

# DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

International Edition

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## About Wine, Ethics, Environment and Tradition

In all of these years spent in the world of wine, I had extraordinary chances, I tasted thousands of different wines, both of magnificent value and pretty modest ones, however all useful in order to better understand the beverage of Bacchus. I met a lot of people working in the world of wine as well as genuine and passionate wine lovers, including people of indisputable wine making and viticultural competence: each of them taught me something, I thank them all. With many of them I have a sincere feeling of esteem and friendship, something enriching and making even more precious the simple relationship between professionals who work for wine, although with different goals. It happens quite frequently, in fact, I take advantage of their patience, asking them questions in order to understand their point of view about wine and viticulture, also for my very personal benefit, of course.

I like, in fact, every time I can, to listen to the people who work in the world of wine, those who really make wine and sincerely appreciate it, not just because it is part of their job. To listen to the passionate words of vintners and wine makers, I always get the very same factors, common in all cases: the passion for their job and wine, the will to offer a quality and sound product, the respect for territory and environment. I am aware that some, by reading these words, would disagree with what I am saying, in particular when they are considered according to certain "wine making visions". In particular, I am talking about the "absolute" vision sometimes expressed by producers and wine lovers, so strong and indisputable, they are fiercely opposed to every way of interpreting wine but theirs.

I am not talking about any specific "wine making vision", being aware of the fact each of them, considered in their own principles, are all "exact", capable of expressing an indisputable wine making method and philosophy. I do not want to get into anyone of them, although I see behaviors and thoughts not so different from religions or ideological and political views: I keep on be-

lieving wine is superior to all those poor and frivolous matters. I have always considered wine as the expression of the people making it and, as a consequence, their vision of territory and grapes: wine, without the intervention of man, would not exist. It undeniably is a beverage made for our own pleasure and there is no other reason which could justify its existence, as wine does not have any biological or evolutionary use both for vine and land.

I frequently realize that for wine, more than any other product pertaining to agriculture, they tend to be more exacting and rigorous, even more intransigent and fundamentalist. They express pretty rigid considerations and demand impeccable "moral conducts", both according to environment and technical views, something hardly seen in other aspects of agriculture. They demand wine to be respectful for health and environment, it must follow strict viticultural and wine making methods, giving origin to certain factions rejecting all the rest, most of the times considered not so healthy and even dangerous. Wine is required, virtually with no exception, to represent the tradition of a culture and of a territory: innovation is sometimes seen as an adulteration detrimental to the traditions of past times instead of being seen as an ameliorative element.

Wine frequently suffers the burden of tradition, a dead weight forcing it to live in a time not existing anymore but, because of nostalgic reasons, we like to keep it alive. We should remember a tradition simply is a successful innovation and, at its times, it has been capable of replacing another tradition. We call it progress and it is what allowed us to be here and it is the reason why modern wine is different from the one made by ancient Romans. Also for phytosanitary treatments in vineyards can be seen, more or less, the same behavior. According to tradition, the treatment done by using sulfur and copper sulfate represents the foundation of a genuine viticulture and respectful both for health and environment. Nevertheless, copper is a heavy metal and it is not that

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simple to discharge it from the soil when it has been absorbed. I received many times this food for thought: who is spoiling the environment more, the one who is applying ten treatments of sulfur and copper sulfate, or the one who applies just one and by using other phytosanitary products?

I hear many objecting on the fact modern phytosanitary products are the expression of chemistry and, as such, they are certainly dangerous for our health. This can also be true - after all, I am not an expert in this sense and I have no competence to deny that - nevertheless, I do not think sulfur and copper and healthy substances for our body as well. There is something that, in any case, I could understand from the words of producers and wine makers with whom I had the pleasure to listen to their opinions about wine: they all are respectful for their territory, vine and environment. They all are aware of the responsibility about offering their clients a sound and quality product, by respecting, first of all, their vineyard, as it is the place where their job originates from. Besides of this, all of them have their own vision on how reaching this goal, both as an ethical and technical point of view, they all however give absolute priority to vineyards and territory, how to keep them and respect them the best possible way. And of all the frivolous things I see around the world of wine, I believe this to be the most concrete and sustainable one.

