

## Latin passion in the Vales

Review by [drinkster.blogspot.com](http://drinkster.blogspot.com)



Whitey visits the local Italians for Christmas, tasting some fine drops from Serafino and J Petrucci & Son.

The Italians pretty much invented Jesus's birthday, along with Gina Lollobrigida and the Vespa.

They have also played a big role in the life and style of McLaren Vale, always adding a touch of Latin passion to the aloof cool brought by the Brits.

With that in mind, take a look at this **Serafino Bellissimo Fiano 2015** (\$20; 13% alcohol; screw cap). Fiano is beginning to slot into the local gastronomic vista a bit like a white Grenache. Like Grenache, it's pretty and poised at lower alcohols, but quickly turns to porty gloop if let ripen too far.

This model displays the fleshy face-cream aroma typical of the riper sorts, and follows that with just the right amount of comfort in the saddle. Importantly, though, its resilient bones are never lost in its corpulence: while it flashes the flesh it retains just enough poise and dignity to bring refreshing lemony balance to the table.

It can handle a serious chill, even chilli, and draws my hunger in the direction of chicken casserole with plenty of garlic and fresh herb, or a spaghetti vongole with fresh-picked Italian parsley. It's a good thing.

A little farther along the track from Serafino Maglieri's vast temple of pulchritude, you find the valley of the Italians on Sand Road. This is where the Petrucci family has lived and farmed for generations.

Significant among their recent revelations is Joe and Michael Petrucci's Sabella Colorino, an ink-black astonishment that'll suck all the water out of your eyes, along with the last tiny beam of light from the room.

On the other hand, the notion of making rosé from the black Aglianico seems in this case to flood the same room with colour and light: the **J Petrucci & Son Sabella Aglianico 2015** (\$25; 12% alcohol; screw cap) is one of those fleshy pinks that paints smiles all over everyone. It smells like those cured hams hanging in the window, but served with a quivering maraschino cherry jelly.

Once again, we have a wine richly endowed with puppy fat, but never so much as to hide its racy bony frame: beneath that chub and pickled cherry there's an acidity as stiff and crunchy as bone china.

You can have this on ice with a splash of soda with your breakfast panettone, or, dammit, chilled with that sugar-cured Christmas ham and crunchy white bread from the brilliant McLaren Flat bakery. La vita è bella!