

Your partner in wine...

**With the Goan Vegetable Curry, John recommends ...
Nascetta 2012. Bianco Langhe. Rivetto.
(£27, Hedonism Wines, www.hedonism.co.uk).**

I'VE just returned from Piemonte in north-west Italy where I spent a couple of days in Alba with Indigenous Langa, a new association of winemakers dedicated to promoting the indigenous grapes of the Langhe region, "focusing on Nascetta and Pelaverga", the invitation announced.

I have to confess, I'd never heard of either of them! Nascetta's white whilst Pelaverga is red by the way. I was looking for a lighter style white to partner the vegetable curry and Nascetta came up trumps, it matches the Goan speciality effortlessly.

Nascetta's claim to fame is that it's the only white grape native to Langhe, the region that also produces Barolo and Barbaresco, two of Italy's most famous reds. For my anorak readers, Arneis, the most prolific white Piemontese grape is indigenous to Roero, the region across the River Tanaro, whilst Cortese, the white grape behind the popular Gavi label, hails from the Alessandria vineyards to the east.

Nascetta was Piemonte's premier white grape in the mid 1800s, but was not replanted after the devastating phylloxera (the little bug that loves vine roots for starter, main course and dessert) epidemic that swept through Europe in the late 19th century.

A few winemakers kept the faith however and replanted small parcels of Nascetta; the foundations of the Indigenous Langa association that now promotes this traditional variety so enthusiastically.

I tasted a large flight of Nascetta wines in the cellars of the imposing Grinzane Cavour castle outside Alba; some were good, some not so good. The good bottles carried lively acidity and a touch of minerality with nutty citrus aromas and fla-



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vours. The best reminded me of Chardonnay from the Maconnais in Burgundy, the very best had me thinking that they would improve with age. For the record the Nascetta producers that collected my highest

scores were Cagno, Cellario, San Silvestro and Rivetto.

Before tasting the Pelaverga wine flight, I popped outside for a touch of warm spring sunshine in the castle's courtyard - the views were breathtaking. Hilltop villages with silhouetted castles and churches, steep green vineyard slopes with the snow capped Alps providing a stunning backdrop to one of the most beautiful vineyard regions in the world.

Next time you're thinking of a holiday in Tuscany, don't forget to consider Piemonte.

Back to the wines! Pelaverga grapes were first recorded way back in 1400 and today thrive in the calcerous and sandy marl slopes around the town of Verduna. Like Nascetta however, the vines only occupy small vineyard plots. The wine was known for its aphrodisiac qualities but after a little research I found that this was 'because of its excellent drinkability' Mmmm, let me pour myself a glass and think about that one.

The first thing to strike you about a flight of Pelaverga wines is the light attractive colour, a feature of the grape variety. The aromas and flavours of strawberry, raspberry and spice with friendly tannins backed by crisp acidity are also a characteristic of this easy drinking wine. If you prefer a light red with your vegetable curry pull the cork on a Pelaverga; the wines that headlined my tasting notes were from the estates of Reverdito, Cantina I Bre and Ascheri.

In a world dominated by Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and their international mates, it's great to see winemakers promoting their local indigenous varieties.

So, bravo to the Lads and Lassies of Langa. Nascetta and Pelaverga both lift the Goan vegetable curry wonderfully.... Just thinking, they'd be a really good addition to the wine list in my local curry house.

INDIGENOUS LANGA ASSOCIAZIONE PRODUTTORI NASCETTA

JOHN DOWNES M.W. - Master of Wine. (Your Partner in wine ...)

Il 10 maggio 15 è stata ufficialmente presentata l'associazione dei produttori di uva Nascetta "Indigenous Langa" (ormai siamo 30 realtà) nella splendida cornice del Castello di Grinzane Cavour. In quest'occasione si è svolta una degustazione alla cieca fra i vini dei produttori che hanno aderito ed è stato finalmente pubblicato il primo articolo da **Mr John Downes** (uno fra i soli "300 Master of Wine" al mondo, degustatore per Decanter e rinomato scrittore/giornalista del settore in UK ...) La nostra Nascetta si è posizionata benissimo insieme alla storica azienda Cagno che ci ha fornito le gemme in passato per il nostro impianto e che ha permesso la rinascita di questo grande vino insieme ad un'altra azienda sempre di Novello.

Per le migliori Nascette il degustatore ha espresso i complimenti per il livello di acidità, la mineralità e gli aroma di cedro. Alla degustazione erano presenti altri degustatori internazionali di grande spessore ed aspettiamo con ansia anche il loro giudizio.