*Antonello Biancalana*



## WINE TASTING

# Contrasts of Nebbiolo and Pinot Nero

Two examples of elegance expressed in different ways and, in certain aspects, even opposed, both indisputable protagonists of great wines

Two great red berried grapes, absolute protagonists of two great wine areas, acclaimed all over the world for the quality of their wines. Langhe in Piedmont - and, of course, Valtellina in Lombardy - and Burgundy in France, are, respectively, the indisputable homeland of Nebbiolo and Pinot Noir. Of the two varieties, the one to have traveled beyond the borders of its country and reached very distant places, certainly is Pinot Noir, now considered an international variety, a fate it shares with many grapes of France. Also Nebbiolo has walked a long way, by catching the interest of vintners of other countries, however it is about a pretty marginal presence, and Piedmont and Lombardy - in Italy - are the places where it is mainly found. Besides being the indisputable glory of Burgundy, Pinot Noir has been successful in giving quality wines even in Oregon (USA) and New Zealand, as well as Tasmania, South Africa, Australia and Italy.

Nebbiolo and Pinot Noir are both appreciated by wine lovers for the specific qualities they can give their wines. Powerful, robust and full bodied the Nebbiolo, refined and elegant the Pinot Noir, wines produced with these two varieties are characterized by some common qualities, however being distant expressions. Varieties very sensitives to soil and climate conditions, they give wines with extremely different character according to each territory. For example, we can think about the different expressions of Nebbiolo in Piedmont's Langhe, capable of making *gentle and elegant* interpretations as well as more robust and austere ones. In this sense, Pinot Noir is not so different, an extremely demanding variety - maybe, the most demanding grape of them all - frequently considered as a challenge both for vintners and wine makers. The famous grape from Burgundy in fact gives monumental wines in the best conditions, modest and ordinary wines in unfavorable conditions.

Nebbiolo, like already said, is the wine glory of Langhe and Valtellina. These two important wine areas of Italy - the former in Piedmont, the latter in Lombardy - represent, as a matter of fact, the most famous styles for wines produced with Nebbiolo. In Piedmont, this noble variety is found all over the region, protagonist of countless wines of almost all wine denominations of the region. Barolo, Barbaresco, Gattinara, Ghemme, Roero and Carema are among the most famous wines of Piedmont and produced with Nebbiolo, however it should be noticed this variety is also found in Vallée d'Aoste and Sardinia. In Lombardy Nebbiolo is mainly found in Franciacorta and Oltrepo Pavese, however it is in the territory of Valtellina where the most famous wines are produced, including the famous Inferno, Sassella, Valgella, Grumello and Sforzato. Moreover, it should be noticed in Valtellina this variety is also known as Chiavennasca, a name being

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A glass of Barolo: it can be noticed the high transparency and nuances of garnet red color, not so different from Pinot Noir

less and less used in favor of Nebbiolo.

Native to Burgundy and member of one of the most important grape families of the wine scene, Pinot Noir is among the most appreciated varieties for the production of red wines and classic method sparkling wines. In these two styles is capable of extraordinary performances, despite it is a very demanding variety both in vineyard and in winery. Burgundy for red wines, Champagne for bubbles, Pinot Noir is the red berried grape catching a remarkable attention and appreciation of wine lovers all over the world because of its elegance and class. Qualities which can be obtained, first of all, in territories characterized by cool climate conditions, as in warm areas it can easily lose its famous elegance by replacing it with a quite disappointing mediocrity. In favorable climatic and environmental conditions, Pinot Noir is however capable of giving wines of absolute value, certainly among of the most expensive and looked for wines by many wine lovers in the world.

