

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

International Edition

www.DiWineTaste.com

Issue 4, January 2003

DiWineTaste's Wines Guide Has Come

We wish to begin this new issue of DiWineTaste as well as this new year, by wishing our dear readers a very happy new year, we wish all our readers the new year to bring them everything they wish and that it will be for everyone, and please let us extend our wishes to everyone in our planet, no one excluded, a better year where reason, human intelligence and moral sense will finally prevail over stupidity, true plague of our times, perhaps of all times in human history.

New year, new goals and objectives. We just published our fourth issue, a truly and very modest goal, but full and rich of good results for us and that are making us hope for our future and, for this, we surely have to thank you all for what we reached and got so far, we have to thank you all, our dearest readers, which continue to read our publication and keep on honoring us of your preference. Thank you very much indeed everyone, thank you.

Like we said, new year, new goals and objectives. We want to begin 2003 by announcing to our readers our first news and the goal we set when we started working on this project, as always, we sincerely wish our readers will like this and we hope it will be interesting for you all. As you know already, in DiWineTaste's pages we publish every month the results of our tastings and these results are published in two different column: "Wines of the Month" and "Wine Producers". In the former are being published the results of the tastings concerning wines that producers send us at our office, the latter is for wines of those producers we personally meet and visit. We decided to publish on our web site, www.DiWineTaste.com, the results of the tastings concerning the wines which have been published on the magazine, including the ones published in this issue, of course. In short, together with the new year also comes the "DiWineTaste's Wines Guide".

We would like to illustrate to our readers the goals of this new project, as well as giving some instructions on how to use it. Let's make things clear about one point: we have no intention in creating a new "guide", that is a tool having the purpose of magnifying certain wines while destroying others, we believe there are so many out there and another new "guide" would probably confuse consumers' ideas and thoughts even more. Our primary goal remains still the same, the same we expressed in the first issue of the magazine as well as in our web site's pages: we are interested in spreading wine culture and the information about enogastronomy. Indeed, in some pages of our publication, we express our opinions about certain wines, anyway, we want and believe that the final word, the one that will really award producers for their products, should

not be ours, anyway we are just a small group of people if compared to you all that read our magazine, we think the final word must unequivocally be told by consumers, that is, by you all. This is one of the reasons that makes us believe wine culture and information is truly essential in order to reach this goal: everyone must be able, in complete freedom, to decide what to like and what to like not.

We thought of creating a tool that, also thanks to the opportunities offered by computer technologies, can become a searching and reference tool; we thought of a tool that should continue growing with time and enriched every month, that remembers about the past and looks towards the future. We like the idea our readers will consider "DiWineTaste's Wines Guide" as a tool that will allow them to search for specific wines according to some searching criteria, a tool that will allow the evaluation and comparison of a group of wines, possibly having common characteristics. We like the idea of offering a new service to our readers, coherent with the spirit which animates DiWineTaste; this is the spirit that convinced us to give birth to our "guide".

The guide will be updated every month, in concomitance with the publication of every new issue, and the wines published, as well as their characteristics, will be added to the guide. We tried to give the results on the guide the same appearance of the magazine, excepting the price which is not part of the guide. This choice is mainly because of practical reasons, as the guide will include every wine published, prices would be destined to become useless and obsolete with time as they would probably change and this information would easily become inconsistent. The importance and the consistency of

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price is concerned to the very moment the wine is published in the magazine; the same information would surely become outdated, and therefore not useful, with time. We understand our guide, in its current state, is not extremely rich, because of the modest quantity of wines available, a little less than 50, but, like we are used to tell ourselves, we are proceeding step by step and this is just one of the many little steps of our journey and, you will agree, it must have been started in a way or another and from some place.

What you will see in our web site's pages is just a starting point; however, in its preliminary phase, the guide can clearly show its exact purpose and use, while waiting to be enriched with more wines in the next months and, we are sure of this, with more functions as well. As always, your support and help will be essential and valued, it will let us understand whether this is the right direction or not: every comment or opinion from you, as well as every suggestion, will surely and certainly be welcome.

After having spent much words in premises, let's try to understand what "DiWineTaste's Wines Guide" can offer. The guide is mainly a tool for searching and comparing wines: it will be enough to select the criteria on which the search is based on and a list of wines satisfying the criteria will be displayed on your screen. As soon as the list of the resulting wines is displayed, it will be possible to display the details about a particular wine and this will include the same information published on DiWineTaste. In order to simplify the comparison and evaluation of more wines, every form will be displayed in its own window in order to allow these windows to be placed side by side and compared at the same time.

The guide allows to search wines by specifying the following parameters: producer, year, score, country, region, wine area, typology, name of wine, grapes and, lastly, the food to be matched with the wine. The resulting wines will be the ones that will satisfy every searching criteria. We think a useful function offered by the guide is the one which allows the user to ask a list of wines that could be matched with specific foods; our guide is not just a "simple" list of wines, but mainly is an enogastronomical tool that will suggest you the wine, or the wines, that can be matched with certain foods. The possibility of entering a group of criteria is also useful for enogastronomical purposes: in this case it will be possible to search for a wine, or a group of wines, that can be matched with a specific food and, possibly, produced with certain grapes and in a specific area and even produced by a specific winery. At the same way, it will be possible to search for wines produced with certain grapes or coming from specific areas as well as produced by specific wineries. We tried to make this guide as versatile

and useful as possible: we sincerely hope it will be useful to everyone that will make use it.

We wish our guide to be interesting for you and that you will like it; we wish it will be useful to you all in searching and choosing a wine that you will decide to uncork in particular moments of your life and, why not, to celebrate a happy event and, lastly, to evaluate and compare wines having common characteristics, even though, like we all know, every wine is different from another. Finally, we wish our guide will be a tool that will allow us to reach our fundamental goal: to promote and spread the wine culture and information as well as enogastronomy culture. This would surely be a great result: we are absolutely open and available to any new idea and opinion that would allow us to offer a better product, not to mention, every comment or opinion from you will be welcome, as always.

Once again, we would like to end this editorial by wishing you all a very happy 2003, we sincerely hope this new year will be a very happy and prosperous one for everyone, no one excluded. Happy 2003!

MailBox

In this column are published our reader's mail. If you have any comment or any question or just want to express your opinion about wine, send your letters to our editorial at Mail@DiWineTaste.com.

I heard wine kept in larger bottles is better than the one kept in regular bottles. Is that true?

Carol Swain – Albany, New York (USA)

Generally speaking, yes, it is true. Wine kept in larger bottles, such as a magnum, ages more slowly than in regular bottles and develops more complex, elegant and refined characteristics. This is generally true for red wines suited for aging in bottle, as there are few white wines truly suited for this purpose because they tend, with time, to lose their crispness and vivacity. Moreover, it should be considered that sparkling wines produced with classic method, such as Champagne, when are fermented in larger bottles develop more refined and elegant aromas than the ones fermented in regular bottles.



I am a wine lover and I particularly like French wines from Bordeaux. I often hear talking about terroir, although I do not really know what it is, it seems to be an important term. What does exactly mean terroir? Congratulations for your publication.

Simon Wilson – Worthing, Sussex (England)

The term *terroir* is mainly used in the Bordeaux area. Its literal meaning is "soil" and it comes from the French phrase "*goût de terroir*" that is "taste of soil". In Bordeaux enology, the term "*terroir*" indicates, besides the specific characteristics of the soil, also other geographical factors that directly influence the quality of wine, such as altitude, position relative to the

DiWINEtaste

Independent periodical of wine culture and information

Published by

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sun, angle of vineyard's incline, subsoil water drainage and the microclimate condition of the area. In Burgundy they use the "climat" term to indicate local conditions, just like "terroir", referred to a tiny area, usually not larger than a vineyard.



Congratulations for your publication which I think to be complete and well made. I would like to ask you this question: what is the difference between Spanish Cava and the other sparkling wines produced in other countries, such as Champagne?

Alberto Ramajo – Valladolid (Spain)

Besides the production area, there are other differences between Cava and Champagne, as well as other sparkling wines produced with classic method. The production method used for Cava is the classic one which provides for a secondary fermentation in bottle, just like Champagne. Grapes used in the production of Cava are *Macabeo*, *Xarel-lo* and *Parellada*, whereas in the production of Champagne, *Chardonnay*, *Pinot Noir* and *Pinot Meunier* are used instead. However it should be noticed that in some Cavas Chardonnay is used as well as Pinot Noir, which usually give a better structure and longevity. Another difference is represented by the minimum time of fermentation in bottle: because of proper characteristics of the local grapes used in making Cava, the minimum aging is of 9 months.

ABC WINE

Australia

Despite most of Australian production is limited to a specific area, this country has proven to be, year after year, one of the leading wine countries of the world

When one thinks of Australia, the things that first come to mind are its particular fauna and flora, its amazing, uncontaminated and wild places, but probably not its excellent wines. Australian producers surely worked very hard in order to have their wines known all over the world, in fact, most of the Australian production is exported outside the country. The development of Australian enology has been, maybe, among the most rapid and efficient ones of the whole world, a relatively recent history and an excellent level of quality achieved in a short time, moreover, they also added a typical character to their products, both by means of technology and casks, which allowed the creation of a real and proper "mark" that can be surely defined as "Australian".

Perhaps the secret of the success of Australian wine was the adoption, since the very first moments of Australian enology "renaissance", of advanced enological technologies and advanced practices, a step that allowed a rapid development and the achievement of a high level of quality; as a matter of fact, the most famous "flying winemakers" of the world are from Australia and they are often hired by European and American wineries in order to benefit of their competence and collaboration.

Australia is currently the eighth wine producer of the world and has a pro capita consumption of wine of about 20 liters (5.28 gallons) and it ranks as the eighteenth among the countries which drink wine. Indeed, Australia produces more wine than it really consumes, a condition that requires a strong commercial strategy oriented to the export of wine, and this led Australia to have a high export percentage towards some western countries, such as the United States of America, almost equal to some historical wine producers countries such as Italy or France. However, it should be noticed that one of the main factors that played a fundamental role in Australian enology and its spreading and appreciation everywhere, is the excellent quality offered at a reasonable price. Of course, this is what happens in general terms, just like every other wine producing country of the world, there are some exceptions; there are some Australian wines whose cost is as high as the ones of the most renowned European or American wineries.

The history of Australian viticulture and enology is, in regard to other European wine producing countries, relatively young. It is said that vine was introduced in Australia in 1788 by the governor Captain Arthur Phillip, who brought to Sydney, coming back from one of his many journeys abroad, some vine plants coming, surprisingly not from Europe, but from Rio de Janeiro and Cape Good Hope (South Africa). These vines were planted in the governor's estates which proved to be pretty good for the cultivation of vine but not really good for the production of wine. Governor Phillip did not give up and he decided to repeat his experiment and planted a new vineyard in the garden of a property in Parramatta, not far from north of Sydney. This land resulted to be more suited than the previous one, and this encouraged Phillip to send official requests to the British Government in order to have some wine and viticulture experts to be sent in Australia. The British Government sent two French prisoners, to whom was offered freedom in return, because they were convinced that every French was an expert in enology or, at least, they would surely know something about viticulture and wine making. The results they got were obviously catastrophic and one of them was sent back to England while the other tried to produce cider, by making the mistake of using peaches instead of apples. Australian enology could not have had a beginning worsen than this.

In spite of these "accidental facts", there are other information about Australian enology. From 1820 to 1840 viticulture and enology were well established and spread in New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia and Southern Australia.



Fig. 1: Australia

The vines cultivated at those times were all from Europe, there are no evidences or information about indigenous Australian vines and the practice of hybridization, which was very common in the United States of America, was never adopted. However, it should be noticed that Australian soil, contrary to the American one, was not infested by parasites, such as the awful phylloxera, therefore the cultivation of European species has never been difficult there. Anyway, Australia was not saved by this flagellum and it officially appeared in Victoria's lands in about 1877. Curiously, this was the only place that was infested by phylloxera and it never spread elsewhere including the neighboring areas and therefore were saved by the terrible consequences of this tiny vine's parasite. Phylloxera dramatically altered, just like every other place it infested, both the production of wine and the strategies of wine making, forcing producers to adopt specific actions in order to prevent damages. Although phylloxera destroyed most of the Victoria's vineyards, this area became, almost at the end of 1800, the most important wine producing area of Australia and it produced alone almost twice the wine produced by all the other states.

