

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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Who Does Like Sweet and Fortified Wines?

The question could sound like a provocation, one of those which would make not much sense asking. However, if we ask wine lovers what is the style or type they like the most, only few of them give a top ranking to sweet and fortified wines. As these wines are not so popular among the preferences of consumers, it is therefore legitimate to ask if there is still someone who likes sweet and fortified wines. Of course these wines are liked and appreciated by everyone - or, at least, by most of wine lovers - however they are not among the ones playing a primary role in the wine making scene. A trend which is also confirmed by our polls and in which we ask our readers what is the wine they like the most, both in general sense as well as referred to every month of the year. In our general poll, sweet wines are in the middle of the ranking, with 4.29% of preferences, whereas fortified wines occupy the last place with a little less than 1% of preferences.

In order to understand this result better, the first place of our poll is occupied by red wines, with 73%, followed by whites, with 13.70%. Whether red wines were the ones preferred by most of consumers, it has never been a mystery, not at least in recent years. What strikes the most is the result achieved by fortified wines: not only for being in the last place of the ranking, indeed for the fact they got less than 1% of preferences. The figure is even more disconcerting if we think fortified wines played a very important commercial role in past times, very looked for by European noble courts. We can certainly admit times have changed and, with them, tastes as well: this could explain the preferences of consumers in our days. It should also be remembered in relatively recent times, most of fortified wine production was not so exciting in terms of quality, and this certainly contributed to "demolish" the fame of these noble wines. It should also be said in the last years, the production of fortified wines achieved results of absolute excellence, therefore fading the not so honorable past.

This is also true for sweet wines, whose fame did not follow the same fate of fortified wines, and they certainly reached very high levels of quality, something which distinguished them

since the dawning of enology. It should also be said both sweet and fortified wines have a marginal consumption in the table: whenever one thinks about uncorking a bottle of wine to be matched to a meal, most of the cases it is a white or a red wine. We think about the consumption of sweet and fortified wines, and not all the times, in case of pairing with desserts and, sometimes, in the so called "meditation" moments. Nevertheless, if we ask anyone to express an opinion about sweet and fortified wines, most of the consumers will answer with superlative adjectives of appreciation. Everyone likes sweet and fortified wines, they like them a lot, however it is undeniable their consumption is definitely marginal in regard to other wine styles.

For the sake of truth, we should remember the price of quality sweet and fortified wines is generally high, therefore the number of consumers who can afford buying them is pretty low. Is therefore price the main problem for the consumption and the spreading of sweet and fortified wines? This certainly contributes significantly, but it certainly is not the only factor to be considered. Always remembering there is a substantial and undeniable difference between speculation and the right price, we should also remember if the production of quality wines generally has high costs, in quality sweet and fortified wines costs are even higher. Sweet wines are generally made from dried grapes, that is grapes having lost part of the water contained in the berries. The quantity of juice which can be obtained from them is therefore far lesser than the one obtained in the typical production of table wines, hence strongly affecting both costs and final prices.

For this reason, the production of sweet and fortified wines is generally limited; they are being produced in a limited quantity of bottles and which - for the usual marketing and entrepreneurial rule - they must ensure a profit in order to recover production costs. In our opinion, one of the problem limiting the spreading of sweet and fortified wines - which is added to the other ones - is represented by the low visibility and promotion reserved to these wines. For example, try to take a look to the wine list of any restaurant: the space reserved to sweet wines is very modest, most of the time listing just three

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or four choices. Things are not certainly better for fortified wines, most of the times totally absent from wine lists. Of course, we do not mean to blame restaurants for this, after all - this is can be easily understood - in case a product does not sell, or there is a low demand, it is not economically convenient to offer a wide choice. If we also consider these wines are usually sold at a high price, the chances to sell them drastically diminish.

A solution could be represented by selling sweet and fortified wines by the glass: with a definitely lesser price of a whole bottle, many will consider matching a good glass of wine with their desserts. If this could seem like a good solution, it should also be remembered wine sold by the glass is currently uncommon for table wines, therefore it is even more uncommon - and less probable - for sweet and fortified wines. Last but not the least, it is also a problem connected to culture and customs: everyone, or at least the majority, appreciate and like sweet and fortified wines, however few of them remember about them. Moreover, if we consider the fact the ones who remember about these wines do not choose them because of their high price, the situation becomes pretty difficult to remedy. If we then choose a sweet or a fortified wine with a very low price, that is a price anyone can afford, most of the times its quality is very disappointing as well as unsatisfying. Who does like sweet and fortified wines? Everyone, of course. The problem is that not everyone can afford very good ones!