Just like Nebbiolo, Pinot Noir is a variety having a modest coloring quality, however - as opposed to the famous Italian grape - it does not have a rich quantity of polyphenolic substances. This characteristic, appreciated by many, contributes to the exaltation of one of the typical qualities in Pinot Noir: acidity. Wines produced with the famous variety from Burgundy are in fact appreciated for their pleasing acidity, considered by many one of the factors giving elegance to Pinot Noir. To the nose it is always capable of giving pleasing sensations of red berried fruits, a characteristic usually enhanced also by the use of non particularly aggressive casks in order to keep its characteristic olfactory profile. The aging in cask is however beneficial to Pinot Noir. This practice allows in fact to smooth the evident acidity, as well as to enrich the structure of wines - by considering the modest content in tannins - while accentuating roundness.

Our tasting by contrast dedicated to Nebbiolo and Pinot Noir will consider two wines having similar wine making characteristics, at least as far as wine making techniques are concerned. Nebbiolo will be represented by a Barolo aged in large cask, preferably coming from the territories of Serralunga d'Alba, Cas-

tiglione Falletto or Monforte d'Alba. As for Pinot Noir, we will pick one produced in the Italian territory, in particular, in the best land of Italy for this variety: Alto Adige. We will choose a Pinot Noir aged in large cask and with at least three years of life. We will prefer wines aged in a large cask, both for the lesser impact in organoleptic profiles of the two varieties and for allowing the best expressions of the two grapes.

As usual, we will start by evaluating the appearance of both wines. Nebbiolo and Pinot Noir, like we already said, are two varieties having a pretty modest coloring quality, a characteristic which can be observed in both wines by evaluating transparency. On this regard, it should be noticed color in red wines - in particular, transparency - does not have any direct connection with quality. In this sense, both Nebbiolo and Pinot Noir are two excellent examples of wines with moderate transparency however being of high quality. The observation of the two glasses will reveal many analogies and few differences, both in the color and in transparency. In both glasses will be in fact observed an intense and brilliant ruby red color, with nuances tending to garnet red. Transparency, like already said, is quite moderate, and it will be quite easy to see an object put behind the glass.

The first differences between the two varieties will be detected during the olfactory analysis, however noticing that also in this aspect we will detect some pleasing analogies. It is, in any case, about analogies concerning the expression of aromas recalling red fruits, whereas will be perceived evident differences in the use of cask and the consequent tertiary evolution. It should be said in both cases, the use of wood is useful both for improving the balance of the wine and for the organoleptic enrichment. The way of using wood is however different because of the specific characteristics of the two grapes. In Pinot Noir, in fact, the organoleptic impact of wood is - in general terms - more moderate than Nebbiolo. In the famous grape from Burgundy, the impact of wood is generally low in order to keep the expression of flowers and fruits of Pinot Noir, while contributing to enrich the structure of wine.

We will start the evaluation of the aromas of the two wines from Pinot Noir. Let's proceed with the first smell, an operation allowing the evaluation of the opening, that is the main aromatic sensations. The operation is done by holding the glass in vertical position and without swirling: to the nose will be perceived aromas of cherry, raspberry, plum and, very likely, strawberry. It will be noticed the moderate impact of wood in order to favor the character of red fruits typical in Pinot Noir. The opening of Barolo is characterized by cherry, plum and violet, an evidently more "severe" character than Pinot Noir, despite showing remarkable analogies. Differences become more evident after having swirled the glasses, an operation favoring the development of tertiary sensations in both wines and allowing a better understanding of the differences related to the use of cask. Interesting differences are detected in the flower expression of both wines: in Pinot Noir will be mainly perceived aromas of cyclamen and rose, whereas in Nebbiolo it will be the aroma of violet to play the main role.

Differences become pretty evident to the taste, despite the two grapes have some characteristics in common. The primary differ-

ence is about the impact and quality of polyphenols, responsible of the sensation of astringency. Barolo is the wine expressing, in this sense, a superior power and strength than Pinot Noir: astringency in the grape from Burgundy is clearly more gentle and lighter. Both wines have, in any case, a remarkable elegance, a quality mainly expressed by acidity. Nebbiolo and Pinot Noir are in fact characterized by a pretty high level of acidity when compared to most of the red berried grapes, a quality being very appreciated by wine lovers having a passion for these two varieties. The burning impact of alcohol expresses different strengths in both wines: in general terms, the ones produced with Nebbiolo usually have a higher alcohol by volume than Pinot Noir.