The advent of phylloxera altered the production style of Victoria and this, as well as other factors, was the beginning of its decay as a wine producing area. The change of consumers' preferences, from a dry wine to a fortified wine, gave a strong impulse, in the beginning of 1900, to the enology of Southern Australia and this strongly contributed to make it the most important wine producing area of Australia also because of the fact, contrary to Victoria, it never suffered from the catastrophic effects of phylloxera. In 1930 Southern Australia produced more than 75% of the total production of Australia and it was in that time that Barossa Valley became famous. However the production of wine was oriented to fortified wines and they were mainly destined to export, particularly in England.

The new era for Australian enology began around the half of the 1950, a process that led to radical changes and that brought back the attention of producers in making dry wines instead of fortified ones; a process that allowed Australian enology to become what it is today. The huge investment to support the most advanced technologies, the many experiments they did for the improvement and development of wine making technologies, allowed Australian winemakers as well as the wine making school of Australia, to reach a prestigious and respectable place in the wine scene of the world. A striking success which was achieved in a relatively short period of time: about 30 years. A drastic change which made completely forget about the mediocre past production of the 1950, a change that led Australia and Australian wines among the most important and primary positions in the enology of the world.

The Australian Quality System

Contrary to other wine producing countries of the world, Australia does not have any quality system for the production of wine regulated by specific norms and laws. Currently, there are no laws or norms that indicates to the producers what grapes are allowed for the production of certain wines, geographical delimitations of areas or allowed wine making and viticultural practices. To make things clear, there are no production disciplinary like the ones in force, for example, in

France (*AOC*), Italy (*DOC*) or United States of America (*AVA*).

Indeed, the need of creating a legal quality system for production of wines emerged about 40 years ago, the first attempts are dated back to 1963, however Australia does not have any indication or disciplinary that regulates the production of wine yet. Anyway, Australia has a specific system which defines and imposes directives that must be followed in writing wine labels. This system is called *LIP*, (*Label Integrity Programme*) and is regulated by the *Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation* which also is in charge for defining and regulating the viticultural areas of Australian, a project still in progress. This labeling system imposes producers to write their labels in a way that allows consumers to know useful information about the wine contained in the bottle. In order to understand Australian wine, a proper knowledge about the way wine labels are written is required as well as the way labels are to be interpreted.

- In case the label indicates the name of the grape used to make a wine, at least 85% must be produced with that grape
- In case the label indicates the name of the production area, at least 85% of the wine must be produced in the named area
- In case the label indicates the year of vintage, the minimum percentage of wine produced in the named vintage must be at least 95%
- In case a wine has been produced by using more than one grape, they must be indicated according to the used quantity and in decreasing order. For example, in case a label indicates "Cabernet Sauvignon-Shiraz", this means that the wine has been produced with these two grapes where the Cabernet Sauvignon represents the higher percentage. The exact percentage of the composition of the wine must be indicated in the label as well, Australian producers usually write this information in the back label. The same rule applies to the wines that indicate in the label more than one area

Moreover, it should be noticed that Australian wine labels can also indicate brand names or fantasy names that designate a particular wine, sometimes fantasy names as well as names of the grapes are also found. Another kind of indication that could be frequently found in Australian wine labels is the term *bin* followed by a number. This habits, which probably started in the beginning of the 1930, indicates the number of the bin where the wine has been kept before being bottled. The system of numbering containers was done by producers in order to keep track of the wines produced in the various years, as well as the many assembled wines that were made in the cellar including those wines produced in particular areas or vineyards. In practice, the number identified a specific wine produced in a specific year and with a particular method. This system has now become a habit for Australian wine producers and it is still used now, in fact many Australian wines have the term *bin* in their labels followed by the number with which they are known practically since ever.

Production Areas

Wine production in Australia is mainly made in the southern area of the country, particularly in the areas of New South Wales, Victoria and Southern Australia, the latter to be considered as the most important area of the country which also produces most of the Australian wine. Most of the production is made by the very active and flourishing wineries which are located near the cities of Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide. The rest of production, in more modest quantities, is made in Tasmania and Western Australia, near to the city of Perth. Moreover, a marginal production of wine is also made in some areas of Queensland and Northern Australia.

One of the characteristics which mark Australian viticulture and enology, is the huge use of technology, from vineyard to cellar. Harvests, as well as other works done in the vineyard, are usually mechanized, it is quite uncommon for producers in Australia to manually harvest grapes, maybe because of the lack of personnel, and the processes of wine making are done according the most advanced technologies. This surely is because of the spirit of adaptation and experimentation Australians have, perhaps, more than any other country, here they highly value ideas and encourage experimentation, both in the vineyard and in the cellar and, most of the times, their results and methods are adopted by some wineries of the other countries.

In Australia are produced both white wines and red wines, with a higher percentage in favor of white wines, as well as a modest quantity of sparkling wines and fortified wines. The most cultivated white grapes in Australia are Chardonnay, Riesling, Sémillon (here in Australia it is written as *Semillon*), whereas the most cultivated red grapes are Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah (in Australia, as well as in South Africa, this grape is called *Shiraz*). Undoubtedly the best results of Australian enology are achieved with Chardonnay for white wines and Shiraz for red wines. Other white berried grapes cultivated in Australia, even though in modest quantities, are Muscadelle, Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains, Muscat Gordo Blanco (the name Australians use for Muscat of Alexandria), Palomino and Pedro Ximénez (both mainly used for the production of fortified wines), Sauvignon Blanc and Verdelho. Among red berried grapes we find Grenache, Merlot, Mourvèdre and Pinot noir.

Southern Australia

Southern Australia is undoubtedly the most representative and productive area of the country. More than the half of the Australian wine is produced in this area and here are located the most prestigious wine areas of Australia such as Barossa Valley, Coonawarra, Adelaide Hills, Eden Valley, Clare Valley, Padthaway and McLaren Vale. The most active and important areas are located near the city of Adelaide except Padthaway and Coonawarra which are located to the southern side of this area.

Among the wine production areas of Southern Australia, Barossa Valley and Coonawarra are the ones that certainly are the most renowned ones, not just the most famous ones of this area, but also of Australia. Barossa Valley, which is located in the proximity of Adelaide, is renowned for its full bodied and amazing wines produced with Shiraz grape, whereas

Coonawarra is famous for its wines produced with Cabernet Sauvignon. Besides wines made from Shiraz grape, Barossa Valley is also renowned for Chardonnay, most of the times produced by making use of cask, and in this area there are the most important and productive cooperage industries, a sure sign of the massive usage of casks both in Barossa Valley and in Australia. Among other interesting wines produced in Barossa Valley there are good examples of Riesling, Sémillon and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Clare Valley, north from Barossa Valley, produces elegant and refined wines where the most renowned ones are produced with Riesling and Cabernet Sauvignon. Another interesting area of Southern Australia certainly is Coonawarra, which produces both excellent white wines and red wines. In the beginning was the Shiraz grape to excel in this area and, no matter it still is one of the most important grapes of this area, they found out the land was particularly well suited for the cultivation of Cabernet Sauvignon. Among white wines, Riesling from this area seems to be superb, as well as Chardonnay, and both are to be considered as some of the best white wines of Australia. Not far from south of Adelaide, there is another interesting area, called Southern Vales, which also includes the area of McLaren Vale, where they produce excellent examples of wines made of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay

New South Wales

The New South Wales actually represents the second wine producing area of Australia. Among its renowned areas here we find Hunter Valley, Mudgee and Riverina. Undoubtedly the most renowned area of this area is Hunter Valley, north from Sydney, which is famous for its Chardonnay wines and, last but not the least, for its surprisingly and amazing wines made of Sémillon. The wines produced with Sémillon in the Hunter Valley can also be considered, in their youth, as ordinary wines and not really surprising, indeed, when they are allowed to age in the bottle for sufficient time, at least 5 years, or even 10 years, they become extraordinary complex and amazing: intense and strong aromas and flavors of honey, hazelnut and dried fruit surprisingly come out from the glass.

Another interesting wine area of New South Wales is Mudgee, which is located west from Hunter Valley, and here are probably produced the best wines made of Cabernet Sauvignon of the whole area. In the central part of this area there is Riverina, which is mainly renowned for the production of fortified wines as well as a vast production of table wines.

Victoria

The area of Victoria has been, until the end of the 1960, the most important wine production area of Australia, however, when Australian enology began the course of radical changes that led to the quality results they achieved now, Victoria ceded its scepter to Southern Australia. Victoria is currently the third most important wine area of Australia and it is located to the most southern side of the country, excluding the isle of Tasmania, near the city of Melbourne.

The areas near the ocean, such as Yarra Valley, Geelong and Mornington Valley, are characterized by a climate which is pretty cool and therefore suited for the production of Chardonnay and Pinot noir wines. In the inner parts of this area, Central

Victoria, Goulburn Valley, Pyrenees and Grampians, the climate is suited for the production of wines made of Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. It should also be noticed that Victoria makes a good quantity of sparkling wines produced with the classic method and, in the areas of Rutherglen and Glenrowan, an interesting dessert wine production made of Muscat Blanc is found as well.

Tasmania

Tasmania, a triangular shaped island located to the south of Australia, is among the emerging wine areas of the country and it is getting more and more consideration among the wine areas of Australia. Wine production is mainly made in the northern and southern coasts of the island. The particularly cool climate of the island is suited for the cultivation of red berried grapes, in particular Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot noir, however here we find an interesting production of wines made of Chardonnay and Riesling as well. Tasmanian wines are renowned for their delicacy and elegance and in this island are also made sparkling wines produced with the classic method from Chardonnay and Pinot noir grapes.

Western Australia

Far from the main wine producing area of Australia, thousands kilometers to the west, we find Western Australia which is developed around the city of Perth. No matter this area is so far from Southern Australia as well as producing a pretty modest quantity of wine, when compared to the other area, here we find interesting white wines produced with Chardonnay, Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc as well as interesting red wines produced with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

The most renowned area of this region is Margaret River, south from Perth, which is mainly famous for its wines produced with Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as for wines produced with Chardonnay and Pinot noir. Another area of this region that should be mentioned is Swan Valley, east from Perth, which also was the first wine area of Western Australia to become famous. Even today this area is renowned for the production of a white wine made of Chenin Blanc, Muscadelle and Chardonnay. In this area we also find a modest production of wines made of Verdelho. Finally, another area which proved to produce good wines is the Great Southern Region, to the far south of the region, and thanks to its cool climate, produces good wines with Pinot noir and Riesling.

WINE TASTING

Introduction to Olfactory Evaluation of Wine

Aromas represent the most exalting aspect of a wine and it surely is the most complex and hard aspect to evaluate, however is rich of satisfactions and opens the way to the joys of tasting

When a glass of wine is raised to mouth level in order to be drunk, it is almost impossible not to notice its aromas and to appreciate them, the information we unconsciously receive from the olfactory sense determine, in a relevant way, the agreeability or the unpleasantness of any food or beverage, every thing which has a nice smell, including foods, positively predispose us to its agreeability. That incredible group of sensations that we usually define as “flavors” and that allow us to tell a food from another as well as making the act of eating or drinking pleasurable, is mainly determined by the smell sensations we receive from the nose; indeed, taste is the union of fundamental gustatory sensations (sweet, salty, sour and bitter) enriched with the endless patrimony of aromas and smells. When we are in the condition of not smelling aromas, such as when our nose is congested, we are used to say we cannot taste flavors; indeed, what is really lacking is that fundamental contribution the olfactory sense adds to the sense of taste, that fundamental and discerning factor that makes us tell an apple from a peach, one beverage from another. The role played by the olfactory sense is fundamental not only for the evaluation of foods, indeed it has been, and surely still is, the sense that more than any other else allowed humans to recognize dangerous or favorable situations or substances, a fundamental condition for surviving.

