

THIS ISSUE'S REVIEWS

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ITALY

Red:

Savanna Samson, Italy (Italy) Barbera “Sogno Tre” 2005 (\$50, Domaine Select): Barbera is one of the most food-friendly of all red wines. The lighter-bodied Barberas, in the \$15 to \$24 price range, are great with casual dinners such as pizza or pasta with red sauce. But there are also more serious, fuller-bodied Barberas, such as Savanna Samson's Sogno Tre, which can easily accompany steak or pork dishes. Savanna Samson happens to be an adult film star who's married to a New York wine shop proprietor with lots of Italian connections. The noted Brunello di Montalcino winemaker and wine consultant Roberto Cipresso is the guiding light behind Savanna Samson's wines. The 2005 Sogno Tre, made from 45-year-old vines in Monferrato, Piedmont (the birthplace of Barbera), is a totally dry, not particularly fruity, very traditionally made Barbera--even though Cipresso and winemaker Fabrizio Iuli make the modern concession of aging the wine in used French barriques. It has lots of depth, plenty of acidity, and a silky, understated texture, with tart red fruit flavors layered in with suggestions of ripe black fruit. Unlike most Barberas, the 2005 Sogno Tre improves with some aeration, and it has amazing length on the palate for this variety. I had planned to just taste this wine, but wound up finishing the entire bottle. I guess that says more than all of my words! 'Sogno Tre' is the name Savanna Samson is using for her Italian selections; she previously released an old-vine red wine from Latium using the almost extinct Cesanese variety, and last year gave us a Falanghina from Campania. This might be her best wine yet. **92 Ed**

McCarthy *Feb 17, 2009*