WINE TASTING

Comparing Chianti Classico

One of the most representative wines of Tuscany and of Italian enology, Chianti Classico is one of the most famous reds in the world produced with Sangiovese grape

One of the many wines who made Italy famous in the world certainly is Chianti, belonging to the glories of Tuscany. This renowned wine takes its name from the *Colline del Chianti* (Chianti Hills), a hilly area of about 20 kilometers in the territories of the provinces of Siena, Arezzo and Florence. In past times, the *Chianti* area was referred to the territories in the communes of Gaiole, Radda and Castellina only - all of them located in the province of Siena - which together formed the ancient *Lega del Chianti* (Chianti League) which then become the *Province of Chianti*. According to an enological point of

view, these three areas represent today the so called *Chianti Storico* (Historical Chianti), however the area defined as "Chianti Classico" is today larger and includes other areas in the province of Florence and Siena. The bottles of wine belonging to Chianti Classico - an area of *Denominazione d'Origine Controllata e Garantita* (DOCG, Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin) - are always marked with the famous symbol of the black rooster, the emblem of the ancient Chianti League.

The production area of Chianti's wines was one of the firsts to be regulated and defined by a law. On September 24th, 1717, grand duke Cosimo III de' Medici issued a special law in which were defined the borders of the Chianti, Pomino, Carmignano and Val d'Arno di Sopra regions, in which was allowed the production of the famous wine. The grand duke also issued a decree with which was established a special institution for the control of production, trading and frauds. The production area of Chianti - defined by the Italian quality system as DOCG - is today larger and includes a generic area simply defined as *Chianti*, the seven subareas of Colli Aretini, Colli Fiorentini, Colli Senesi, Colline Pisane, Montalbano, Montespertoli and Rufina, as well as the *Chianti Classico* area. Because of the many areas defined in the production disciplinary, Chianti is today subject of confusion among consumers. Many in fact define every wine from these areas with the generic *Chianti* name, whereas in other cases they use this name for the production from the classic area only.

Wines of the Tasting

In past times Chianti Classico was produced with Sangiovese grape only. In 1840 baron Bettino Ricasoli created a blend which he believed to be good for making a pleasing wine and to be drunk early, by adding Canaiolo Nero and Malvasia Bianca grapes. Moreover, barone Ricasoli introduced the so called method of the *governo alla Toscana*, consisting in adding, at the end of primary fermentation, the must of slightly dried grapes, in order to restart fermentation and to give wine a higher structure. Later was also decided to add Trebbiano Toscano to this blend, therefore defining the so called *Chianti formula*, very popular up to about twenty years ago. Nowadays Chianti producers are mainly focused on Sangiovese, most of the cases alone and most of the cases blended to the traditional Canaiolo Nero grape or other varieties, such as Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

In our comparative tasting we will consider the evaluation of three wines produced with different grapes and aging periods. The first wine selected is Dievole's Chianti Classico Riserva Novecento, produced with Sangiovese, Canaiolo Nero, Colorino and Malvasia Nera grapes, aged for 18 months in barrique. The second wine is Castellare di Castellina's Chianti Classico Riserva Vigna il Poggiale, obtained from Sangiovese, Canaiolo Nero and Ciliegiolo grapes, also in this case aged for 18 months in barrique. The last wine of our comparative tasting is Castello di Fonterutoli's Chianti Classico Castello di Fonterutoli, produced with Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes, aged in barrique for 16 months. The three Chianti Classico wines will be tasted at the temperature of 18° C (65° F) and served - as usual - in three ISO tasting glasses.

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The three Chianti Classico of our comparative tasting

Appearance Analysis

Color and transparency in Chianti Classico strongly depends on the quality and type of grapes used for its production. Chianti Classico is mainly produced with Sangiovese, a grape with a moderate content in polyphenols and which usually makes wines with a moderate transparency. Sangiovese makes wines with low transparency in case of low yield harvests, followed by proper wine making procedures, an essential condition for quality wines. Also color is affected by this factor and, in case of Chianti Classico, also by the coloring properties of the other grapes used in the production. In its first years of life, Chianti Classico is characterized by an intense and brilliant ruby red color, with a moderate transparency, in some cases being pretty low as well. As years pass by, colors in Chianti Classico follow the natural evolution which can be observed in other red wines, passing from ruby red to garnet red, then becoming, at the top of its evolution, brick red.

