

A Light And Lively Italian Red To See The Summer Out

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Terra di Pietra Valpolicella Piccola Peste 2015

Soon enough it will be time to move to chunky autumn and winter reds – but not yet. I've enjoyed quite a few juicy Valpolicellas this summer. Designed to be drunk while still young and fruity, they make an excellent match for lighter food. Of them all this is my favourite – so juicy and perky that you'll find it difficult to put down.

Made from grapes grown organically in the stony hills east of Verona and vinified using indigenous yeasts, it offers both purity and charm. Fresh red cherry flavours are spun together smoothly with just enough grip to make the wine moreish and food-friendly. Even more striking is the fact that it has a kind of inbuilt vigour to make it ripple in the mouth.

The name *piccola peste* means ‘little scamp’, as you might guess from the child’s drawing on the label: have a good look at it and you’ll find this bottle easy to remember and pick out on the shelf. It comes with a sad story. The winemaker, Laura Albertini, mother of two little scamps, died earlier this year at the age of just 36.



By all accounts she was one of Valpolicella’s rising stars – enthusiastic, determined and fun. Her description of how she created a family estate is a lesson worth absorbing: ‘Starting from scratch I had only one recipe: a little recklessness, lots of wilfulness, loads of passion, a good dose of hope and someone who believed in me.’ Her husband, that someone, has vowed to carry her work forward.

Laura’s delicious Piccola Peste will go with grilled chicken or pork, charcuterie or a cheese plate as well as with pizza and pasta.

Alcohol: 12%