

From Valpolicella & Soave: The Times, They Are A Changin' (Feb 2021) by Eric Guido

Celestino Gaspari carries a lot of weight in the circles of Amarone lovers, as he was considered to be something of an heir apparent to Giuseppe Quintarelli himself. Today, however, the name most often associated with him is Zyme, even though he's been involved in the guidance and successes of a number of famous wineries in the region. Zyme is located in San Pietro in Cariano within the Valpolicella Classica growing zone, and it sources its fruits from locations throughout the region to create a unique and constantly evolving portfolio of wines. At times they can be larger than life, such as the ultra-modern Harlequin, while at other times, they are traditional to the core, which I witnessed while tasting the 2008 Riserva La Mattonara, one of the top wines I've ever experienced from the region. There are no set rules at Zyme, other than the pursuit of experimentation to better deliver a unique and honest experience, which also communicates the character of each individual vintage. This brings to mind the 2019 From Black to White, a white blend that relies heavily on Rondinella Bianca and shows amazing character and purity. Gaspari is also known to hold wines back until he believes they are ready to drink, making the 2008 Amarone Riserva the current release. In the end, I think it's important to look deeply into the tasting notes to fully understand the wines, as they range from traditional stylings to more experimental bottlings.



SCORE 89

The **2017 Valpolicella Classico Superiore** is all about fresh fruit, energy and instant gratification. It blends bright cherries with white smoke and sweet herbs to create an inviting display. The textures are soft, complemented by ripe red berries and zesty acids. This lingers long with mineral underpinnings and hints of dried strawberry, and it leaves the palate feeling perfectly refreshed.



SCORE 94

The **2015 Amarone della Valpolicella** bursts from the glass with a ripe and extroverted display of medicinal cherries dipped in dark chocolate, offset by hints of balsamic spice and sweet mint. It's rich and deeply textural, with vibrant acidity lending lift as ripe red and purple-tinged fruits flesh out, leaving a subtle coating of fine tannins in their wake. Nothing is out of place here in this pleasure-bomb of a wine, which shows the ripeness of the vintage yet never falls out of balance. The Amarone is one of the most classic wines from the Zymē portfolio. A blend of traditional grapes are dried for three months, then crushed, fermented and macerated for another two months before being matured in large Slavonian oak for five years.



SCORE 98

The **2008 Amarone della Valpolicella Riserva La Mattonara** keeps you at the edge of the glass, as it opens up in layers, showing dried cherries, currants and hints of pine. Further coaxing brings forward savory smoke followed by crushed blackberries, cinnamon, clove and candied citrus. The textures are like pure silk, slowly draped across the palate with a polished sheen, leaving ripe red and black fruits, mocha, sweet herbs and autumnal spice. You can feel the weight, yet the 2008 remains remarkably balanced, vibrant and flat-out delicious, with a finish that never seems to end. The Riserva La Mattonara is produced through strict selection in the vineyards, followed by three months of air-drying, two months of maceration and nine years maturing in large Slavonian oak. In a word—Wow!