The finish of the two wines is generally very good, having - in general terms - an excellent taste-olfactory persistence. In this final phase of the evaluation, it will be perceived evident differences concerning the impact of the respective sensations of astringency. In the finish of Barolo will in fact be perceived a sensation of fuller body, however followed by a pleasing crispness and a correspondence of flavors recalling the aromas perceived to the nose. The finish of Pinot Noir expresses a stronger sensation of crispness and, in certain aspects, a more refined elegance than Nebbiolo. They however are two grapes capable of expressing magnificent wines, in both cases very demanding in every stage of production, from vineyard to the glass. Of the two varieties, Pinot Noir certainly is the one being more demanding, as to be defined the most difficult grape to vinify. It really takes a little, in fact - in particular climate conditions - to turn Pinot Noir into a quite mediocre and ordinary wine.

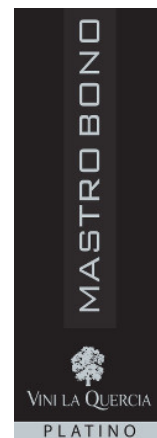
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## Wines of the Month

### 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



### Mastrobono Platino La Quercia (Abruzzo, Italy)

🍷 Trebbiano d'Abruzzo, Other Grapes

Price: € 20.00

Score ❖❖❖❖

👁 Intense golden yellow and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent.

👃 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of apple, plum and almond followed by aromas of ripe pear, citrus fruits, hawthorn, honey, vanilla and ripe peach.

👄 Crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness.

🍷 Persistent finish with flavors of apple, plum and almond.

📅 2 years in cask.

🍴 *Stuffed pasta, Roasted fish, Roasted white meat*



**Montepulciano d’Abruzzo Colline Teramane Riserva  
Mastrobono 2006  
La Quercia (Abruzzo, Italy)**

Montepulciano

Price: € 35.00

Score ★

Deep ruby red and nuances of garnet red, impenetrable to light.

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of prune, black cherry jam and dried violet followed by aromas of blueberry jam, blackberry jam, tobacco, vanilla, cocoa, mace, licorice and menthol.

Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness.

Persistent finish with flavors of prune, black cherry jam and blackberry jam.

Aged in cask.

*Game, Roasted meat, Stewed and braised meat, Hard cheese*



**Adarmando 2012  
Tabarrini (Umbria, Italy)**

Trebbiano Spoletino

Price: € 20.00

Score

Brilliant golden yellow and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent.

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of apple, medlar and pear followed by aromas of citrus fruits, hawthorn, pineapple, peach, hazelnut, broom, lychee, plum and mineral.

Crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable.


Very persistent finish with long flavors of apple, medlar and pineapple.

9 months in steel tanks, 9 months in bottle.

*Pasta and risotto with mushrooms and crustaceans, Sauteed white meat, Stewed fish*





**Montefalco Sagrantino Colle alle Macchie 2010**  
Tabarrini (Umbria, Italy)


 Sagrantino


Price: € 50.00


Score 


 Brilliant ruby red and nuances of ruby red, little transparency.

 Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of blackberry, black cherry and plum followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate, mace, leather, pink pepper and menthol.

 Tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, agreeable.

 Very persistent finish with long flavors of blackberry, plum and black cherry.

 36 months in cask, 12 months in bottle.

 *Game, Roasted meat, Stewed and braised meat, Hard cheese*





**Cavalcaonte 2013**  
Fattoria Ca' Rossa (Emilia Romagna, Italy)


 Barbera


Price: € 8.00


Score 


 Intense ruby red and nuances of purple red, little transparency.

 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of cherry, plum and blueberry followed by aromas of violet, blackberry, raspberry and cyclamen.

 Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable.

 Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, plum and raspberry.

 Aged in steel tanks.