Let's begin appearance analysis of our wines from Dievole's Chianti Classico Riserva Novecento. By holding the glass tilted over a white surface - a sheet of paper will be enough - let's observe the color of the wine at the base of the glass: it will be noticed a dark and deep ruby red color, with a pretty low transparency. Let's now observe the edge of the liquid mass, towards the opening of the glass, in order to appreciate nuances. It will be observed a garnet red color, a sign of the development of wine aging. Let's now pass to the observation of the second wine of our comparative tasting: Castellare di Castellina's Chianti Classico Riserva Vigna il Poggiale. The color of this second Chianti Classico is intense ruby red, also in this case, with a pretty low transparency. Also in the nuance will be observed a ruby red color. The color of the third wine - Castello di Fonterutoli's Chianti Classico Castello di Fonterutoli - is characterized by an intense ruby red, with a pretty low transparency, whereas in the nuance will be observed a garnet red color.

Olfactory Analysis

The aromatic profile of Chianti Classico is strongly characterized by the aromatic qualities of its main protagonist: Sangiovese. Despite in Chianti Classico are frequently used other

grapes - such as the traditional Canaiolo Nero as well as the more recent Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot - will be the qualities of Sangiovese to be noticed from the glass, to which will follow the qualities of other grapes and the complex aromas given by the aging in wood and time. The world of aromas of Chianti Classico is mainly characterized by red and black berried fruits as well as by flowers. Among the most common aromas which can be found in Chianti are mentioned black cherry, plum, blueberry and blackberry, whereas in flower aromas, violet is the one to play the main role. Thanks to the aging in wood, in Chianti Classico will also be perceived spicy aromas such as vanilla, licorice, cinnamon, nutmeg and black pepper, as well as balsamic hints of menthol and eucalyptus. Among other typical aromas in Chianti Classico are mentioned tobacco, leather, cocoa and chocolate.

The evaluation of aromas of our comparative tasting will begin from Dievole's Chianti Classico Riserva Novecento. By holding the glass in vertical position and without swirling, we will do a first smell in order to perceive opening aromas, that is the ones made of light molecules and requiring a small quantity of oxygen to volatilize. From the glass will emerge clean and intense aromas of black cherry, plum and violet, three typical and identifying qualities of Sangiovese grape. Let's now proceed by swirling the glass in order to favor the oxygenation and volatilization of other aromatic substances, therefore completing the olfactory profile of this first Chianti Classico. By tilting the glass and by doing a second smell, we will perceive aromas of blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, cinnamon, cocoa, licorice and eucalyptus, to which will follow pleasing hints of lavender and black pepper.

Let's now pass to the aromas evaluation of the second wine of our comparative tasting: Castellare di Castellina's Chianti Classico Riserva Vigna il Poggiale. The opening of this Chianti Classico reserve is characterized by black cherry, plum and violet, also in this case very typical in Sangiovese grape. After having swirled the glass, we will do a second smell which will complete the olfactory profile of the wine with aromas of blueberry, raspberry, licorice, vanilla, chocolate, tobacco and menthol with hints of leather. Also the opening of the third wine of our comparative tasting - Castello di Fonterutoli's Chianti Classico Castello di Fonterutoli - is characterized by aromas of black cherry, plum, blackberry and violet, therefore confirming the dominant presence of Sangiovese. The second smell, done after having swirled the glass, will allow the perception of the aromas of black currant, blueberry, vanilla, cyclamen, tobacco, licorice, cocoa and eucalyptus, as well as hints of cinchona and leather.

Gustatory Analysis

The tasting of Chianti Classico is characterized, just like the olfactory evaluation, by the organoleptic qualities of Sangiovese which, according to production disciplinary, must represent at least 80% of the grapes used for the production of this wine. Sangiovese is a grape with an average content of polyphenolic substances and an appreciable acidity. The aging in wood will allow wines produced with Sangiovese to *smooth* crispness, while contributing to increase structure. The "harshness" of Sangiovese in Chianti Classico is also mitigated by Canaiolo Nero, as well as by Merlot, a presence which is be-

coming more and more frequent in this famous wine. Crispness and astringency of Chianti Classico require a proper quantity of alcohol in order to reach balance, which in this case is generally equal to 13.5%.

The first wine we will taste is Dievole's Chianti Classico Riserva Novecento. The attack of this wine is characterized by an appreciable astringency, well balanced by roundness and alcohol, completed by the pleasing crispness of Sangiovese and a definitely robust body. It should be noticed the excellent correspondence to the nose, in particular the flavors of black cherry and plum. Let's now pass to the evaluation of the second wine of our comparative tasting: Castellare di Castellina's Chianti Classico Riserva Vigna il Poggiale. Also in this wine the attack is tannic with a pleasing roundness which mitigates astringency, balanced by the presence of alcohol and a full body. The attack of the third wine, Castello di Fonterutoli's Chianti Classico Castello di Fonterutoli, is characterized by an attack of robust structure and for its evident astringency, however well balanced both by roundness and by alcohol, to which is added the pleasing crispness of Sangiovese.

