

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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Shall We Talk About Wine Again?

I know, I am talking about this too much. The fact is that I am watching the world of wine, of wine information - more or less competent, more or less boorish to the limit of vulgarity and insult - leaving me perplexed by reading certain accusations, most of the times unfounded and of which one does not have any competence about the subject, things said "just to say something in order to recriminate one's presence". So boring! A pathetic show, sad and useless, where everyone is talking about everything - that is, about nothing - everything but wine. Nevertheless they are all convinced to talk about wine, maybe confusing one's own vanity, a supposed competence, religions, the need to be noticed while shielding oneself behind a fundamentalist position - therefore idiot and blind - shouting words out just because they must be said with the hope of considering oneself "important". Everyone convinced to state the *ultimate verdict* while believing others will certainly *drink it* as a revealed truth.

They talk about schools of thoughts, wine making religions, wine rules and laws, about who is better in making it - wine, of course - about the ones who had the gift of enological omniscience, who has been enlightened while *walking the road to Bacchus*, who fiercely believe his own wine is the very best, whereas the wine of others is, in the best case, the absolute evil to be fought. I try so hard, I truly try to do that, only using my possibilities - of course rich of limits and ignorance - but it seems impossible to me, I cannot really understand all that *much ado about nothing*. Everyone trying so hard to put in front of their wines - both producers as well as those silly megaphones - words, suppositions, conjectures, supposed superiority, most of the cases never supported by objectively and proven facts, far before talking about their wines, as if they should justify or hide something.

All that makes me think about the wisdom of past times, a sign that, after all, these behaviors have always been part of the

debates of all times: *excusatio non petita, accusatio manifesta*. This locution, is translated as *excuse not required, evident accusation*, or more precisely, *if you don't have anything for which you should be sorry, there is no need to excuse yourself*. Some wine producers, some fierce supporters of a position - of any trend or any *belief* - look like those kids who, caught in the act of stealing cookies, have the cheek to say they were not guilty. For what reason, at the moment of tasting a wine in presence of a producer, he or she must continuously saying it is a wine made in a certain way, meeting specific wine making criteria, belonging to specific *wine making religion*, and, as such, must be classified in a certain way, before pouring in the glass and letting me taste the wine, denying my right to form my own idea, the idea I can get by listening to that wine?

I have always said this and still say it: I don't give any importance or guarantee to appellations - while I give absolute importance to the territory - certificates, religions, ideological and fundamentalist positions, fashions "coming and going", in particular when they are shown off with a violent and vulgar way, in order to "hide something else". It is an insult both to my intelligence and to my skill of wine taster, qualities that, both and with no fear, I am aware to be very limited. I don't care - in any way - a wine is *natural, organic, biodynamic, conventional, technical* or belonging to any other category, and all the words said about this "nothingness", just to impose one's mediocrity on others, makes everything dull and useless. Sadly useless. Shall we understand quality is not something set by law - as a new law is being issued, you find a way to break it - and that morality and honesty are qualities which cannot be imposed but are an intimate part of persons and their ethics? A honest producer does not need any law or rule, and has no interest in imposing anything on others in order to protect what he or she does: it is the wine which can speak for itself and for the producer.

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Behaviors and factions quickly becoming new fashions, sometimes brought back to new life, when - at their times - they were openly denied and rejected. Fashions getting a striking success and have frequently the result of distracting the attention from wine while keeping debates alive and making fierce proselytes. Positions becoming hypocrite and absolutely sad, in order to fiercely support the wine belonging to the category of "the heart" even in case it is of evident bad quality, but however becomes the *ultimate masterpiece* just because it is the son of the trendy "revealed truth". I don't like, in fact, when they put in front of wine quality the category to which it belongs to and the production technique - no matter what it is, with no exception - while presenting this aspect as a merit or, even worse, the justification to certain evident faults or excesses. Likewise, to *revive* certain wine styles, of disputable wine making quality, considered in the past unanimously of bad quality, calling them with *romantic* names while presenting it as "pure", "traditional", "healthy" and "sound". It is too far obvious everyone is interested in a healthy wine and in a viticulture respectful for the environment and ecosustainable, with no exception, including and in particular myself.

All this makes me really smile when I think about my grandfather, who has always made white wine by fermenting the must with the skins - all of the skins - while keeping them in the cask until the first racking. His wine had a deep golden yellow color and a pretty robust body if compared to a white wine. All he used in the vineyard was sulphur and crystals of copper sulfate dissolved in water, whereas in the cellar he used sulphur pills to be burnt in wine tanks and rackings. Nowadays, such a white wine, produced by a long maceration with skins, would be defined as *orange wine*, and - for the products he used - included in the category of *natural* wines, while noticing my grandfather's wine has never been oxidized nor turbid. Indeed, a turbid or oxidized wine upset him quite a lot, defining the produced as *incapable*, besides using quite "strong" dialect adjectives that, because of the limit of a language, would not be fully understood and properly translated in English. Unfortunately, time and the natural course of life, does not allow me to ask my grandfather his opinion about the fact his wine was a *natural orange wine*. Who knows what he could think about such a definition: my grandfather has always simply called the fruit of his vineyard "wine".