 *Pasta with meat and mushrooms, Broiled meat and barbecue, Hard cheese*





**Sangiovese di Romagna Superiore Riserva**  
**Ripagrande 2007**  
Fattoria Ca' Rossa (Emilia Romagna, Italy)


 Sangiovese


Price: € 12.00


Score 


 Intense ruby red and nuances of garnet red, little transparency.

 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of black cherry jam, plum jam and dried violet followed by aromas of blackberry jam, vanilla, chocolate, tobacco, licorice, mace and menthol.

 Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness.

 Persistent finish with flavors of black cherry jam, plum jam and blackberry jam.

 14 months in barrique, 12 months in bottle.

 *Stuffed pasta with meat, Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed meat with mushrooms*



**Grillo 2013**  
Terre del Sole (Sicily, Italy)



Price: € 7.00

Score ◆◆◆

Pale golden yellow and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent.

Intense, clean and pleasing, starts with hints of apple, plum and almond followed by aromas of pear, hawthorn, broom and peach.

Crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors.

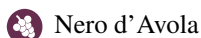
Persistent finish with flavors of apple, plum and almond.

6 months in steel tanks, 2 months in bottle.

*Fish appetizers, Pasta and risotto with crustaceans, Dairy products, Sauteed fish*



**Nero d'Avola 2013**  
Terre del Sole (Sicily, Italy)



Price: € 7.00

Score ◆◆◆

Brilliant ruby red and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency.

Intense, clean and pleasing, starts with hints of plum, black cherry and blackberry followed by aromas of violet, raspberry, blueberry and geranium.

Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors pleasing crispness.

Persistent finish with flavors of plum, black cherry and blackberry.

6 months in steel tanks, 3 months in bottle.

*Pasta with meat and mushrooms, Sauteed meat, Stewed meat*

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](mailto:Events@DiWineTaste.com).



NOT JUST WINE

## Aquavitae

Review of Grappa, Distillates and Brandy

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








**Acquavite di Vinaccia Giovane 2012**  
**Giusti Dal Col (Veneto, Italy)**  
(Distiller: Distilleria Centopercento)

Pomace of white and red berried grapes

Price: € 25.00 - 500ml

Score ◆◆◆

-  Limpid, colorless and crystalline.
-  Intense, clean and pleasing with aromas of plum, raspberry, hazelnut, pear and elder with perceptible alcohol pungency.
-  Intense flavors and perceptible alcohol pungency which tends to dissolve rapidly, pleasing roundness, evident sweetness.
-  Persistent finish with flavors of plum, hazelnut and pear.
-  Distilled in a batch steam operated alembic still.



## 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](mailto:WineParade@DiWineTaste.com) or fill in the form available at our WEB site.

| Rank |   | Wine, Producer   |
|------|---|--|
| 1    | ↗ | Adarmando 2011, Tabarrini  |
| 2    | ↘ | I Sodi di San Niccolò 2008, Castellare di Castellina                     |
| 3    | ↗ | Montiano 2011, Falesco   |
| 4    | ↗ | Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli 2009, Altesino                          |
| 5    | ↘ | Sagrantino di Montefalco Collepiano 2007, Arnaldo Caprai                 |
| 6    | ↘ | Pelago 2009, Umani Ronchi  |
| 7    | ↗ | Torgiano Rosso Riserva Rubesco Vigna Monticchio 2007, Lungarotti         |
| 8    | ↗ | Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Podium 2010, Garofoli |
| 9    | ↘ | Villa Gresti 2006, Tenuta San Leonardo                                   |
| 10   | ↘ | Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi 2007, Tedeschi    |
| 11   | ↗ | Brunello di Montalcino Vigneto Manachiara 2007, Tenute Silvio Nardi      |
| 12   | ↗ | Offida Rosso Il Grifone 2008, Tenuta Cocci Grifoni                       |
| 13   | ↘ | Collio Ribolla Gialla L'Adelchi 2012, Venica                             |
| 14   | ☆ | Trento Extra Brut Riserva Lunelli 2006, Ferrari                          |
| 15   | ☆ | Camartina 2011, Querciabella   |

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry