

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 92

The **2019 Il Bianco *From Black to White*** grabs your attention with a rich yet sweetly perfumed bouquet that mixes ripe peaches, green melon and honeyed yellow flowers. It's silky and sapid in the mouth, with medium-bodied textures, as ripe apples and nectarines are energized by juicy acids and a twang of green citrus. The thrill ride continues, taking on a bit of a tropical note through the finale, along with salty minerals and lingering spice. This blend of 60% Rondinella Bianca, 15% Gold Traminer, 15% Kerner and 10% Incrocio Manzoni is a showstopper, both full of character and remarkably refreshing.



SCORE 92

The **2017 *Kairos*** is seductive from start to finish, wafting up an initial burst of exotic spice and smoke, which slowly evolves into a mix of cherries, blueberries and red currants, complemented by hints of lavender and sage. It's velvety-smooth but also juicy and packed full of lively energy, focusing on fruit, with ripe wild berries and strawberries cooled by minty herbal tones. This is wonderfully polished, textural and soothing, leaving hints of milk chocolate and violet candies. The Kairos is produced using a dizzyingly long list of grape varieties, 10% of which are white, that are partially dried then co-fermented with ambient yeasts, and matured for 24 months in French oak.



SCORE 93

The **2011 *Harlequin*** is dark and intense yet displays a dazzling freshness that frames the expression perfectly. Like opening a fresh jar of blackberry preserves in the middle of a pine forest amidst a field of wild herbs: this is the vision brought about while taking in the bouquet. It's velvety and full-bodied, contrasted by juicy acids and cooling mintiness, as a wave of ripe wild berries coats all that it touches in spice and tactile mineral tones. Fine tannins linger throughout the long finale, yet the structure here is welcoming, and in fact, the Harlequin is deceptively drinkable and vibrant. You could easily cellar it for a decade, but it's already so enjoyable today. This is pure decadence. The Harlequin is another experimental blending of a large list of varieties, most of which are red. The grapes are whole-cluster fermented for 30 days using ambient yeast, after which the wine matures through two passes of new French barriques – in other words, 200% new wood.