Antonello Biancalana



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WINE TASTING

Wine Tasting, Taste and Standardization

Every era and every time had its own standards of wine making quality, an evolutionary and enological journey which underwent deep changes

Taste for wine and beverages, likewise, for arts, culture and every other expression associated to the intimate feelings of man, undergoes continuous changes with time and develops according to social and cultural contexts of every place of the world. Wine has been no exception to this *rule* and, in the course of its millenary history, it changed according to the cultural development of taste. Applied to wine, taste and enological technology have mutually supported one to each other. Without discussing the factors associated to the form of use of wine making technology, it is undeniable it has contributed, for many aspects, to the improvement of the finished product, while affecting - in many aspects - the evolution of taste. Likewise, traditional practices and their form of use, have influenced the development of taste, also at an intellectual and sentimental level.

It is not however the case to define what is the "real" taste of wine and what is the best enological technique for making wine: in both cases this would be a show off of intellectual arrogance: in all cases should be considered the ancient saying *de gustibus non est disputandum* (there is no dispute about taste). If it is certainly wished, the existence of different taste, ideas and opinions, it certainly is unacceptable when they are imposed on others by defining them as *absolute*, *best* and *indisputable*. While noticing difference is always an invaluable richness and an endless resource for everyone, it is however undeniable that, in tastes as well as in opinions, there is a certain "agreeability", determined on a statistical basis according to an expressed majority, and which tends to define a *reference model*.

These reference models are strongly determined by cultural, historical, traditional and psychological contexts in which are being defined and definable. Likewise, also the concept of wine making quality is affected by the same factors, as well as by facts of ethic and moral type. In this sense, it is the ethics and morality of a producer to set the border between quality and productive and viticultural compromise. Every production and cultivation technique has the effect of determining the organoleptic profile of a wine, both in positive as well as in negative terms. The adoption of every technique is based on the moral and ethic orientation of every producer, as well as - of course - the personal opinion or prejudice about the technique itself. The same orientation, in the definition of quality and taste, is therefore adopted by consumers, each of them having personal references and preferences.

The reference for taste and enological quality is therefore strongly influenced by this type of choice, prejudices and orientations. In order to give an example, the use of selected yeast - having the capability of strongly orienting the organoleptic profile of a wine, just like the so called *indigenous yeast* - can be a prejudicial element in the evaluation of wine quality. Tasters and consumers openly contrary to selected yeast will tend to penalize, or to not prefer at all, those wines produced with this technique, whereas it is very likely they tend to recognize of higher quality the wines in which they are not used. Likewise, wines produced with a fermentation done by *indigenous yeast*, could be penalized and not favored by those who like the typical aromas of selected yeast.

For the sake of clearness and completeness, it should be noticed every yeast - either selected or indigenous - has in any case the capability

of orienting the organoleptic profile of a wine. It is not by chance the so called "secondary aromas" of a wine are also defined as "aromas of fermentation", just to emphasize the fundamental role of yeast, of any type, in the formation of the olfactory profile of a wine. Moreover, it is said that primary aromas of the grape are revealed by fermentation, that is by yeast, which, unavoidably, will add to the aromas of the grape its aromas as well. Finally, it should be always noticed the selection of yeast, and therefore the control of the organoleptic qualities of a wine at the end of fermentation, can be done by controlling temperature. This concept is true both for selected and indigenous yeast, that, by controlling temperature, as well as by using sulphur dioxide, undergo a radical biological change, by inhibiting or favoring the activity of specific species.

Sensorial tasting of a wine, despite it should be done objectively and according to reference quality criteria, it is undeniable it is frequently affected by personal and subjective predispositions and tastes. This condition, of course not negligible, is however capable of orienting the definition both of wine quality as well as of taste. Factors which are not only determined by prejudicial reasons towards certain styles or wine making techniques, but also by the influence of *fashions* or *imposed quality references*. For example, something which can be adapted to any other productive or stylistic factor, we could think about the *barrique fashion* and how every wine fermented or aged in the small Bordelais barrel could easily meet the favor and the appreciation of both critics and consumers. In less than twenty years, the feelings about *barrique* have radically changed, as to be rejected as well as the wines produced with this wine making tool, even in case it was used judiciously and without abusing of it.

The references for sensorial tasting, and with that, also technique, have changed in the course of the history of wine. As new fashions and tastes were introduced, the references and the techniques used for tasting a wine changed as well. In this sense, a huge help has been contributed by the research done from the beginning of the 1900s, which contributed to improve the understanding of what is a wine, also from a chemical and biological point of view. Research has in fact allowed a more rigorous definition of sensorial tasting methods, by allowing it to abandon, for certain aspects, the empirical methods - based on simple, however important, observations - therefore allowing the understanding of the interaction among each gustatory and tactile stimuli in the physiology of taste. Of course, we are not going to state in the past they were not capable of tasting a wine, but it is however undeniable the result of researches and studies have allowed the improvement both of technique



Fashion and wine: the endless challenge of whites and reds

and understanding.

