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TASTINGS

Eric Asimov

New Reds Around Naples

OR centuries, southern Italy has been a vast reservoir of rustic red wines, produced for a market bounded by the seas and the rugged inland hills. But in the last 25 years, several winemakers began adopting modern methods of viticulture, and their wines started to pique the interest of collectors and bargain hunters around the world.

Apulla - the heel of the Italian boot - and Sicily have drawn much interest, but some of the most interesting wines may be coming from Campania, a halfmoon shaped area stretching from just north of Naples to the top of the toe.

Like many of the new wave of Italian wines, some of the coveted reds from Campania incorporate internationally popular grapes, like cabernet sauvignon and syrah, but many still rely on traditional ones, most prominently aglianico (pronounced ah-lee-AHN-ee-coh) and piedirosso. For some of the more expensive wines, winemakers have adopted foreign methods, like aging the wines in new oak barrels.

Many of Campania's best wines are made in such small amounts and are so highly prized that they are virtually impossible to find. Call me right away if you're serving a bottle of Montevetrano or Fattoria Galardi, two Campanian equivalents of California cult wines.

Others show up in shops that specialize in Italian wines. One of



these wines is De Conciliis's Naima, a wine with enough well. integrated French oak that it tastes almost like a fine Bordeaux, though it's made of 100 1 percent aglianico.

In the midrange are some delights that are a little easier to find, like the fresh, fragrant and easy-drinking Donnaluna, also ... from De Conciliis, and the Taurasi from Feudi di San Gregorio, an exceptional winemaker.

On the low end of the price spectrum are wines with the evocative name of Lacryma Christi, meaning tears of Christ. These have generally received little respect, but I found several of them delicious and unpretentious. like good Beaujolals.

DE CONCILIIS, NAIMA 1998 Rich, dark aromas of b	s rambly fruit and oak; deliciously complex.	\$45
FEUDI DI SAN GREGORIO, T. Extremely fragrant with	aurasi 1995 delicious dark berry and herb flavors.	\$35
Peppermint and winter	, Actianico 1999 green aromas; flavor of a fresh berry pie.	\$19
Dark and complex fruit	SISERVA, COSTA D'AMALFI 1996 aromas; tannic and concentrated.	\$30
	CRYMA CHRISTI DEL VESUVIO 1998 ight-bodiad, supple and pleasing.	\$16
atea, with high	MA CHRISTI DEL VESUVIO 1997 - Pitched fruit flavors, chocolate undertone ence. Prices are those paid in wine shops in the New York 0650-577-102-79	\$22

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