Final Considerations

The final phase of our comparative tasting will focus on the sensations left on the mouth after the wines have been swallowed. The finish of Dievole's Chianti Classico Riserva Novecento is persistent with intense, clean and pleasing flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry, typical qualities in many grapes and, in particular, in Sangiovese. Also the finish of Castellare di Castellina's Chianti Classico Riserva Vigna il Poggiale is persistent, leaving in the mouth intense, pleasing and clean flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry, just like the previous wine. The finish of the third wine of our comparative tasting, Castello di Fonterutoli's Chianti Classico Castello di Fonterutoli, is very persistent, leaving in the mouth long and intense flavors of black cherry, blackberry and blueberry. It should be noticed the perception of the structure and crispness also after having swallowed the wine, as well as the excellent correspondence to the nose of all the three Chianti Classico.



Wines of the Month

Score legend

- ◆ Fair – ◆◆ Pretty Good – ◆◆◆ Good
- ◆◆◆◆ Very Good – ◆◆◆◆◆ Excellent
- ★ Wine that excels in its category
- ☉ Good value wine

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



Morellino di Scansano Riserva Ciabatta 2005 Erik Banti (Tuscany, Italy)

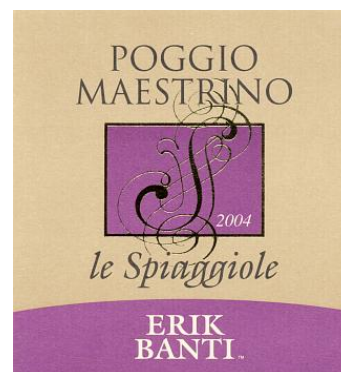
Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 12.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Morellino di Scansano Riserva Ciabatta shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and violet followed by aromas of blueberry, blackberry, vanilla, pink pepper, carob and tobacco. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blackberry. Morellino di Scansano Riserva Ciabatta ages in cask for 13 months.

Food match: Broiled meat and barbecue, Roasted meat, Stewed meat with mushrooms



Poggio Maestrino Le Spiaggiole 2004 Erik Banti (Tuscany, Italy)

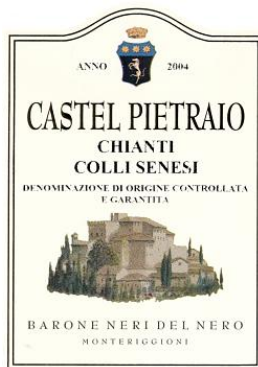
Grapes: Merlot (40%), Cabernet Sauvignon (30%), Syrah (30%)

Price: € 10.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

Poggio Maestrino Le Spiaggiolo shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and black currant followed by aromas of blueberry, violet, vanilla, geranium, tobacco, pink pepper, caper, cocoa and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, agreeable roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and black currant. A well made wine. Poggio Maestrino Le Spiaggiolo ages for 14 months in cask.

Food match: Game, Roasted meat, Stewed and braised meat, Hard cheese



Chianti Colli Senesi Castel Pietraio 2004
Fattoria di Castel Pietraio (Tuscany, Italy)

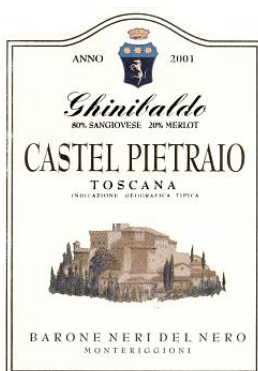
Grapes: Sangiovese (95%), Canaiolo Nero (5%)

Price: € 5.50

Score: ♦♦★

This wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean and pleasing aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and blackberry followed by aromas of violet, raspberry and blueberry. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic and crisp attack, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is pretty persistent with flavors of plum and black cherry.

Food match: Broiled meat and barbecue, Sauteed meat, Stuffed pasta



Ghinibaldo 2001
Fattoria di Castel Pietraio (Tuscany, Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese (80%), Merlot (20%)

Price: € 18.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

Ghinibaldo shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and black currant followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, licorice, eucalyptus, chocolate, clover and mace. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and black currant. A well made wine. Ghinibaldo ages for 14 months in barrique followed by at least 12 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Game, Roasted meat, Stewed and braised meat, Hard cheese



I Terreni di Sanseverino Moro Ribballa di Cagnore
2004

Antico Terreno Ottavi (Marches, Italy)

Grapes: Montepulciano

Price: € 12.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

This wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and violet followed by aromas of blueberry, black currant, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate, mace and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry. This wine ages for 16-18 months in barrique.

