

wine

For a black grape with plenty of tang, try nebbiolo.

Words Tim White

It was meant to be a tangy sauvignon

blanc that we'd be enjoying most with our goat's curd on sourdough toast – but it turned out to be an autumn sunset-hued Gattinara (a north-east Italian red made from the grape nebbiolo) that was every bit as good.

This was in the Adelaide Hills, long before nebbiolo's rise. Two producers craft consistently fine "nebb" there, Arrivo and S.C. Pannell, the latter collecting the top trophy at the Australian Alternative Varieties Wine Show late last year. Pizzini, in the King Valley, has been setting the standard for many years.

Nebbiolo can be a bit fearsome in the tannin and acid department but it's my favourite black grape variety. At Pearl one time, an '01 Vajra Nebbiolo d'Alba was fantastic with a red duck curry. The '07 Vajra nebb (\$60) is sold at Enoteca Sileno, and there's a stunning '06 Langhe nebb from Massolino (\$58, Cloudwine). Thorne-Clarke has a great-value Morello '06 (\$20, try Blackhearts & Sparrows) and there's the Serafino '07 (\$20, serafinowines.com.au).

Many Italian red varieties, notably sangiovese, have an acid-tannin tang that makes them delicious with a range of food. Australian Justin Bubb's '07 Babo sangio from Tuscany is a mouth-watering example (\$22, Rañdall's). Perhaps the most surprising nebb combo, though, was a puttanesca-rubbed, pan-roasted barramundi fillet and an '04 Proprieta Sperino Uvaggio (\$50, Winestar) at Cecconi's Cantina. Sublime.



Chalmers Sagrantino 2005, Murray Darling, NSW, \$26 (City Wine Shop)

Smells peaty and packed with black juicy fruits. Has chew and juice in the mouth, and lip-smacking acidity. There's a woody, leafy character, with sweet-sharp fruit flavours. This is a tasty, mature, sapid red, as is the aglianico of the same vintage.



S.C. Pannell Nebbiolo 2007, Adelaide Hills, SA, \$53 (Rathdowne Cellars)

Fragrant and pure: loganberry pips, some porcini with air, new leather, fennel – complex. Fabulous texture on the palate, the perfect masochistic mix of tannin and acid: terrific, harmonious tension. Will evolve for at least a decade, but with decanting is great drinking now.



Greenstone Vineyard Sangiovese 2007, Heathcote, Vic, \$69 (Prince Wine Store)

Has attractive liquorice and terracotta. Also a fair sniff of oak, but it's integrating. Firm and austere, builds dark cherry, creamy flavours then gets wholemeal toasty to close. Quite complex sangiovese.

bars

Jules



Jules

A bar runs down one side of a shabby-chic, whitewashed dining room with lanterns and white lace tablecloths, and through some arches, there's a rustic courtyard with mint-green walls and cactus shrubbery. Jules is run by Moi Rogers, of Glitzern jewellery, Michelle Dufty, who also owns Julio Cafe in North Fitzroy, and academic Jasmine McGowan, all of whom wanted a low-key, local spot to enjoy good-quality European food and wine. Snacks range from French fries (\$8), a prawn cocktail (\$18) and a croque Provencale (tomato roasted with thyme and leeks, \$10). Sip on something French (there are lots of \$8 options and some very nice NV Louis Bouillot Perele de Vigne "Grand Reserve" Burgundy bubbles for \$9). Salut.

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