We would like to say this straight: the olfactory evaluation of a wine is the most complex of them all, it surely is one of the most amazing phases of the whole evaluation, therefore this report has the sole purpose of introducing the reader to the charming but difficult task of olfactory evaluation of wine. We will continue talking about olfactory evaluation of wine, as well as the direct influence and connection with taste, in future issues: a such vast argument like this which is so fundamental for the evaluation of wine cannot be underestimated or ignored, it surely deserves the highest consideration and importance to any wine taster.

In order to understand the fundamental importance of the olfactory sense in tasting, we invite you to make the following experiment. Take three glasses and pour some fruit juice in every one of them, such as orange juice, pineapple juice and peach juice. Blindfold yourself and hold your nose by using your fingers or something else that could be suited for this purpose. Now take a glass at random and, without seeing its content, take a little sip without swallowing. Make sure the liquid is passed all over the mouth and try to taste the juice. Expel the juice from mouth and write down the flavor of the juice according to what you believe it was. Repeat the same operations with the remaining glasses. Did you guess the three fruit juices right? Probably no. The sensations you will have perceived in your mouth will have been of sweetness, more or less evident, sourness, more or less strong, and a more or less

intense sensation of bitterness, however, these were the only clues you had to tell the flavor of the juice. Without the help of the olfactory sense it is practically impossible to determine the exact flavor and the taste of a food, therefore, it is almost impossible to recognize it.

The main problem in evaluating the olfactory profile of a wine, as well as of any other substance which emits odors, is the scarce habit one generally has in concentrating and realizing the aromas and odors he or she is smelling; the olfactory sense, no matter it is continuously working and sending the perceived sensations to the brain, is mainly an instinctive sense that needs a rapid reaction and evaluation, sometimes we do not even realize the odors we are smelling, however the brain perceives them and, according to experience and association, determine the agreeability of the stimulus and predisposes the individual to face dangerous or pleasing situations. The conscious evaluation of smells requires attention, concentration and, alas, experience as well as memory. Attention and concentration are attitudes that everyone has, experience and memory, in this case concerned to the olfactory sense, is something that not everyone has, they are attitudes of the ones that decided, both for will and opportunity, to always pay attention to the information perceived by the nose. This condition can be, of course, achieved by anyone and everyone can surely succeed in this. However it is almost impossible to determine and recognize a smell in case it was never perceived before, it is impossible to form an olfactory memory, in our specific case concerning to wine's aromas, in case one does pay scarce or no attention to what is being perceived by nose. The solution in forming one's experience and olfactory memory is only one: practice, lots of practice and more practice. Every time a wine is being tasted, this is also true for everything that emits smells, try to pay the best attention and concentrate on every aroma you can smell while trying to associate to every smell an odor already perceived in the past, therefore recognizable, or, in case it is an unknown smell, try to associate it to that specific wine while trying to remember about it. This is easier said than done. This surely is a very hard job, however, this is the key for success in evaluating a wine. Be patient and be prepared to do all your best with the sincere will and modesty to learn something new.

Another problem with the recognition of aromas is concerned to the difficulty of finding aromas in a group of many smells, sometimes pretty vast and complex. Smelling an apple and being able to recognize it, is certainly easy: every apple in good conditions undoubtedly has an evident and clear aroma of apple. The aroma of apple is also found in wine, however in this specific case, this will not be the only aroma that will be perceived in a wine's bouquet and this aroma must be recognized and identified among many other. Moreover, during the evaluation of wine's aromas, and however of everything else, the intensity of the smell must be evaluated as well; a condition which is objectively measurable as well as being something which is indisputably subjectively perceived. An aroma can be defined as "light" by a certain individual whereas can be defined as "pretty intense" by others, moreover, for some this aroma could not be perceived at all no matter it is objectively present in the bouquet. The subjectivity of this judgment is also determined by what is usually defined as "*threshold of perception*", that is the minimum level of stimulation in order

for an individual to detect any specific sensation.

Concerning this aspect, we would like to invite you to do the following experiment in order to determine your personal "level of threshold of perception". Take five glasses and fill them with about 100 ml of plain water (about 3.38 fl.oz.) at a temperature of 20° C. (68° F) Also take some ethyl alcohol and, by using a dropper, add 8 drops of alcohol to the first glass, 6 to the second, 4 to the third and 2 to the fourth. The fifth glass will contain just plain water. Take five lids and cover all five glasses and wait for about one hour. Randomly change the order of glasses and uncover the first one: smell and try to evaluate the intensity of the perceived aroma. Repeat the same with all the remaining glasses. At the end of the experiment, try to tell the quantity of alcohol contained in each glass, from the glass containing plain water to the one containing 8 drops of alcohol. The best thing is to have someone preparing the glasses in order to be as much objective and honest as possible. Repeat the same experiment by using vinegar instead of alcohol. Did you guess the order of glasses right? Perhaps, for some glasses you will have been undecided about their contents, in others you did not smell any odor: this is pretty normal just because every person has its own minimum threshold of perception as well as having its own tolerance to specific stimuli. In case you guessed the order of glasses right, congratulations, you are going to become an excellent taster: your nose will surely be by your side in a determinant way and it will help you in finding the most hidden and subtle secrets of a wine.

Like we said already, the olfactory evaluation of a wine is undoubtedly the most complex phase of the whole analysis, both for the number of aromas that can be perceived and for the objective difficulty of the recognition of aromas and lastly, for being able to recognize aromas among many other. The role of olfactory memory is determinant and important, remembering a specific aroma and, mostly, being able to recognize it, become a strategic requirement for any taster, a requirement that can be refined and developed with practice and commitment. What can be seen as a very difficult and complex task, can also be seen as a "fun game" where anyone can be an "aroma investigator" which discovers every time new and amazing clues that will allow him or her to enrich his or her personal "mosaic" of aromas.

Aromas in a wine are determined by specific volatile smell substances and their perception is what makes the process of evaluation and recognition of aromas to begin. All these substances are found, for example, in fruits and flowers and thanks to the common association we usually do with their aromas, this allows us to recognize, as well as allowing others to recognize them, the aroma of an apple or a rose. This characteristic is extremely useful in the recognition of aromas because allows us to determine odors as a consequence of an *analogy*, that is, every time an aroma of banana is being perceived, we will say, according to this analogy, we are smelling an aroma of banana instead of the volatile chemical substance which originates it. This method greatly simplify the recognition process as well as the communication process and it will be easier for others to understand what we perceived: it is easier, as well as being more immediate and practical, to say a wine has an aroma of *banana* instead of *isoamyl acetate*, that is the volatile substance which originates this aroma. In order to better understand the

vastness of volatile substances found in wine, the number of substance found so far are a little more than 120. It should be clear that olfactory evaluation of a wine is vast as well as complex, the number of smells and aromas, in case we are also going to include defective and unpleasing aromas, is certainly high.

Recognizing aromas in a wine can be extremely difficult, in particular for those wines that, after some years of aging, have developed complex aromas and smells that can be hardly associated, or however recognizable, with foods of other things which are commonly known. Sometimes, when we are about to evaluate complex aromas, or aromas that are scarcely recognizable or a wine having a particularly rich bouquet, it may also happen one of the most recurring problems that may arise during the evaluation of aromas: adaptation, that is the nose has gotten used to some aromas. Our olfactory apparatus tends to get adapted to certain stimuli when they are perceived for a very long time, in other terms, after having perceived a specific smell, usually within some minutes, it will tend to lower the perception of this smell and it will end up ignoring it, it acts like a sort of filter in response to a prolonged stimulus: the olfactory apparatus will have got adapted to that smell. Of course this effect is reversible, it will be enough to interrupt this stimulus for some minutes and, like a sort of magic, the smell that was previously ignored will be perceived again. This phenomenon is easily experienced in case we enter a room having a strong smell: in the beginning this smell will be clearly and easily perceived, after some minutes the perception will be lowered and it will disappear with time, indeed, other smells that was covered by the strong one will be now perceived no matter the strong smell is still present in the room. It will be enough to exit the room for some minutes and to enter again: the strong smell will be perceived again. The very same also happens during the olfactory evaluation of a wine: after some minutes spent in recognizing specific aromas, the nose will tend to get tired and it will seem not to work properly like it used to do. This “danger” must be avoided in any way and it is advisable to subdivide the olfactory evaluation of a wine in subsequent phases while taking little breaks in order to prevent nose adaptation.

Practice and experience will teach everyone the most efficient method for recognizing aromas and for their proper classification in memory. Do not get discouraged if at first everything will seem overwhelmingly complex and difficult; you should remember it was hard for every taster and this seems to be the price we have to pay because of the scarce attention we usually pay on our olfactory sensations. In a way, wine tasting, and in particular the olfactory evaluation, can be seen as an useful work that will help us in reeducating our senses, and this surely is a very positive aspect, something we can take as an advantage while “playing” and we all know that the best way to learn something is to do that without being forced, but with passion and, above anything else, with that pleasing satisfaction that is usually ensured by the “playing” aspect of things. With time you will realize to have developed your own and personal technique in recognizing aromas, indeed, every taster has a personal technique and every technique is surely functional as well as efficient, the most important thing is that this technique works very well for oneself.

However there are some general hints that can help everyone in recognizing aromas, some little helps that will probably be useful during the hard and complex task of the olfactory evaluation. Aromas are generally classified in categories, such as fruit aromas, flowers aromas, vegetable aromas and so on. During the olfactory evaluation it is advantageous to concentrate to the aroma’s category instead to the aroma itself. It should be noticed that in evaluating the olfactory profile of a wine we do not know in advance what kind of aromas we are going to find, that is you cannot expect every wine having an aroma of banana or strawberry, it should be remembered every wine is different from another, they can have common characteristics, including aromas, but they will surely be different anyway. According to this aspect, it is more easy and advantageous to focus on aromas categories instead of continuously asking oneself about any specific aroma. In other terms, when an aroma is perceived in a wine, it is better to ask oneself whether that aroma resembles the one of fruits instead of asking oneself whether that aroma is of apple or any other specific fruit. As soon as the aroma can be classified in a specific category, and by doing so we will automatically exclude all the others as well as hundreds of aromas, it will be more easy to recognize that particular aroma. This method can be further improved and developed on. Let’s consider in this example the category of fruits aromas: we can subdivide this category in other categories such as “red berried fruits”, such as strawberry and raspberry, “white fruits”, such as apple and pear, and so on. This new method allows us to proceed in subsequent steps where we will exclude in every step a certain category, therefore groups of unwanted aromas, and this will lower the possibility of error while increasing the possibility of success in identifying a specific aroma. When a fruit aroma is being perceived, we will ask ourselves whether this aroma is of a “red fruit” or “white fruit”, and this approach will be continued and applied until the final identification of the aroma.

A mistake that can be made during the olfactory evaluation of a wine is self suggestion. In case the taster is prejudicially convinced a specific aroma is present in a wine, he or she will end up being so convinced about it that the aroma will be perceived even when it is not obviously present in that wine. A serious mistake that can be easily avoided in case the evaluation is done by trying to recognize categories of aromas instead of trying to recognize every specific aroma. Finally, it should be remembered that temperature, like we already said in the previous issues of DiWineTaste, plays a fundamental role in the development of aromas; a wine which is too cool will develop little aromas, whereas when the wine is too warm the aromas will be evidently coarse and ordinary. This is the reason why wines whose organoleptic characteristics are being evaluated, are not served at their typical serving temperature, they are usually evaluated at temperatures from 12°C to 14°C for white wines (53° F to 58° F), and from 16° C to 20° C for red wines. (60° F to 68° F)

How to Evaluate Wine’s Aromas

The procedure that allows a proper evaluation of wine’s aromas is generally divided in specific phases where each one of them allows the evaluation of specific typologies and categories of volatile substances. It should be remembered that

the shape and volume of glass, as well as the ratio between contact surface and the volume, are all determinant factor for the proper development and perception of aromas. In our specific case we assume tasting glasses, such as the ISO tasting glass, or glasses expressly designed for this purpose are being used. Before illustrating the procedure for olfactory evaluation, it should be remembered that aromas are produced by chemical volatile substances which are molecules having different "weights". The lighter substances are easily volatilized, whereas the heavier ones need a higher oxygenation, and others which are very heavy, need a proper and real "hyper-oxygenation" in order to volatilize.