Food match: Roasted meat, Braised and stewed meat, Broiled meat and barbecue



Pianetta di Cagnore Le Goduriose 2003
Antico Terreno Ottavi (Marches, Italy)

Grapes: Vernaccia Nera, Montepulciano, Sangiovese

Price: € 15.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

Pianetta di Cagnore Le Goduriose shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and blackberry followed by aromas of blueberry, violet, vanilla, black pepper, tobacco, chocolate and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blackberry. Pianetta di Cagnore Le Goduriose ages for 18 months in barrique.

Food match: Roasted meat, Stewed and braised meat with mushrooms, Hard cheese



Poggio della Costa 2006
Sergio Mottura (Latium, Italy)

Grapes: Grechetto

Price: € 9.90

Score: ◆◆◆★

Poggio della Costa shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of pear, peach and pineapple followed by aromas of hawthorn, apple, hazelnut and broom. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of pear, peach and pineapple. Poggio della Costa ages for 6 months in steel tanks followed by 2 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Pasta and risotto with vegetables and fish, Sauteed fish, Legumes soups



Latour a Civitella 2005
Sergio Mottura (Latium, Italy)

Grapes: Grechetto

Price: € 15.90

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Latour a Civitella shows a brilliant straw yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints

of apple, pear and plum followed by aromas of pineapple, citrus fruits, vanilla, hazelnut, hawthorn, grapefruit and butter. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, apple and hazelnut. Latour a Civitella ages for 9 months in cask followed by 6 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Pasta with meat, roasted fish, Roasted white meat, Mushroom soups



Colline Novaresi Vespolina Ricardo della Zoina 2004
Cascina Zoina (Piedmont, Italy)

Grapes: Vespolina

Price: € 8.00

Score: ◆◆◆★

This wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of cherry and plum followed by aromas of rose, violet, vanilla, chocolate, tobacco and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of cherry and plum. Colline Novaresi Vespolina Ricardo della Zoina ages for 12 months in barrique.

Food match: Stuffed pasta, Stewed meat with mushrooms, Broiled meat and barbecue



Colline Novaresi Nebbiolo Cordero della Zoina Mot 2004

Cascina Zoina (Piedmont, Italy)

Grapes: Nebbiolo

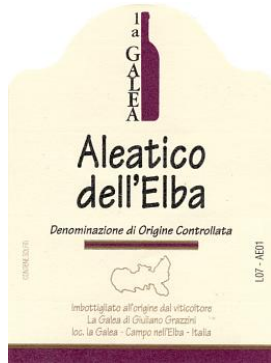
Price: € 11.00

Score: ◆◆◆★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of brick red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of black

cherry, plum and strawberry followed by aromas of violet, vanilla, tobacco, cocoa and tar. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and pleasing crispness, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, strawberry and plum. This wine ages for 24 months in barrique followed by 5 months in steel tanks and at least 12 months in bottle.

Food match: Roasted meat, Braised and stewed meat, Hard cheese



**Aleatico dell'Elba 2005
La Galea (Tuscany, Italy)**

Grapes: Aleatico

Price: € 24.00 - 50cl

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of blackberry, black cherry and geranium followed by aromas of raspberry, strawberry, blueberry, violet, plum and pink pepper. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a sweet and slightly tannic attack, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness and crispness. The finish is persistent with flavors of blackberry, black cherry and strawberry. This Aleatico dell'Elba ages for 12 months in steel tanks.

Food match: Fruit desserts, Jam tarts



**Sagrantino di Montefalco 2004
Terre de La Custodia (Umbria, Italy)**

Grapes: Sagrantino

Price: € 21.70

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This Sagrantino di Montefalco shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of black cherry, blackberry and plum followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, cocoa and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, blackberry

and plum. This Sagrantino di Montefalco ages for 15 months in barrique followed by 8 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Game, Stewed and braised meat, Roasted meat, Hard cheese



**Sagrantino di Montefalco Passito Melanto 2004
Terre de La Custodia (Umbria, Italy)**

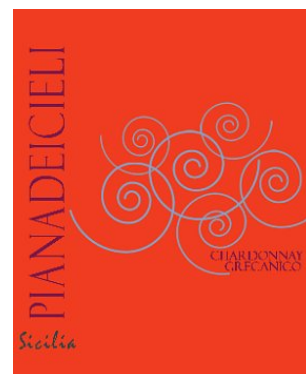
Grapes: Sagrantino

Price: € 23.20 - 375ml

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Sagrantino di Montefalco Passito Melanto shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of blackberry, black cherry and plum followed by aromas of violet, vanilla, tobacco, cinnamon, carob, caramel and pink pepper. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic and sweet attack, however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of blackberry, black cherry and plum. Sagrantino di Montefalco Passito Melanto ages for 12 months in barrique followed by 12 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Fruit and jam tarts, Hard cheese



