

From the Land of Many Grapes, Unusual Italian Reds

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The glory of wine today is its unparalleled diversity. Never before in history would you be confronted in a wine shop with the range of choices available now.

Some may suggest this poses a problem: The endless options are too intimidating. But I think the selection offers a wonderful opportunity for exploration.

It may be that Italy grows more different kinds of grapes than any other wine-producing country. Next we'll look at three Italian red wines made of unusual grapes.

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The three wines I recommend are:

G. B. Burlotto Langhe Freisa 2017 (Bacchanal Wine Imports, Port Chester, N.Y.) \$24

Elena Walch Alto Adige Schiava 2018 (Walch U.S.A., Sausalito, Calif.) \$17

Foradori Vigneti Delle Dolomiti Teroldego 2016 (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York) \$25

This trio of grapes — freisa, schiava and teroldego — is far from the most obscure that Italy has to offer. I might have considered cornalin or fumin, pelaverga or grignolino, gaglioppo or schioppettino, but the three I chose may be a little easier to find. You can try them if they come from other producers or vintages as well.

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Still, if you find one of these other grapes I mentioned and prefer to try that, why not? Or if you discover something you have never heard of before, go for it. The idea here is exploration. The variety is endless.

None of the three wines I recommended is heavy. They are bright and aromatic, and ought to be delicious summer reds suitable with either meat dishes or light pastas. Don't hesitate to serve them lightly cool.

Often when I suggest somewhat obscure wines, somebody will respond that they already know what they like, why try something different? I get that. People often feel that way about the foods they enjoy and the friends they already have in their lives.

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Yet, I can't help but believe that curiosity leads to unexpectedly rewarding experiences. It's true that drinking the same sorts of wines is not like rewatching the same movie or rereading the same book. Something can be different in every bottle. But a new wine? Who knew something could taste that good?

If you don't believe me, try these out.

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