The way a wine is smelt plays a very important role. Generally speaking, there are three different ways of smelling: slow and deep, quick and deep and sequence of short and little smells. Smelling slowly and deeply allows the perception of light substances because this generates, both in the nose and in the glass, light turbulences that do not "disturb" heavier substances. Smelling quickly and deeply generates a more intense turbulence, both in the nose and in the glass, and this will promote the perception of the heavier substances. Lastly, a sequence of quick and short smells will contribute to "amplify" the perception of aromas because this action will generate subsequent turbulences on the nose while encouraging the perception of all volatile substances. This smell technique is the one generally used by animals, such as dogs, when they have to smell something and perceive odors. These three smell techniques will be used in all the phases that will be discussed later.

The qualities evaluated during the olfactory analysis are usually four: intensity of aromas, that is their strength, persistence, that is the time they can be perceived before disappearing, finesse or quality, that is the elegance, agreeability of aromas and, lastly, the analytical and nominal description of every perceived aroma.

The olfactory evaluation begins by holding the glass, without moving or swirling it, and the content will be smelt: in this phase are going to be evaluated the light molecules which easily volatilize from the glass. This first phase also allows the perception of all light and delicate aromas and that would be covered or dispersed during the subsequent phases. In this phase will be perceived defective aromas and olfactory faults as well. After this, the glass will be swirled in order to promote oxygenation, therefore volatilization, of heavier substances and then the content of the glass will be smelt again. In this second phase will be probably perceived aromas that was not perceivable in the previous phase. In case a wine's aroma would be very light or "dumb" no matter the glass has been vigorously swirled, it will be needed to vigorously shake the glass in order to promote the volatilization of its aromas. Cover the glass with a hand and shake it vigorously: the "lazy" aromas should be now perceived. Finally, the last evaluation of aromas can be done when the glass is empty and there are few drops of wine in the bottom. There are molecules which are particularly heavy and need vigorous oxygenations in order to get volatilized. The scarce quantity of wine remained in the bottom of the glass will be heavily exposed to oxygen and this will finally promote the volatilization of all those heavier molecules. In consideration of this, it is a good idea to smell a glass after it has been emptied in order to detect further and useful information about wine's aromas, of course, this final

evaluation can be done at the end of the organoleptic analysis of a wine and therefore will be the very last operation to be done.

Finally, it should be remembered of the risk of getting adapted to aromas and this would compromise and vanish all the efforts done during the olfactory evaluation of a wine. After having smelt a wine for three or four minutes, remember to take some little breaks of about one or two minutes before resuming the olfactory evaluation.

Typologies of Aromas

Like we said, aromas are originated by some chemical volatile substances, that is by substances having the property of volatilizing and therefore to evaporate. Chemical compounds having this property belong to specific categories where the most important ones are *alcohols*, *aldehydes*, *acids*, *esters*, *ketones* and *terpenes*. Covering the subject of chemical aspects of smells would go beyond the main purpose of this report and, therefore, for the moment, it will be enough to know smells are produced by some chemical volatile substances.

Thanks to the many experiences acquired from analytical tastings as well as researches done on wine's aromas, it has been possible to define a specific classification system of aromas in proper categories, universally accepted in the wine world, and each of them contains specific aromas usually found in wine. The system which is most commonly used in classifying wine's aromas usually defines ten different categories as follows:

- **animal** - includes "musky" aromas related to certain grapes as well as smell of meat, game and odorous substances produced and emitted by some animals
- **balsamic** - includes aromas which denote a "balsamic" character such as resin
- **woody** - includes aromas produced and originated by the permanence of wine in cask, that is aromas that were passed from wood to wine
- **chemical** - includes aromas having a chemical nature, such as acids, sulfurous smells and so on
- **burnt** - includes smells that resembles those or burnt, toasted, smoky and charred
- **ethereal** - include smells produced by alcohol, those of ethyl's nature, produced by esters of fatty acids or enamel as well as smells produced by wine's fermentation
- **floral** - includes aromas that resemble the ones of flowers
- **fruity** - includes aromas that resemble the ones of fruits
- **spicy** - includes aromas that resemble the ones of spices and aromatic herbs
- **vegetal** - includes typical aromas of vegetal substances, such as pepper, grass, hay and so on

The above categories are particularly useful during the olfactory evaluation of a wine and represent a valid and consistent reference in the identification of specific aromas. Moreover, wine's aromas are classified according to their specific origin or, in more specific terms, according to their level of development and period of wine's life. These categories are three, as follows:

- **primary aromas** - aromas belonging to this category are also defined as varietal and represent the typical aromas of the grapes used to produce a certain wine, that is the aromas that usually and typically develop in specific grapes
- **secondary aromas** - also known as fermentative, the aromas belonging to this category are the ones that developed as a consequence of the alcoholic fermentation
- **tertiary aromas** - also known as post-fermentative, the aromas belonging to this category develop as a consequence of wine's aging, typically after some years

Primary Aromas

Primary aromas are originated by certain grapes used to produce wine and these aromas are usually typical and allow, in general terms, to recognize and tell that grape as soon as the wine is smelt. Generally speaking, primary aromas are produced by the so called "aromatic grapes", that is from those grapes having a rich and high quantity of aromatic substances, and whose aroma usually resembles the one of grape, such as Muscat blanc and Gewürztraminer. Grape's aromas are found in skins and, because of fermentation, they are passed to the must that will be subsequently transformed into wine. Every grape has a primary aroma and every grape will give wine particular aromatic characteristics, however there are grapes which have higher aromatic substances than others as well as different aromatic intensities. Thanks to primary aromas it is usually possible to recognize and to tell the grape used to make a wine, therefore its typical aspects, and, last but not the least, the area where the wine comes from, the cultivation technique and the level of grape's ripeness at the moment of harvest. Finally, primary aromas can also be altered by certain wine making techniques in order to enhance or diminish the typical character of grapes.

Secondary Aromas

Secondary aromas are the result of the fermentative processes and of the development of some primary aromas because of the alcoholic fermentation. Alcoholic fermentation begins as soon as the grapes are pressed and originates aromas that can be defined as *pre-fermentative* and they will evolve and develop in the course of the alcoholic fermentation. This process, whose purpose is to transform sugar into alcohol by means of yeasts, produces alcohol which, in turn, works as an excipient for aromatic substances, as well as giving carbon dioxide, which promote the development of some aromas, and other byproducts that can be source of aromas in a wine and, lastly, the aromas produced by yeasts because of the effects of the transformation of sugar into alcohol. Aromas produced during the so called *malolactic fermentation*, that is the process that transforms malic acid into lactic acid with the result of giving a more "round" wine, belong to this category as well.

Aromas which are typically developed in consequence of fermentation are usually of ripe fruits, jams, flowers, aromatic herbs and however those aromas that cannot be considered as primary, that is typical aromas of grapes. Alcoholic fermentation also has the property of revealing in a very clear way wine's primary aromas, as well as amplifying other aromas;

that's also why it is said that "primary aromas are hidden in grapes, alcoholic fermentation reveals them".

Tertiary Aromas

The aromas belonging to this category are the ones which developed and evolved during the phases of wine's refinement and aging, including the aromas that are originated during the wine's stay in the cask. These aromas develop as a consequence of *oxidative* and *reductive* processes, that is the processes that takes place in absence of oxygen and it is, in fact, the opposite of oxidization. The development of the so called "tertiary aromas" is truly complex and, besides being produced by oxidization and reductive phenomena, they also develop as a consequence of *acetilization*, *esterification* and *etherification* as well as for the transformation of tannins. During these phases, come components, such as alcohol, acids, esters, ethers and phenolic compounds, are determinant for the proper development of these processes.

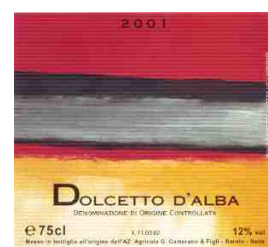
As a matter of fact, wine's refinement and aging transform primary and secondary aromas while giving them a more complex and mature character and, sometimes, some aromas are transformed in a way that it is almost impossible to associate them to their original aromas. This process also has the important effect of "tying" the olfactory profile of wine.

Wines of the Month

Score legend

- ◇ Fair – ◇◇ Pretty Good – ◇◇◇ Good
- ◇◇◇◇ Very Good – ◇◇◇◇◇ Excellent
- ★ Wine that excels in its category

Prices are to be considered as indicative. Prices may vary according to the country or the shop where they are bought



Dolcetto d'Alba 2001 Camerano (Italy)

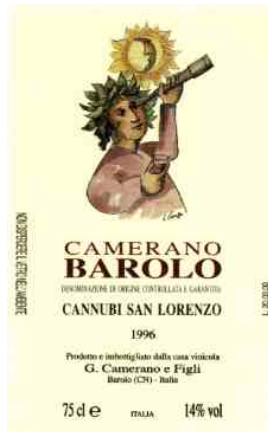
Grapes: Dolcetto

Price: € 5,00

Score: ◇◇

The wine has a ruby red color and nuances of purple red, pretty transparent. The nose reveals fruity aromas of good intensity such as black cherry, raspberry and blueberry. The attack in the mouth is characterized by a good crispness which is well balanced by tannins and alcohol and it has a good correspondence with the aromas perceived in the nose. Wine's finish is pretty persistent with good flavors of black cherry as well as a pleasing crispness.

Food match: Sauteed meats, Roasted white meats



**Barolo Cannubi San Lorenzo 1998
Camerano (Italy)**

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 18,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇

This Barolo shows a ruby red color with nuances of garnet red, pretty transparent. The olfactory evaluation reveals evident fruity aromas, clean and well defined of black cherry, cherry jam, black currant followed by licorice, vanilla, violet and a hint of truffle. In the mouth is intense with a firm alcoholic impact however well balanced by tannins as well as having good correspondence with the aromas perceived by the nose. Finish is persistent with evident flavors of black cherry.

Food match: Roasted meat, Game, Braised meat, Stewed meat, Hard cheese



**Vernaccia di San Gimignano Riserva 1999
Panizzi (Italy)**

Grapes: Vernaccia di San Gimignano

Price: € 15,50

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine has a straw yellow color with nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. At the nose expresses elegant and refined aromas of fruit, and although wood aroma is clearly perceivable, the olfactory profile is balanced and pleasing. The main perceptions are of citrus fruits, ripe banana, almond, cooked apple, pear and plum followed by pleasing aromas of vanilla and honey. In the mouth has intense flavors and it is well balanced, fully confirming the aromas perceived by the nose. Alcohol, which is present in good quantity, is balanced both by the wine's crispness and sapidity. Wine's finish is persistent with a long sequence of lasting aromas of pear, almond, vanilla and honey. A wine truly well made and balanced. This reserve is aged for 12 months in barrique.

Food match: Soups, Pasta with mushrooms, Stuffed pastas, White meats, Fish



**San Gimignano Rosso Folgore 1999
Panizzi (Italy)**

Grapes: Sangiovese (75%), Merlot (15%), Cabernet Sauvignon (10%)

Price: € 23,25

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The visive evaluation shows a beautiful and intense ruby red color, little transparency. At the nose reveals personality with clean and intense fruity aromas. The aromas mainly perceived are of black cherry, raspberry, blueberry, black currant and plum followed by aromas of caramel, eucalyptus, licorice and vanilla. The attack in the mouth is pretty tannic, anyway well balanced by alcohol. A wine having body and good correspondence with the nose. Finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of plum and raspberry. This wine, which is surely drinkable at its current state, will give its best with some more years of aging. Folgore is produced by macerating skins in the must for 23 days and then it is aged in barrique for 12 months

Food match: Roasted meat, Game, Braised meat, Stewed meat, Hard cheese



**Chardonnay 2001
Plaisir de Merle (South Africa)**

Grapes: Chardonnay

Price: € 9,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a straw yellow color, very transparent. The nose is elegant and shows personality. Aromas of wood, although are clearly perceivable, are not intrusive and do not cover other aromas. In this wine can be perceived good aromas of citrus fruits, banana, honey, pear, pink grapefruit and hints of toasty aromas and vanilla. The mouth reveals intense flavors, elegant and agreeable with good correspondence to the nose. The wine is also crisp and balanced, also thanks to alcohol, and has good body. Finish is persistent with flavors of vanilla, honey, pear and hints of citrus fruits. 90% of this wine is fermented and aged in barrique whereas the remaining part is fermented and refined in non wood containers.

Food match: Roasted white meat, Roasted fish, Pasta with rich sauces



Sauvignon Blanc 2002
Plaisir de Merle (South Africa)

Grapes: Sauvignon Blanc

Price: € 8,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a greenish yellow color, very transparent. Wine's aromas are very delicate and refined and show good personality. There can be perceived intense and good aromas of pineapple, banana, lemon, pear, peach and elder-tree. The attack in the mouth is pretty crisp, a characteristic that tends to be always present in mouth, however it is balanced thanks to alcohol. Wine's finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of pineapple and pear followed by hints of crispness. This wine is fermented in steel containers and it is allowed to stay on its yeasts for three months.

Food match: Aperitif, Appetizers, Pasta and risotto with fish



Cabernet Sauvignon 2000
Plaisir de Merle (South Africa)

Grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon

Price: € 10,50

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

The visive evaluation shows a beautiful and intense ruby red color, very firm, little transparency. The nose reveals a set of intense aromas, very rich and of good personality. The main perceptions are of black cherry, blueberry jam, plum jam and bilberry followed by aromas of licorice, leather and vanilla with pleasing hints of mushrooms and rosemary. In the mouth is very elegant, clean and refined, with soft and pleasing tannins, excellent balance and body, and alcohol is well balanced with the rest. Excellent correspondence to the nose, intense and agreeable. Wine's finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of bilberry, black cherry and plum jam. A well made wine that can give better satisfactions with more aging. This wine is fermented in steel containers and it is aged in barrique for about 10÷16 months.

Food match: Roasted meat, Braised meat, Stewed meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Hard cheese



Comte de M 1999
Chateau Kefraya (Lebanon)

Grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon (50%), Syrah (50%)

Price: € 25,51

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇★

Simply a great wine. It shows a beautiful and intense ruby red color with nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose is rich of aromas, great personality and very clean as well as elegant. There can be perceived good aromas of black cherry, blueberry, plum and black currant followed by clean aromas of cocoa, eucalyptus, licorice, anise, tobacco, vanilla and a hint of wood aromas. The mouth reveals a good correspondence to the nose and, despite of a tannic attack, tannins already have a good agreeability and the wine is surely balanced by alcohol. A full bodied wine. Finish is persistent with pleasing and intense flavors of black cherry and raspberry. A truly elegant wine and very well made; no matter it can be drunk in its current state, it will give its best with a further period of aging of some years. This wine is aged in barrique for 12 months.

Food match: Game, Stewed meat, Braised meat, Hard cheese, Roasted meat

WINE PRODUCERS

Fattoria Paradiso

Between tradition and innovation, between culture and love for arts, in Bertinoro, Forlì (Italy), in one of the most significant areas of Romagna's enology, is located this very prestigious winery, impressive for its quality, rich for its historical and cultural patrimony

Talking about Fattoria Paradiso means, first of all, talking about one of the greatest leading persons of Emilia Romagna's enology, it means talking about Mr. Mario Pezzi, the passionate and ingenious wine producer that has been responsible for the success and the rebirth of the enology of his homeland. A great wine producer who deserves the highest praises for his merits, such as for having discovered again the local grapes Barbarossa, Cagnina and Pagadebit, which were surely destined to disappear forever from our patrimony and, last but not the least, the conviction and the intuition of creating the very first reserve of Sangiovese. All that and more is, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Mario Pezzi, whose philosophy and passion is truly expressed and told by his wines.

We get to Fattoria Paradiso, in Bertinoro, indisputable homeland of Albana grape, the very first Italian white wine to be designated as DOCG, few kilometers far from Cesena

and about 20 kilometers from the Adriatic sea. Mrs. Graziella Pezzi, Mario Pezzi's daughter, welcomes us to Fattoria Paradiso with a warm and kind hospitality, a good characteristic of the people of these lands. Mrs. Pezzi opens her cellar's doors and starts talking about the historical origins of these places: «Fattoria Paradiso was an ancient residence of Roman times and in 1450 was Marco Palmezzano's house, a famous painter for his representations of Holy Nativity and he was disciple of Melozzo da Forlì. In the noble floor of the house there is a fireplace which has the initials "M.P." carved on it, that is Marco Palmezzano, which curiously are the very same initials of the current proprietor, Mario Pezzi. The residence was subsequently a property of Counts Lovatelli and the last proprietors of this family was Countess Ugarte Lovatelli who sold this residence to my great-grandfather Costantino in the middle of 1800 and from that moment on the residence is property of Pezzi's family. My father Mario started the winery business in these properties in 1950 and in 2000 we celebrated our fiftieth anniversary.»

Let's get into the rich wine production of Fattoria Paradiso and, concerning this subject, Mrs. Pezzi shortly illustrates her wines: «we produce both white wines and red wines, as well as sparkling wines and sweet wines. Our white wines include a dry Albana "Pezzi di Paradiso", a sweet Albana "Contessina Ugarte", Trebbiano di Romagna "Donna Ubalda", Pagadebit di Romagna "Brezza di Paradiso", a lightly sparkling wine "Paradiso" and, lastly, "Jacopo" a wine produced with Chardonnay and Sauvignon blanc which is aged in barrique. We also make two sparkling wines: "Bert'in Oro", a sweet wine produced with Albana grape, and "Villa Paradiso Brut" produced with Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Moreover, we also produce a sweet wine, Albana di Romagna Passito "Gradisca", which was the preferred wine of the great Italian director Federico Fellini and it was him who chose the wine's name as a tribute to one of the characters in his famous movie "Amarcord". Among red wines we also have a nouveau wine, "Garibaldino", that was first released in 1982, in the year of the centenary of Giuseppe Garibaldi's death, and it is produced with Sangiovese and Merlot, then we produce a Cagnina di Romagna "Sinfonia d'Autunno", a Sangiovese di Romagna "Maestri di Vigna", which is produced with little berried Sangiovese, therefore not really suited for aging, however it shows a good structure and agreeability. We also produce Sangiovese di Romagna Superiore Riserva "Castello Ugarte Vigna delle Lepri", produced with big berried Sangiovese (Sangiovese grosso), therefore it is well suited for aging, it is aged for two years in casks and six months in barrique. "Vigna delle Lepri" was the very first reserve of Sangiovese ever created. My father, in 1960, was convinced that Sangiovese could give magnificent wines suited for aging and he gave a public show of his ideas and decided to store 5 000 bottles of Sangiovese in an old snow tank that we have in our garden. The ceremony was attended by many public authorities as well as famous people working on the wine business; the tank was sealed and the key was given to a notary. After seven years, in occasion of another ceremony, the tank was opened and it gave the world magnificent wines. The very first bottle was uncorked by the famous Italian wine journalist Luigi Veronelli and it was the confirmation that Mario Pezzi's ideas and intuitions were right. Our Sangiovese reserve was also requested by the former President of the Italian Republic



The magnificent entrance staircase to the aging cellars

Mr. Sandro Pertini and our wines have been part of the Quirinal's cellars since then. The wine was served in occasion of a formal dinner in honor of the former President of the United States of America Mr. Ronald Reagan. Our production also includes Barbarossa "Il Dosso", a grape my father discovered again in the beginning of the 1950 in a very old Sangiovese vineyard that he planned of uprooting, and my father, while was checking the level of grapes' ripeness, noticed a "particular" bunch different from the one of Sangiovese; it was smaller as well as having small berries and an indented leaf having a purple border. Samples of this grape were analyzed by many experts in the aim of identifying it, unfortunately, no one was able to determine its species. They also researched the grape's DNA in order to find some clues that could identify it, but they did not find any similarity with any other grape, therefore, we decided to name this grape as "Barbarossa", in honor of emperor Federico Barbarossa who lived in the castle of Bertinoro. Finally, the last wine created at Fattoria Paradiso, "Mito", which is produced with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. The label for this wine has been created, including a dedication, by the famous Italian actor Dario Fo, who was also awarded with the Nobel prize. We also produce two grappas, "Chicca" with Pagadebit's pomace and "Grappa di Barbarossa" with Barbarossa's pomace. At Fattoria Paradiso we also produce the olive oil "Palmezzano", dedicated to the homonym painter and "Vignatico" a balsamic grape sauce.»

We continue our visit to the cellar and Mrs. Pezzi ushered us in the aging rooms and in the Fattoria Paradiso's private cellar, a real wine "cathedral" where they keep Fattoria Paradiso's wine bottles as well as other wineries' wines. These rooms are preceded by an impressive staircase having at its sides and at its roof hundreds of bottles, neatly ordered, giving the entrance an amazing and gorgeous view. At the end of this staircase, there is a new surprise waiting to impress us. Mrs. Pezzi opens the

door of Fattoria Paradiso's private cellar and, again, the show is as impressive and as magnificent as before. The entrance to the private cellar is preceded by a gallery where its sides and roof are adorned by historical bottles of the cellar, the private cellar's entrance is as evocative as impressive as the staircase: a multitude of bottles that every wine lover would like to own.

Mrs. Pezzi tells us very interesting aspects of this private cellar and of the cultural events held at Fattoria Paradiso: «we keep bottles as old as 200 years, here we have bottles dated back to 1800, both bottles from our production and from others, as well as keeping wines produced with Albana dated back to 1961, a truly wonderful vintage. In this cellar we also keep our historical wines as well as wines produced by many wineries of the world that we also use to compare our products with the one of others, to understand what we can learn from others and what we know already and that we could teach others instead. Here we also keep wines that are being shipped to the Vatican City, as well as the bottles that were selected by the University of Bologna in occasion of the celebrations for its 900 years. We also pay attention and care to our wine labels: they usually depict paintings of the winners of the biennial painting contest "Vinarte" which I personally organize in Fattoria Paradiso's rooms. We always dedicated much of our time and resources to social and cultural events, including "Ospitalità a Tavola", with the collaboration of "Donne del Vino", as well as the "International Paradiso Prize", a contest for contemporary chamber music. In this cellar we also keep the labels that famous people wanted to create for us during their stay at Fattoria Paradiso.»

Let's continue talking about wine production and the territory where Fattoria Paradiso makes its wines: «we are located in a hill which is towards the sea and therefore this area benefits from the influence of the sea climate and it is sheltered from northern winds. Our winery strongly believe in local grapes of this area just because this is the best place for them to grow up and, being their natural homeland, they are capable of giving the very best of them. Moreover, we also believe in our territory, in our traditions and in what our fathers taught us. This strategy has proven to be effective in the course of the years and gave us lots of satisfactions, therefore, why should we change them? If we truly need to change something, we have to change things in order to improve the quality of our products, working in the vineyard while trying to lowering the yield, paying attention to cellar practices, hopefully with the help of new technologies, anyway, always respecting our traditions. We do not think it would be wise to deny our traditions, that "agricultural" philosophy which is, however, part of us. These choices surely gave us the best satisfactions and we believe this is what we will do in future, also because in this "homologated" world, where everything seems to look the same, the ones that will be able to keep their typical characters will be successful at the end and will get positive results. Consumers need to discover again the "origins" of wine as well as something different, I think that always producing the same things, no matter the area where they are from, this will surely tend to be boring. This is the reason why we prefer giving our consumers a good wine made of Barbarossa or a good Sangiovese where there can be found the real characters of the people from Romagna: we are simple people, anyway we also are sincere and the same sincerity is found in the wines of this

land. We also created a wine made of the Bordeaux blend, Mito, because we wanted to deny the ones who accused us of being too much traditionalist; the result gave a modern wine which proved that, however, we have been good in creating a wine which is not part of our traditions, a wine that was a striking success since its release everywhere in the world.»

Talking about countries where Fattoria Paradiso's wines are sold, Mrs. Graziella Pezzi tells us «our products are present in Italy, as well as in Europe, Germany, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Denmark and France. Our wines are also sold in the United States of America, Canada and Japan.»

Concerning anticipations for the last vintage, Mrs. Pezzi says «we already had some good results with nouveau wine and with Cagnina di Romagna, however, the 2002 will not be a vintage to remember. I would also like to say that just before the harvest, most of producers complained about huge losses and the expectations were bad for everyone; after the harvest there have been expectations that denied the previous ones. I sincerely believe that one should be more honest as well as recognizing the real value of every vintage. This year our agronomist made us thin out vineyard and wanted us to vigorously defoliate the vines, something that allowed us to obtain a product which surely is more than reasonable. Unfortunately red wines of this vintage will slightly lack in color because of the unfavorable meteorological conditions.»

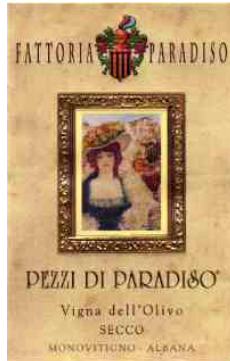
Fattoria Paradiso also produces two excellent grappas made of the pomace of Barbarossa and Pagadebit. Mrs. Pezzi reminds us «Fattoria Paradiso produces two grappas, "Chicca" with Pagadebit's pomace and "Grappa di Barbarossa" with Barbarossa's pomace. They are both smooth and round, very agreeable, which generally meet consumers' taste, including the one of ladies.» We personally tasted Grappa di Barbarossa: it has a crystalline aspect and it is very clear and limpid, at the nose are revealed good aromas of hazelnut, peach, apricot, dried plum as well as elegant hints of violet and raspberry. In the mouth is truly round and soft, almost velvety, very agreeable, with a persistent finish of hazelnut, peach and raspberry. A very well made grappa, truly agreeable, the alcohol is well balanced and does not "burn" even though the grappa has 42% of alcohol by volume.



The impressive entrance of Fattoria Paradiso's private cellar



Wines are rated according to DiWineTaste's evaluation method. Please see score legend in the "Wines of the Month" section.



Albana di Romagna Secco
Pezzi di Paradiso Vigna dell'Olivo 2001
Fattoria Paradiso

Grapes: Albana

Price: € 6,00

Score: ◆◆◆

The wine has a beautiful and intense greenish yellow and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes a good sequence of aromas, mainly apple, peach, almond, chamomile followed by hints of fennel, acacia honey and pickle. In the mouth shows good correspondence with the nose, with a crisp and pleasing attack although alcohol tends to prevail over the wine's balance. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of apple and chamomile.

Food match: Soft cheese, Light appetizers, Pasta and risotto with fish, boiled fish and crustaceans



Jacopo 2001
Fattoria Paradiso

Grapes: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc

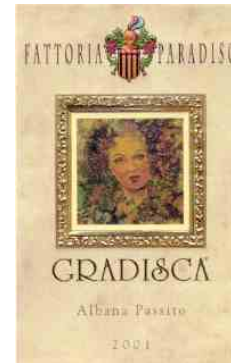
Price: € 10,00

Score: ◆◆◆★

The wine shows a deep straw yellow color with nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals good personality where wood aromas are perceived from the very beginning. Other good and intense aromas that can be perceived are of banana, apple and peach as well as butter, croissant, acacia, hawthorn, honey and vanilla. In the mouth has good intensity as well as good body with a correspondence to the nose,

a crisp attack which is well balanced by alcohol, followed by an agreeable hint of wood flavors. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of peach, banana and honey. The wine is aged for six months in barrique as well as in bottle.

Food match: Roasted white meat, Roasted fish, Pasta and risotto with rich sauces



Albana di Romagna Passito Gradisca 2000
Fattoria Paradiso

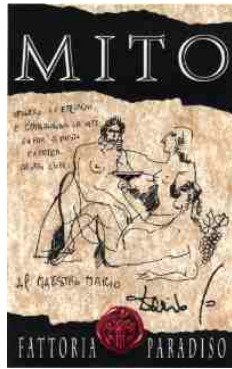
Grapes: Albana

Price: € 20,00 (500 ml - 16.9 fl.oz.)

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Pleasing and interesting example of Albana passito. The visual evaluation shows a beautiful amber yellow with nuances of golden yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals an enchanting symphony of elegant, refined and well defined aromas, of great personality. There can be perceived good and intense aromas of dried apricot, candies, caramel, peach jam, dried fig, dried flowers, honey, skin of citrus fruits, enamel and a hint of vanilla. The mouth has an excellent correspondence with the nose, soft, round and well balanced by alcohol, pleasingly sweet which is well balanced as well. The finish is very persistent with long and pleasing flavors of honey, peach jam and dried apricot. A passito wine of great elegance and well made and will be capable of giving good emotions even tasted by itself. Gradisca is produced with dried Albana grapes and the must is fermented and aged in small casks.

Food match: Piquant and hard cheese, Confectionery, Cookies



Mito 1997
Fattoria Paradiso

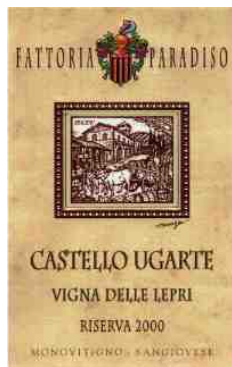
Grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

Price: € 36,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine shows a beautiful and brilliant ruby red color, moderate transparency. The nose reveals an olfactory profile of personality, with good and intense aromas of black cherry, cherry, bilberry, licorice and plum followed by hints of peach and vanilla. The mouth corresponds to the sensations perceived by the nose and has a slightly tannic attack although well balanced by alcohol. Mito is full bodied and its finish is persistent with agreeable and intense flavors of black cherry, plum and a hint of peach. This wine is aged in barrique for 20 months and then follows a refinement in bottle for one year.

Food match: Braised meat, Stewed meat, Roasted meat, Game, Hard cheese



Sangiovese di Romagna Superiore Riserva
Castello Ugarte Vigna delle Lepri 1999
Fattoria Paradiso

Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 12,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

Excellent example of Sangiovese di Romagna Superiore. The wine shows a beautiful and brilliant ruby red color, very firm, moderate transparency. At the nose reveals a great personality, very rich in clean and elegant aromas. There can be perceived good and intense aromas of black cherry jam, plum jam, Cherry macerated in alcohol, strawberry and blackberry followed by pleasing aromas of peach, chocolate, licorice, dried rose, vanilla and black pepper. In the mouth shows a good body and a tannic attack, however well balanced by alcohol and roundness. Good correspondence with the fruit aromas perceived by the nose. Wine's finish is persistent with long

and pleasing flavors of black cherry jam, plum jam and blackberry. Simply a great wine which will be capable of giving excellent satisfactions in future. This wine is aged in cask for 18 months and 6 months in barrique followed by 12 months in bottle.

Food match: Game, Braised meat, Stewed meat, Roasted meat, Hard cheese



Barbarossa Il Dosso 2000
Fattoria Paradiso

Grapes: Barbarossa

Price: € 25,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

This wine, of great personality and character, shows a beautiful and intense ruby red color with nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose reveals an impressive personality with clean, elegant and refined aromas of black cherry jam, cherry jam, plum jam, raspberry, licorice, violet, dried rose and cocoa followed by leather, cinnamon and vanilla. In the mouth shows the same great personality and a tannic attack however well balanced by alcohol and by roundness, as well as by its full body. It harmoniously corresponds to the nose with intense flavors of jams. The finish is persistent with long and pleasing flavors of black cherry jam and plum jam. A truly well made wine which will give rich and wonderful emotions to the ones that will be able to wait for some more years. This wine is aged for 18 months in cask and 6 months in barrique then follows a refinement of 12 months in bottle.

Food match: Game, Braised meat, Stewed meat, Roasted meat, Hard cheese

Fattoria Paradiso - Via Palmeggiana, 285 - 47032 Bertinoro, Forlì (Italy) Tel. +39 0543 445044 Fax. +39 0543 444224 - **Winemaker:** Roberto Cipresso - **Established:** 1950 - **Production:** 550 000 bottles - **E-Mail:** fattoriaparadiso@fattoriaparadiso.com - **WEB:** www.fattoriaparadiso.com

Cellar Journal

This section is reserved to wine producers who want to publish news and information about their business, to announce new products or just for communicating to its customers informations and promotions about their products and activity. Send news to be published at the e-mail address CellarJournal@DiWineTaste.com.

EVENTS

News

In this section will be published news and informations about events concerning the world of wine and food. Whoever is interested in publishing this kind of information can send us a mail at the address Events@DiWineTaste.com.

CORKSCREW

Wine at Restaurant

Choosing a wine at restaurant is not always easy: sometimes you find competent personnel whereas other times the wine is penalized by a very bad service

When we sit down at a restaurant's table, we probably expect that the manager and its collaborators are competent in their job, and the served food is, not only enjoyable, but also prepared with care, the same we usually expect for wine and we expect it to be, in a certain way, special and served the best way possible. Unfortunately, it is not always like that, particularly for wine. Paradoxically, wine seems not to have a good relation with restaurants, it is often served in an approximate way, at the wrong temperatures and in wrong glasses, sometimes the prices seem to be exaggeratedly high and, worse than anything else, in case the wine was suggested by the restaurant's personnel, it is not even suited for the food that should match instead.

There is a great deal of interest about wine and about everything related to it, consumers surely acquired a better knowledge about this subject, unfortunately, speaking in general terms, the treatment wine usually gets in restaurants is not surely the best. Of course, there are many exceptions to this, not all restaurants are the same, there are some where wine is served, suggested and managed excellently, however, most of restaurants seems not to have understood the importance of a proper service of wine and its proper valuation. When the wine is not properly valued in a restaurant can be easily realized: there are some details that allow to understand both the quality of wines and the quality of service in a restaurant and, be sure of this, a restaurant which pays proper attention and care on wine's "details" is also a restaurant which cares about the service and making of the foods. Certainly, we cannot expect to find a sommelier in every restaurant, this would surely be something which would guarantee a certain level of quality, anyway, it would be nice to expect that both the restaurant and its personnel to respect certain "manners" in order to properly value wine and, as a consequence, the quality of foods and of restaurant as well.

Unfortunately, in many restaurants the approach with which they usually serve and suggest beverages, particularly wine, is not only wrong but also counterproductive. It is most likely that this happened to many of you, as soon as getting sat down at a table, being asked "what shall I bring for drinking?" or "Shall I bring white wine or red wine?", even before having taken a look at the menu. This surely is the worsen approach, particularly for wine, because, as a matter of logic and practice, one should decide what to eat before ordering any beverage or the most appropriate wine. In other restaurants the wine list, that is the useful tool both for restaurant and for customers and which shows prices as well as short information about the wines sold, it is not even available, even worse, it is presented to the client only in case is explicitly requested. Lastly, rapidly check the style of glasses that are on tables that are not still occupied as well as the beverages

other clients ordered: in case you see few bottles of wine, inadequate glasses, it is more likely that wine is not properly valued in that restaurant. Distrust buying wine in such restaurants: the scarce attention the manager pays to wines is a sure sign they do not sell much wine there, perhaps they do not want to sell wine as a matter of choice and the few, or many, bottles they keep in their cellar are probably there since a very long time and probably kept badly, therefore, you cannot expect to find neither a good service nor a good treatment for served wines. Finally, the wine which is served at a restaurant must be obviously paid, therefore it is not right to pay for something which is not properly valued and this does not justify at all the high prices of restaurants.