**Chardonnay Grecanico 2006
Pianadeicielei (Sicily, Italy)**

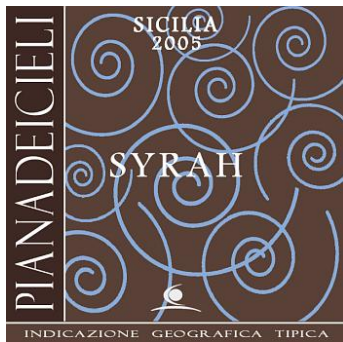
Grapes: Chardonnay (60%), Grecanico (40%)

Price: € 9.40

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This wine shows an intense golden yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of apple, lychee and banana followed by aromas of acacia, medlar, peach, pear, pink grapefruit, plum, honey and mineral. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of lychee, apple and plum. This wine ages in steel tanks.

Food match: Stuffed pasta, Pasta with mushrooms and crustaceans, Sauteed fish, Vegetable and mushroom soups



Syrah 2005
Pianadeicieli (Sicily, Italy)

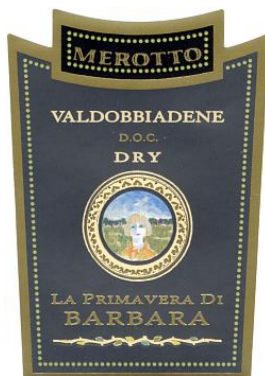
Grapes: Syrah

Price: € 10.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

This Syrah shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of black currant, black cherry and plum followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, black pepper, vanilla, blackberry, carob, lavender and mace. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of black currant, black cherry and plum. A well made wine. This Syrah ages for 8 months in barrique.

Food match: Roasted meat, Stewed and braised meat, Hard cheese



Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Dry La Primavera di Barbara 2006
Merotto (Veneto, Italy)

Grapes: Prosecco (90%), Perera (10%)

Price: € 11.75

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Dry La Primavera di Barbara shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of pear, apple and pineapple followed by aromas of peach, wistaria, citrus fruits, hawthorn, broom, plum and sage. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, an effervescent and crisp attack, pleasing sweetness, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of pear, pineapple and peach. Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Dry La Primavera di Barbara ferments for about 50 days in tanks.

Food match: Risotto with crustaceans, Broiled crustaceans, Vegetable flans



Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Dry Superiore di Cartizze
Merotto (Veneto, Italy)

Grapes: Prosecco

Price: € 23.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This Prosecco shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of pear, pineapple and apple followed by aromas of peach, wistaria, white rose, plum, broom and hawthorn. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, an effervescent and crisp attack, pleasing sweetness, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of pear, peach and pineapple. Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Dry Superiore di Cartizze ferments in tank for about 50 days.

Food match: Boiled fish, Vegetable flans, Risotto with crustaceans

EVENTS

News

In this column are published news and information about events concerning the world of wine and food. Whoever is interested in publishing this kind of information can send us a mail to the address Events@DiWineTaste.com.

NOT JUST WINE

Salmon

Among the most popular fishes in the world, salmon is very appreciated in cooking for its tasty and fine meat, protagonist of many culinary recipes

It is still a mystery how salmon can find the path leading to the river in which they were born. It seems to be a combination, among the many things, of astronomical navigation and electromagnetic flows, and also an extremely developed sense of smell. Almost all the species of salmon are born in sweet waters, then migrate to the valley towards the ocean, and finally go back to the place of their origin. The "wild" salmon is the best one, that is the fished one, because, thanks to the continuous movement, it has a more compact meat. Salmon meat is in fact very appreciated in the tables of the world and many are the recipes in which it is protagonist. With the term salmon are intended many species of fishes all belonging to the *Salmonidae* family.

Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo Solar*), is the salmon living in the Atlantic ocean, simply known as "salmon", the most common type in cooking. With a back of brown-green-blue color and silvery flanks, it can reach 80 cm in length. It is a predatory fish, very active and very aggressive, its ideal environment is the waters of Northern Atlantic ocean, cold and rich in oxygen. It is an anadromous fish, that is living most of the time in salt water and spawning the eggs in sweet waters. During its adult phase, it lives in the Northern Atlantic ocean, then, at the age of 2-6, it swims upstream the rivers of Northern America and Northern Europe in order to spawn eggs. It is the female who chooses the place, whereas the male fertilizes the eggs. Eggs hatch after a period from five to seven months, therefore some fry salmons, at least most of them, go to the sea, whereas others can stay for some years in sweet waters before beginning the journey to the sea. The few salmons who can survive to the period of reproduction, as they reach the sea, quickly recovers from the loss of weight, and within one or two years they are ready again for a new swim upstream of the river. Its meat, with a pink color, is very tasty and appreciated, for this reason



Salmon is one of the most appreciated fish in the tables of the world

Atlantic salmon is frequently bred in specific plants.

