. This one included burrata cheese, parsley, and was served over a bed of arugula, and accented with pecarino romano.



The pasta I used was Farfalle by Delverde, my favorite pasta. Of course there was good olive oil and fresh ground rainbow pepper and sea salt and some other ingredients. The secret is in gentle cooking being careful to balance the ingredients and allowing the pasta to prevail.

It was delicious and with the wine ethereal.

The Catarratto of Anthilia da Sicily complimented the rich flavors of the dish so well, with deliberate structure, delightful minerality and fresh complex white fruit aromas and flavors, pear, white peach, and a touch of grapefruit and nuts.

A very happy dinner.

A recipe for two:

Feel free to improvise

Start the water for pasta in a large pot, per instructions.

Dice a small onion, in a large pan gently sauté and caramelize in vegetable oil with a very low flame and remove, slice the mushrooms, 8oz package, and brown them with higher heat and remove, then gently brown the pancetta, we usually use the entire little package of pancetta cubetti from Citterio. When they are brown add 1/2 cup of very good chicken and 1/4 cup of good white wine to the pan and let that boil down a bit, reduce the temperature to a simmer add back the onions and mushrooms. Start the pasta and let the sauce gently cook down. I added a teaspoon or so of diluted arrowroot to thicken. You might need a little more stock or wine.

When the pasta was done I drained, reserving some water, placed it back in the pot and then crushed a ball of burrata over the pasta and stirred to make it creamy, you may add a little pasta water if needed. Then poured the sauce over the pasta and stirred a bit more. Lined the bowls with fresh arugula and splashed with good

Sicilian olive oil and a grind of sea salt and rainbow pepper. Gently laid in the pasta and covered with pecarino romano and more parsley.

I did promise my Negroni ingredients.

I use New Amsterdam a great inexpensive Gin made in California. It has great flavor and body for Negroni style cocktails. Not too flowery. While I enjoy great value on the Gin for the vermouth I buy one of the most expensive, Carpe Antica Formula, it is essential. I also use a good Amori, Cynar is our favorite. And last but not least a few drops of bitters. Urban Moonshine Citrus for classic flavor is one favorite and Dutch Spirits Prohibitters for something a little more exotic.

Recipe

2 Parts Gin (New Amsterdam or Bulldog)

1 Part Vermouth (Carpe Antica Formula, Cocchi Turino or Dolin Red)

1/2 Part Ameri (Cynar, Campari, Aperol)

Stir well with very cold spring water ice pour on big rocks or straight up.

Garnish with orange slice and 2 drops orange bitters

Links

Donnafugata

Delverde Pasta

Il Buco Restaurant

47 Bond Street, New York, NY 10012, 212.533.1932



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