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Wednesday's Wines: Two From Donnafugata



By pure coincidence we opened two wines by the same Italian producer this week. The first, the Donnafugata Sur Sur 2014 Grillo (12.73% abv, Sample \$23), was my choice to pair with a pasta dish I had made for dinner. I don't believe I had ever had a wine made from the Grillo grape before. Grillo is a Sicilian cultivar that withstands really high temperatures and drought. However, this wine didn't taste like a wine that was produced from a hot region. I suppose this was because 2014 in Sicily was marked by a relatively mild winter, a cool spring and the summer passed without excess heat. The nose was subtle, and revealed some timid aromas of peaches and citrus. There was a distinct grapefruit flavor on the palate that, when combined with slight herbal tone made me think this would be a good substitute for a Sauvignon blanc. The wine showed very bright acidity in the mouth, but also had hint of creaminess that fooled me in thinking this saw a bit of oak when it in fact did not. Overall, this is a lovely wine and I look forward to trying more Grillo in the future.



The second wine, the Donnafugata Lighea 2014 Zibibbo (12.34% abv, Sample \$23), was chosen by my wife and served to me blind in a decanter. My first guess based on the nose was Riesling because it was so aromatic with notes of flowers, peaches, honey, and limes. However, it didn't taste like Riesling, but more like Viognier. There were more flavors of apricot and pineapple and it didn't have acidity I would expect in Riesling. It seemed as if it were some kind of blend of Riesling, Viognier and Portuguese Vinho Verde. I looked at my wife puzzled and I told her I had given up guessing what it might be. Well, turns out what's on the label - Zibibbo - is a synonym for Muscat of Alexandria. All those aromas and flavors make sense for Muscat! Interestingly enough, Muscat of Alexandria is believed to be one of the oldest genetically unmodified grape cultivars. Jeremy Parzen posted an interesting article on the origins of the name Zibibbo on his site Do Bianchi. It is often made into fortified wines - Rutherglen in Australia, Málaga in Spain, and off the coast of Marsala on the island of Pantelleria. It is also distilled into Pisco in Chile and Peru. It also happens to make a lovely dry, still wine from Sicily.