Royal Salmon or *Red King* or *Chinook*, it is the *Oncorhynchus Tshawytscha*. It is the bigger of the family, can reach 150 centimeters in length and a weight of 20 kilograms. It lives in a pretty large area, it can be found in California (Monterey Bay), in the western coasts of the United States, Canada, Alaska and Siberia, as well as in the coasts of Japan. It can also be found in the Great Lakes of North America and in some areas of New Zealand, where it was introduced by man. Its compact meat, with a color ranging from pale pink to intense red, it is very appreciated by connoisseurs. Royal salmon, just like the Atlantic one, it is an "anadromous" fish and is an excellent traveler. After some years of age, it begins the journey to the sea, goes down the rivers and reaches estuaries, safe places rich of food, an ideal stop in order to let skin's physiology to adapt to the new concentrations of salt.

The body of royal salmon is stretched and robust, with a green-blue back and silver flanks. The head is pointed, the mouth, with black gums, is full of pointed teeth: for this reason it is also known as "blackmouth". During the reproduction period, royal salmon changes many parts of its body. One of them is the growth of the lower jaw, which block the mouth so it cannot close, therefore making eating impossible and forcing the salmon to a complete abstinence from food during the period of migration. Salmons swim upstream the river always in the same period of the year. Every salmon can, thanks to its sense of orientation guided by the sun, to find the right direction to the place of origin. The sense of smell, extremely developed, allows the salmon to recognize the water of the river where it is from.

Silver Salmon, or Coho Salmon, it is known as *Oncorhynchus Kisutch* and can be found in the Pacific Ocean, along Siberian coasts, western coasts of Canada and United States down to Mexico, in the coasts of Japan and in North-Eastern Russia. It is very common during the sport fishing season, it is very appreciated in fish shops and in restaurants for its inviting red meat and moderate price. **Red Salmon** or Sockeye Salmon - known as *Oncorhynchus Nerka* according to scientific classification, with a green-blue back and silver flanks - it is common in the Pacific Ocean, from California to Japan. It can also be found in lakes and rivers having no access to the sea, in Alaska, Canada and in the North area of the United States. It is the most fished salmon from the industry and represents about two-thirds of total production. The aspect of its meat is compact with an intense red color, it is the most appreciated salmon in British Columbia and it has become the most common type of "canned salmon".

Pink Salmon, or *Humpy*, it is the *Oncorhynchus Gorbuscha* and the name derives from the color of its back. Of all the species living in the Pacific ocean, this is the smallest one, its length does not exceed 75 centimeters and its weight does not exceed 7 kilograms. Pink salmon has a maximum life span of two years, it has a green-blue back with large dark spots. The term *Humpy* comes from the slight hunch which it develops during the period of reproduction. Its meat is pale and with a delicate taste, however having a lower quality than others. During the month of July or August, pink salmons reach estuaries of rivers and begin to swim upstream, looking for a place to spawn eggs. The fry of pink salmon quickly go down to the estuary, rich of safe places and food, where they spend some

weeks. After some time they enter the Pacific ocean where they will become adults.

Keta Salmon, or *Chum Salmon*, it is known as *Oncorhynchus Keta* as well as *Dog Salmon*, because of the big teeth it develops during the spawning period. It lives in the Pacific Ocean, from California to Korea and in the Bering Strait. After having been canned, it takes the name of keta salmon. Its meat has an aspect from pale red to average intense red, with a low quantity of saturated fats. **Danube Salmon**, also known as *Hucho Hucho*, lives in the Danube river and in its northern tributaries. It is a massive fish and very strong, excellent predator, it likes to stay in the surface of the stream, always ready to catch its prey. The reproduction period is springtime. In March and April, Danube salmon swim upstream in search of calm waters with gravelly floors, where the female spawns eggs. **Japanese Salmon**, according to scientific classification *Oncorhynchus Masou*, is common in Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

Salmon and Cooking

Fish, as it is commonly known, it is good for the health thanks to the presence of that particular type of fats known as "Omega 3". It is a polyunsaturated fatty acid the body cannot make itself, for this reason it is defined as *essential*, and it must be provided through the assumption of food. These "good" fats have a repairing function of cellular membrane, delaying the aging of every organ. According to experts, in normal conditions, it is advised a daily intake of 700 mg of Omega 3, a quantity which can be provided by 30 grams of salmon.