Talking about wine's prices at a restaurant it is good to make some distinctions. Generally the price is higher, sometimes more than three or four times, if compared to the one at which it is usually sold at a wine shop; this is a deprecable custom which is worsened in case the quality of service, as well as of wine, cannot be justified by the price. However, there are restaurants, which should be preferred by customers, provided they also have a good level of service and care, which have very honest prices, most of the times the same prices found in wine shops and, curiously, they also offer a higher quality of service: this is an indisputable sign the restaurant's manager has understood and realized the commercial opportunity of selling more wine as well as having a more honest and loyal relation with his or her clients.

Sommelier

In best cases, as we sat down at a restaurant's table and as soon as we decided what to eat, we will see a sommelier approaching our table which is ready to suggest the best wine according to what we ordered, both respecting client's taste and preferences: a good sommelier suggests, listen and helps the client in choosing a wine without imposing anything, indeed, just proposing. Who is a sommelier? The definition that we will give later about this noble and ancient profession, can be in clear contrast with what can be sometimes found in restaurant and that should be in charge as a sommelier. Unfortunately, sometimes there are sommeliers that probably did not understand or realized his or her real role and they can be defined, in the best cases, as simple "wine servants". This kind of sommelier, not only denies and diminish the professionalism of the whole category but, lastly, really acts as a deterrent to the culture of wine, something that should be part of his or her duties and roles instead.

The sommelier is that professional figure that, not only has a perfect knowledge of wine service, as well as the important aspects concerning temperature and glasses, it must have, first of all, a deep and vast knowledge about wine culture, about wine areas of the world, particularly about the area where he or she works at. The sommelier has a good knowledge about enology and, last but not the least, a good level of general culture, knows how to properly treat clients and must be able to have a good relation with them since the beginning, must be good in being trusted and must be good at listening and to understand client's wish, personality, taste and preferences, must help him or her in choosing a wine without imposing anything and without making use of a silly culture with the only purpose of showing his or her disputable superiority; this would surely be an obstacle for his or her job. A good sommelier is modest, humble, never presumptuous, and always looks for a way to enrich his or her culture, which is never sufficiently complete, as well as his or her professionalism, knows his or her job and never impose anything, sometimes he or she may stir up client's wishes, can eventually warning the client about a wine which could not be the best choice for a specific food, however, it is the client that must have, unequivocally, the very last word about his or her wine. In case you find such a sommelier in a restaurant, trust him or her completely: he or she will certainly suggest you the best wine and, lastly, he or she will suggest you, honestly and sincerely, excellent wines having a good price while having a good quality.

Wine List

Some restaurants seem to have a bad relation with wine list: most of the times is creased, pages are dirty and worn out, sometimes wines indicated in the list are not available. They probably did not realize yet wine list is, first of all, a commercial tool which helps the restaurant in selling wines and it is the tools that allows restaurant to sell wines better, last but not the least, positively qualifies both the restaurant and the wine. Having said this, wine list can also be seen as a sort of magic wand, indeed, it should be remembered that wine list must be, first of all, properly used and it must be used in the best way possible, the wine list itself cannot certainly make any wonder. It should be remembered a bad and ugly wine list, as well as a wine list improperly used, will negatively predispose the client both to buying a wine and to the interest for it.

Sometimes restaurants have wine list which are practically useless and unreadable, written in an obscure way and poor in useful information for the client, sometimes are created in a way to show off a hypocrite and useless knowledge about wines. It should be remembered clients go to the restaurants because they want to eat and drink, certainly good things and coherently to the restaurant's style, surely not to see a ridicule "show" where the manager as well as its collaborators do everything they can in order to parade and show stupid immodesty and to strut about all the time. To these people we would like to remind that competition truly exists and that clients, fortunately, have the capacity of deciding whether to go to the theater or to the restaurant.

The characteristics a good wine list should have are clearness, both of prices and of wines, it should be properly presented, easily readable and, lastly, enjoyable to read without any waste of time or being cause of doubts or misunderstandings. It should be clear and direct, it must make things easy for the client to choose a wine, surely it must not make things hard or impossible and it should never be a waste of time. A good wine list should, for example, present wines according their typology, from the ones usually served as aperitifs to the ones served with desserts, categorized by regions or production areas, where the area in which the restaurant is located at should be presented first, to list wines in each category according to their prices, from the cheapest ones to the expensive ones. Every wine should have information about its name, producer, vintage and possibly its grapes; besides this, a short summary about its characteristics would be useful in helping the client with his or her choice.

It should be noticed, however, such a wine list is not suited for every restaurant, in particular for the smaller ones. In case a restaurant's wine list does not look like an "encyclopedia" and does not have hundreds of wines in it, this does not mean the restaurant is of a bad quality. There are some restaurants that, as a matter of choice, decide to offer some quality wines, and those wines have been selected according to the foods served there, and this is would surely be something that every restaurant's wine list should have. In case the wine list does not have a long and rich selection of wines, it does not mean the manager did not pay attention to wine: check how the wine list has been written and the way it is presented to the client; this is the real sign of the consideration the restaurant has about wine, no matter the quantity and the number of wines.

Service of Wine

As the wine has been chosen, the bottle is presented to the client who ordered and it should be served. The bottle must be brought at the table sealed and capped, in case the bottle is presented uncorked, complain about it and reject the bottle. The bottle is opened and uncorked in front of the client and the cork should be left on the table, hopefully on a saucer. The client is not supposed to check the cork, he or she may do so if he or she wishes, of course, is the sommelier who is supposed to check that, the cork is left on the table in order the client to

make sure the cork is truly from the wine's producer, in other words, the cork is left on the table in order to make sure the wine was not altered or counterfeit and it really is what the client actually ordered. As the bottle has been uncorked, a small quantity of wine is served to the person who ordered the bottle in order to be tasted and to make sure the wine has no defects. In case you are the person which is supposed to taste the wine, don't get nervous and take all the time you actually need in order to properly check the wine. In case the wine has defects, tell the sommelier or the person who served the wine, of course with tact and discretion and, in case the wine is really defective and the faults were not confused with some proper characteristics of that particular wine, ask for the bottle to be replaced.

In case the wine will be considered and evaluated as good, the other clients will be served, clockwise and from the person who is at the left side of the one who ordered the wine and, it will be a good norm and practice, not only as a matter of chivalry, but mainly for a matter of respect and education, to serve ladies first and then gentlemen. The last person to be served will be the one who ordered the wine.

A Troublesome Subject: Defective Wines

It may happen that, as we taste a wine, we find out it has some defects, probably the most frequent one of them all is the the famous "corky smell". In this case do not make things "tragic" and do not negatively consider the restaurant, it should be remembered this is something that may happen even in the most refined and elegant restaurant. Most of the times a defective bottle is not because of restaurant's fault, provided they kept the bottle in the best way possible. In case you happen to find a defective bottle, tell the person who is serving the wine and do that in a polite and kind way, without accusing or blaming anyone for what happened. Express your opinions in a polite but clear way, without arrogance, and ask for the bottle to be replaced and, in this case, the bottle will not be paid, of course. After all, in case the bottle is really defective, there is not reason why one should pay for something bad, particularly when the bottle is defective because of the restaurant's or producer's negligence during one of the phases of the wine making or storage.

Things are different in case the client ordered a wine and subsequently found out he or she does not like it. There are wines that have aromatic characteristics as well as particular flavors and they could not be liked to anyone; this surely does not mean the wine is defective, it simply does not meet the taste of the one who ordered it. In this very case, it is not thinkable, as well as not honest, to claim the replacement of something which was ordered and chose by the client. Finally, it should be noticed that in case a competent and serious sommelier works in a restaurant, it will be very hard that a defective wine, or a wine which does not meet the client's taste, is going to be served.

Wines Sold at the Restaurant

Wine at the restaurant is not sold in bottles only, even though this is the most frequent case. Considering the many forms a wine is sold at a restaurant, we are going to talk about four of them: the so called "house wine", wine at the glass, half bottles and, lastly, the wine that client brings at the restaurant.

House wine is usually offered by any restaurant and this can also represent a convenient choice provided the wine offers proper and right conditions. It would be good for the restaurant to provide clear indications and information about its "house wine", such as grapes used to produce the wine, producer, even when it was the restaurant itself which made the wine, and the vintage. It should be also good the wine is presented and served in a bottle, just like any other wine, never in carafes, a practice that would actually promote the alteration and the reuse of wine. Sometimes house wine is presented in bottle expressly created and labeled by the producer for the restaurant: make sure the

label has all the information usually found in wine bottles, in case it is not like that, don't trust that wine.

A good habit which is becoming more and more common is the one of serving the "wine at the glass", that is the client can buy only a glass of wine without being forced to buy a whole bottle. This alternative is also valid in case a person goes to the restaurant on its own, or, even better, it allows the client to always match the best wine with every food. It should be noticed, however, the selection of wines offered "at the glass" cannot be as vast and rich as the one offered in bottles: the restaurant's manager cannot uncork hundreds of wine bottles with the sole purpose of serving one glass of wine and waste the rest, this is obviously understandable. However the selection of wines usually offered at the glass can surely satisfy most of the cases and can properly match the foods served at a restaurant and, most of the times, the price is also reasonable as well.

Another good alternative is the wine served in half bottles, this is certainly a good choice for those persons that, either for necessity or wish, eat a meal at a restaurant all alone, moreover, half bottles are useful when clients wish to drink some more glasses of a wine and uncorking a regular bottle would just be too much. Unfortunately, and this is a criticism for both producers and restaurants, the production of half bottles and the subsequent availability in restaurant is not very common; this would be instead a good commercial opportunity offered to those who do not drink much wine and to the ones that would love to try more wines in the course of a meal.

Finally, there is another opportunity, very common in certain countries, such as United States of America, where the client brings a bottle of wine at the restaurant while just buying the meal. This habit is usually called "*Bring Your Own Bottle*" or, in short, "*BYOB*". The restaurant usually asks for a corkage fee, which is not always cheap, for the service of the bottle and, in this case it is good to make sure about this fee and act accordingly. This practice, however not really common, allows restaurants not to lose a client while allowing the client to have a meal which is suited and matched for his or her wine: a good opportunity for both the client and the restaurant.

NOT JUST WINE

Parmesan Cheese

The king of Italian cheese has a very ancient history as well as a modern taste which is always successful in meeting even the most exacting gourmets

Cheese plays a fundamental role in nutrition, particularly among the products of animal origin. In Italian culture, Parmesan cheese (Parmigiano Reggiano in Italian), is one of the many cheeses which have very ancient history and traditions, and we can actually say, this cheese can be considered as a sign of civilization and culture, in fact, it is one of the most imitated product in the world. To recognize the real Parmesan cheese, fortunately, it is not hard and it does not need to be experts. The traditional mark (Parmigiano - Reggiano), is impressed with fire along the whole side of the cheese in order to guarantee the authenticity of the product. The mark must also be present in every cheese's piece, including the small ones. The structure and texture of this cheese is unmistakable: granulous, with its typical chip structure and its characteristic aroma.

History

There is no need to do complicated historical researches in order to find information about Parmesan cheese, there are lots of signs this cheese left in the course of history, among the many, it is mentioned



Parmigiano Reggiano and its knife

in Boccaccio's "Decamerone" which was written about 1350 AD: "There was a huge amount of ground Parmesan cheese, and people were standing on it, and the only thing they were doing was making macaroni and ravioli", in the pages written by Cristoforo from Messisbugo where Parmesan cheese was served with fresh eggs and pears. Many biographers of Molière reported that, in his elder age, he loved eating Parmesan cheese. Other information can be found in manuscripts kept in some archives of Reggio Emilia. Bibliographical sources of Roman times (Columella, Varro, Martial) confirmed, in fact, the existence, since those times, that is in the beginning of the Christian era, of a cheese of Parmesan origins and having characteristics similar to the modern Parmesan cheese.

Platina, humanist of the 1400 says: "nowadays there are two different cheese species in Italy that are the most renowned: 'marzolino' (which means something related to March) which is called like that by Etruscans because it is produced in Etruria in the month of March, and Parmesan in the Cisalpine region, which can also be called 'maggengo' (which means something related to May), because it is produced in May".

