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Embracing Manzoni Bianco, The Savory Italian White Wine That You Should Know

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Exploring the grapes of Italy could (and should) be a full-time job. According to Ian D'Agata's *Native Wine Grapes of Italy*, an estimated 2,000 varieties can be found in the country's vineyards, though only a few hundred of those are used for quality wine production today. But it's easy to see why, even if you do discover a new favorite Italian wine grape, it could get lost in the shuffle over time.

This happened to me recently with Manzoni Bianco, a grape that you might not have heard of but absolutely should become acquainted with. In the mood for a full-bodied winter white wine – just the thing when all of those rich reds are weighing heavy on the palate – I pulled out a varietal Manzoni Bianco and rediscovered just how much I love the wines from this variety. While this grape may not come around all too often, its savory, generous white wines are ones to scoop up.

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Part of the allure of Manzoni Bianco is its fine balance, the push-pull effect given to the grape by the blending of characteristics from its parent varieties. From Pinot Bianco, the wine gets its round, full body and plump fruit characteristics; from Riesling comes lifting acidity and a tendency towards minerality. The combination of those attributes creates an incredibly attractive style of wine that most closely resembles Chenin Blanc, or perhaps Sémillon, both of which are also excellent white wines for winter's frigid temperatures.



Until recently, I had never encountered another Manzoni Bianco out in the wild, but it turns out that well-known winery **Alois Lageder** – located a quick 20-minute trip northeast from Foradori — began working with the grape during the 2014 vintage. The producer is currently on the third release of the Fórra Manzoni Bianco, which is also farmed according to biodynamic practices from a single plot next to a gorge, or fórra. The 2016 vintage is distinctly savory, with nutty tones on top of clean, fresh citrus and a kick of spice. It, too, will evolve over time.

Take a moment to contemplate today the favorite grapes or wines that you may have forgotten over time, and consider checking back in with them. In the meantime, drink some Manzoni Bianco.