Just like any type of fish, before purchasing a salmon it is good to make sure the eye is "alive" and convex, pink and wet gills, brilliant meat. The central part is the best one and in case it was bought in steaks, meat must adhere to the central bone and with an uniform color. In case it is bought sliced, meat must be well adherent to the cartilage. Bred salmon can be found in shops all year long, its meat has a less strong taste and a darker color. Less valuable salmon have a curved jaw curved upward like a hook. When bought raw, in steaks, fillets or whole, salmon must be washed and dried with a cloth, wrapped in cooking paper or a clean cloth and kept in the fridge, consumed within 24 hours. In case of smoked salmon, it must be kept in fridge until expiration date and it is suggested to take it out from the fridge at least 10-15 minutes before serving. The consumption of salmon, because of its high content in fats, it is not advised to kids below 2 years of age.

In shops can be found excellent smoked salmon, most of the time coming from Norway or Scotland. The first thing to check is the expiration date, the aspect of the meat must be uniform and slightly shading off into orange. In case the color is too dark, this could probably mean it is too salty, whereas in case the surface is oily, this could indicate a non perfect smoking technique. In packages are usually found emblems emphasizing the quality of the product: indeed they simply have a merely "commercial" meaning, whereas it is too frequent the lack of information about the smoking technique. The most appreciated salmon is the one smoked with aromatic wood, mainly juniper, laurel and rosemary. Smoking techniques provide for the disposition of the salmon in horizontal or vertical position, the latter producing a better meat. Smoked salmon is not advised to kids below 4-5 years of age.

In the traditional processing, the head and tail of salmon were eliminated, then the skin was separated from the meat and the two flanks were spread of salt, then allowed to rest for a whole day. After having removed the salt, the flanks were hung and allowed to dry for 24 hours more, before proceeding with the smoking process. The "smoking room" consists in a closed room in which are laid, in specific mats layered at variable heights, salmon flanks, in the bottom are laid wood chips which, burning with no flame, make a lot of smoke which will pass through hung flanks. Salmon remain in this smoking room for 10-11 hours at a temperature of 30-32° C. Industrial processing uses different techniques. Cold smoking lasts about 12 hours at a temperature not higher than 20° C and in specific containers made of aromatic wood. Warm smoking provides for an initial temperature of 120° C for the first 20 minutes, then it is lowered to 80° C for 2 hours, while continuously making sure the internal temperature of flanks is kept at about 75° C.

The industrial processing also make use of liquid smoke, directly sprayed on salmon's flanks or soaked in a solution of liquid smoke and water. Modern technology has also introduced the so called "electrostatic smoking", realized with liquid smoke particles electrostatically charged and which then stick to salmon's flanks. These innovative processes ensure a smoking with no noxious agent produced by the smoke, however in package's labels the smoking technique is never indicated.

Expiration date of smoked salmon changes from country to country. In some countries, like Italy, it is permitted a period of 8-12 weeks, definitely too long, whereas in France the expiration date must not exceed 21 days. In countries where the expiration date is set to definitely long times, it is always advised to consume salmon at least 30 days in advance before the expiration date. Most of the times the choice of salmon is done according to the color of its meat. Producers are well aware of this, therefore they use food enriched with carotenoids in order to obtain a more inviting color. Besides the hue of color it is also advised to check homogeneity, as a homogeneous color indicates a higher quality. Another aspect to be considered is the presence of blood stains: they indicate a low quality processing technique.

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.

Rank		Wine, Producer
1	↗	Barolo Cannubi Boschis 2001, Sandrone (Italy)
2	↗	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2000, Zenato (Italy)
3	↘	Sforzato di Valtellina Canua 2001, Conti Sertoli Salis (Italy)
4	↗	Barolo Bussia 2001, Prunotto (Italy)
5	↘	Soave Classico Monte Alto 2004, Ca' Rugate (Italy)
6	↗	Collio Bianco Col Disôre 2004, Russiz Superiore (Italy)
7	↘	Sagrantino di Montefalco Collepiano 2003, Arnaldo Caprai (Italy)
8	↗	San Leonardo 2001, Tenuta San Leonardo (Italy)
9	↗	Bradisismo 2003, Inama (Italy)
10	↘	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Costasera 2001, Masi (Italy)
11	↗	Wine Obsession 2001, Vignamaggio (Italy)
12	↔	Don Antonio 2003, Morgante (Italy)
13	↘	Nero al Tondo 2001, Ruffino (Italy)
14	↗	Chianti Classico Riserva Novecento 2000, Dievole (Italy)
15	↘	Mater Matuta 2003, Casale del Giglio (Italy)

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry