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WINES OF THE TIMES

The New York Times

In Southern Italy, a Chance to Be More Than Just a Bargain

By **ERIC ASIMOV** Published: October 11, 2012

LIKE Italian food, Italian red winethat's the case, what can we take from negroamaro, a grape and a wine from the sun-baked plains of Apulia, the rustic heel of the Italian boot?....Which brings us back to negroamaro, the other red grape of Apulia, especially the narrow Apulian peninsula, which stretches south between the Adriatic and Ionian seas. For the tasting, Florence Fabricant and I were joined by Carla Rzeszewski, wine director of the Spotted Pig, the Breslin and the John Dory Oyster Bar; and Shin Tseng, general manager of Lupa

Our No. 1 wine, the Perrini Salento Rosso, was light and inviting, with the signature spicy bitterness that we sought in the wines. It was also our best value at \$16. As for great negroamaro wines, the potential may be there, waiting to be explored with methods more subtle than expensive oak barrels and heavy bottles. So, what is the cultural message of these wines? It's of an uncertain identity and a region still playing catch-up as it finds its place in the globalized world. The capacity for pleasure is there. Perhaps all that is needed is more confidence

BEST VALUE

Perrini, ** 1/2 Salento Rosso I.G.T.

Spicy and refreshing, with a light, inviting texture, a touch of oak and a pleasant bitterness (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York)