Parmesan cheese is still produced in the way it was produced eight centuries ago. It is produced in the same places, using the very same practices, the same methods in order to keep and obtain the same characteristics, the same aspect, the same fragrance.

In 1200 Parmesan cheese already acquired its typical aspects: its characteristics were known since many years before and it is obvious this cheese has origins more ancient than those times.

The most reliable sources say the Parmesan cheese was produced first in the valley of Enza, between the provinces of Parma and Reggio Emilia (Italy), that is in the heart of the current district formed by the territories of the provinces of Bologna (partly), Mantua (partly), Modena, Parma and Reggio Emilia. This territory, also known as "typical area", is delimited, since 1955, by specific laws and norms.

Since the times Parmesan cheese was produced first, man learnt how to preserve it and handed on the techniques for its production and preservation, without being tempted by the modernity of "automation". Still today dairymen, by using milk, rennet, fire and their traditions, are capable of giving us a product having very ancient aromas and flavors.

Nowadays, about six hundred small artisan dairies, located in the typical area, have been granted a legal permit which allows them to keep unaltered the original production and preservation methods, guaranteeing a very high level of quality and genuineness, as it is today and tomorrow. Every cheese which happens not to have the requirements expressly stated by the production laws, cannot be marked, in any way, as "Parmigiano Reggiano".

What is Parmesan Cheese

Parmesan cheese has excellent hygienic and healthy characteristics which allow it to be considered as a safe food for the consumer. The way this cheese is produced, as well as its aging, inhibits, in any way, the development and the formation of any dangerous microbacteria for the health. The conditions required for a successful production guarantee the product to be healthy and nutritive.

Concerning rennet, laws for the production of Parmesan cheese state that, for the coagulation of milk must exclusively used calf's abomasum. Moreover, it should be noticed that for the production of Parmesan cheese it is not allowed the use of any additive. Even the mark is made without using any chemical substance but only using an incandescent iron.

There are many differences between Parmesan cheese and similar cheeses coming from other areas and sometimes confused and called with the generic appellation of "grana". These cheeses are usually produced by industrial processes, made in large dairies and by using standardized technologies and methodologies, that cannot give the product those unique characteristics which only an artisan production, as well as a natural aging, can give. Parmesan cheese has a proper and rich concentration of nutrients, a good quantity of proteins, vitamins, mineral salts, calcium and phosphor. To make one Parmesan cheese it takes 570 liters of milk (150.57 gallons) as well as rennet, fire, dairy mastery and the proper aging time. Parmesan cheese is a complete food, healthy and genuine. A cheese of Parmesan has an average weight of 38 Kg. (83.77 lbs.) 100 g. (3.5 oz.) of Parmesan cheese are usually digested in 45 minutes, whereas it takes 4 hours to digest the same quantity of meat. The nutritive value of 100 g. of Parmesan cheese practically correspond to 300 g. (10.58 oz.) or beef, 700 g. (24.69 oz.) of trout or 570 g. (20.10 oz.) of milk.

Parmesan cheese does not contain lactose, as a consequence of the dairy process, there is a quick development of lactic bacteria which ferment all the lactose present in the curd in about 6-8 hours. Even galactose, which derives from lactose, is quickly metabolized by lactose bacteria and within 24-48 hours disappears completely.

The geological characteristics of the soil, the genuineness of cow breeding, as well as the unique environmental combinations which allow the production of a precious milk, different from the one produced in the neighboring areas, make Parmesan cheese a truly inimitable product.

36% of Parmesan cheese is made of proteins (more than any other cheese), 28% are made of fats, 1.3% is calcium and 0.7% is phosphor. Parmesan cheese is also rich in vitamins and the calories for 100 g.

Humidity	g. 30,80 (1.08 oz.)
Proteins	g. 33 (1.16 oz.)
Fats	g. 24,80 (0.87 oz.)
Calcium	g. 1,16 (0.04 oz.)
Phosphor	g. 0,68 (0.02 oz.)
Calcium to Phosphor ratio	1,71
Sodium	g. 1,39 (0.04 oz.)
Magnesium	mg. 43
Zinc	mg. 4
Vitamin A	µg. 298
Vitamin B1	µg. 32
Vitamin B2	µg. 370
Vitamin B6	µg. 106
Vitamin B12	µg. 4,2
Choline	µg. 42
Biotin	µg. 22

Table 1: Composition of Parmesan cheese (100 g. - 3.5 oz.)

(3.5 .oz) are 392.

Parmesan cheese is usually considered as the most complete food besides motherly milk. Modern dietetics recommends Parmesan cheese for children and old people because of its high contents in nutrients, digestibility as well as for its contents of calcium, phosphor and other mineral salts. It is pretty rare a food is equally considered as good and healthy by gastronomes, physicians and dietitians. Pediatricists, for example, recommends to use Parmesan cheese to season babies' paps. During the adolescence, Parmesan cheese is a very important food for young people and it is also important, because of its nutritive characteristics, for old people as well, thanks to the quantity of indispensable substances which are healthy for our body and for our wellness.

Even athletic trainers believe on Parmesan cheese's nutritive characteristics and they recommend it as an indispensable food for the diet of any athlete.

Production

Nowadays, as it was in the past, to make Parmesan cheese it takes milk, exclusively from the typical area, rennet (which is a product of animal origin and coming from calf's stomach), fire and dairymen mastery and, lastly, a proper time for aging. It takes about 16 liters of milk (4.2 gallons) to make one kilogram of cheese (2.2 lbs.) and the milk is the one coming from the provinces of Parma, Modena, Reggio Emilia and part of the provinces of Mantua and Bologna.

The milk of the evening milking is directly sent to the dairy's vats. This milk is allowed to stay in these vats until the morning after, then it is skimmed and added to the whole milk of the morning milking. After that it is added a starter whey as well as a natural culture of lactic ferments obtained by the natural acidification of the residual whey of the day before, and rennet. The mixture is poured in cauldrons in order to produce and transform milk into Parmesan cheese.

The curd is then wrapped in a cloth and it is subsequently put in a woody or metallic mold called "fascera" and it is slightly pressed in order to promote the whey to drain out. During this phase the Parmesan cheese gets its characteristic shape. After this, the cheese is salted by submerging it in a solution made of water and salt for about three weeks. After a brief time of exposition to the sun in order to harden the crust, the cheese is sent to the aging deposit, a climate controlled and humidified room.

From this moment begins the long aging process of the Parmesan cheese, every fifteen days the cheeses are cleaned and checked in order to guarantee the quality of the resulting product. After twelve months, dairy technicians evaluates the cheese by beating with a tiny hammer the sides of cheese and listening the sound which is produced in order to determine its quality. In case the cheese is considered as good and having the required quality, it is then marked with an incandescent iron. Parmesan cheese of superior quality is also marked with the quality sign "extra". After 24 months the Parmesan cheese is ready to be enjoyed.

Preservation

Parmesan cheese, purchased in portions obtained by cutting the cheese in pieces, (preferably cut with the proper almond shaped knife), allow the appreciation of the cheese's characteristics such as color, typical granular structure, and must be wrapped in a plastic or aluminum film, and it should be kept in the lower part of the refrigerator, at a temperature from 0° to +5° C. (32° to 41° F) Particular attention should be paid to the crust which must be kept clean in order to prevent the formation of molds. The modern packing technology allows to obtain a product which is cut in specific pieces that will satisfy the most recurring needs while guaranteeing hygiene and ease of transportation.

How to Cut Parmesan Cheese

First of all, make sure you have the characteristic short almond shaped knife, it should be pointed as well as having a blade on one of its sides in order to make easier the penetration of the knife while the other thicker side will be used as a wedge. Parmesan cheese does not get cut, it gets "opened", in order not to alter the inner structure and keep the original granularity. The operation starts by tracing a line, as well as on the sides, which divides the cheese in two halves, then the crust will be incised along this line while penetrating the knife, in some points of the line, for about 2 centimeters (1 inch). At the extremities of one side of the cheese's diameter, two knives will be hammered, with strength, in order to have these knives working as wedges and the cheese will open in two equal halves. This operation requires lots of experience and attention because the opening of the cheese will be considered as perfect only when the internal structure of the cheese will have opposed the same level of resistance on both halves. Even subsequent "cuts" must be done in the same way in order to obtain equal pieces having the same proportion of crust and paste.

Some Useful Information

Experienced people who works in the making of Parmesan cheese make use of specific terms to classify and qualify this product. They define a Parmesan cheese as "new" when it was produced in the current year; "mature" when it was aged from 12 to 18 months; "old" when it was aged from 18 to 24 months; "very old" when it was aged for more than two summer seasons (from 24 to 36 months).

One of the most characteristic aspects of Parmesan cheese is the color of its paste. When the color is "straw yellow" it means the cows were fed with fresh forage. The color of Parmesan cheese is evenly soft and smooth along the whole surface of the paste and ranges from golden-straw yellow to straw yellow.

Another typical aspect of Parmesan cheese is concerned the paste which, as the product gets mature, detaches in thin chips converging to the center of the cheese; the paste is pretty soft and has a very tiny granularity.

Other factors which qualifies Parmesan cheese and differentiate it from any other else, being an artisan product, are: age, seasoning, aroma and flavor, structure and texture, consistency, state of the crust and dimension (average weight of a Parmesan cheese is from 33 to 44 kilograms, 72.75 to 97 lbs.)

Experts judge Parmesan cheese by evaluating the above mentioned factors, as well as beating the cheese with a little hammer in order to evaluate its internal structure. By means of "broaching", a little quantity of paste is extracted by using a screwed needle; this operation is used to measure the resistance of the paste to the needle in order to evaluate consistency, whereas the extracted paste will reveal the aroma as well as the aging. The "wedging" of cheese is rarely accomplished, anyway it is done only in case there are some uncertainty about the quality of the cheese. Finally, it should be noticed that evaluating the quality of Parmesan cheese takes lots of experience.

Parmesan Cheese and Cooking

Parmesan cheese in an irreplaceable ingredient of good Italian cooking as well as in the famous Mediterranean diet. It is used grounded as a condiment for pasta, rice, soups and broth, including a classical recipe like "Carpaccio". Parmesan cheese is also excellent as a table cheese, eaten alone or with vegetables, nuts, sandwiches and toasts. A match that should be tried is Parmesan cheese and fresh fruits: apples, pears, peaches, figs, grape and nuts. Another habit, originated outside Italy, is to serve chips of Parmesan cheese and nuts with aperitifs and cocktails, in order to enhance the flavor of dry liquors.

Parmesan cheese can be well matched with red wines of good body as well as with fortified wines, such as Marsala, dessert wines, a good example could be Albana passito, and sparkling wines such as Talento, Franciacorta, Cava or Champagne.

Wine Parade

The best 15 wines according to DiWineTaste's readers. To express your best three wines send us an E-mail at WineParade@DiWineTaste.com or fill in the form available at our WEB site www.DiWineTaste.com.

Rank	Wine, Producer
1	➤ Masseto 1998, Tenuta dell'Ornellaia
2	➤ Semillon Sauvignon 2001, Cape Mentelle
3	➤ Muffato della Sala 1999, Castello della Sala
4	➤ Château Pontet-Canet Pauillac 2000
5	➤ Chardonnay 2000, Planeta
6	➤ Rioja Reserva "Pagos Viejos" 1997, Bodega Artadi - Cosecheros Alavares
7	➤ Capo di Stato 1998, Conte Loredan Gasparin
8	↔ Château Lynch-Bages Pauillac 2000
9	➤ Gevrey Chambertin DB Boillot 1998
10	➤ Teroldego Rotaliano Granato 1998, Foradori
11	☆ Château Laroque Saint-Émilion Grand Cru Classé 1998
12	➤ Champagne Ayala Brut
13	➤ Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 1995, Fattoria dei Barbi
14	☆ Albariño 2000, Pazo de Senorans
15	☆ Trentino Müller Thurgau "Pendici del Baldo" 2001 - Mori Colli Zugna

Legend: ➤ up ➤ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry

Classified

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