A process concerning every phenomenon about knowledge and the perception of the world in which we live in: we could think, for example, that before the extraordinary intuitions of Galileo Galilei, the world was considered to be the center of a system in which the sun was revolving around it. Likewise, today we know that, for example, effervescence in sparkling wines is produced by carbon dioxide, as well as we know that ethyl alcohol is produced by yeast by converting sugar. A better understanding of the phenomena involved in the production of wine and its evolution over time, has therefore been fundamental for the understanding of sensorial and organoleptic tasting. This also brought to the mutual influence of the two disciplines: production of wine is frequently made according to the criteria of sensorial tasting in order to meet specific parameters.

The same influence is given, maybe in a more substantial way, by *fashions* and trends of consumption; not only in order to satisfy simple marketing needs, therefore ensuring a better profit, but also in order to conform to specific wine making styles. If we observe the last twenty years of wine production, in particular, the references of quality set both by critics and consumers, the latter frequently influenced by critics themselves, they have strongly determined wine production. Fashions coming and going, most of the times repeating after some years, unavoidably set new reference criteria also altering the sensorial evaluation of a wine. In fact, it should be said, it is inappropriate to set an absolute reference for wine quality, just because it is mainly expressed through senses, therefore, in continuous evolution and determined by subjective and cultural factors of every period.

The history of wine is the witness of how much fashions and trends of every time are destined to born, grow up and, finally, to disappear, therefore coming back to a new life, even denying their decay. We have in fact seen the era of white wines, followed by the one of red wines, the return of white wines and then of reds, in a virtually endless chasing which does not seem to end. Likewise, if today the so called *natural* wines are having an undeniable moment of notoriety - while noticing up to few years ago they were considered in a truly different way - they will unavoidably be destined to a lower appreciation as soon as a new fashion will enter the world of wine. It should be said fashions - all fashions, including those concerning wine - born, live, develop and then are destined to an unavoidable decay in specific *social and cultural contexts*, also defining strict criteria for sensorial evaluation, strongly affected by factors considered as *absolute* however not always accepted by other as such.

The concrete risk which may happen in these case is the definition of a standardization of taste, something happening not only for wine, as all styles and production techniques - with no exception - tend to give the wine recognizable and identifying organoleptic qualities. Technological wines are clearly recognizable since the very beginning of tasting, likewise, wines belonging to an *artisan* production style can be easily recognized as such. In fact, it takes a quick observation of the glass, as well as a quick evaluation of aromas in order to understand - even superficially - the productive style of every wine. The preference for a specific wine style, a legitimate choice and behavior, of course, is a serious risk for the taster, as this will make the taster judge certain wines better than others, because they belong to his or her favorite style, by excluding the others prejudicially, also in case they are produced with an acceptable quality.

Standardization in fact represents for the taster one of the worst pitfalls for the reliability of his or her job. While it should be recognized to fashions and trends of every time a fundamental role in the formation of a reference taste in every social and cultural context, this should not influence - in any case - the evaluation of a wine in case its goal is be-

yond the simple consumption. These are considerations that, of course, do not have any influence in consumers' evaluation of a wine who, legitimately, determine the quality and agreeability of a wine according to their taste and without considering any technical factor. In conclusion, this does not mean consumers' opinion about wine is not reliable or useful: indeed, it contributes to the definition of the wine making model which best reflects the taste of every period and therefore it should be carefully considered.

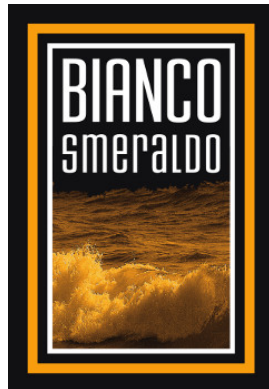


Wines of the Month

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



Vermentino di Gallura Bianco Smeraldo 2010
Un Mare Di Vino (Sardinia, Italy)

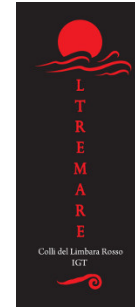
Grapes: Vermentino

Price: € 14.50

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Vermentino di Gallura Bianco Smeraldo shows an intense greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of pear, apple and peach followed by aromas of plum, hawthorn, pineapple, broom, lemon and almond. 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 pear, peach and almond. Vermentino di Gallura Bianco Smeraldo ages in steel tanks.

Food match: Fried fish, Risotto and pasta with crustaceans and fish, Sauteed fish, Dairy products



Oltremare 2010

Un Mare Di Vino (Sardinia, Italy)

Grapes: Carignano, Merlot, Cabernet Franc

Price: € 26.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

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

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



Jazz 2009

Ferlino (Tuscany, Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese (37%), Merlot (32%), Cabernet Franc (26%), Petit Verdot (5%)

Price: € 25.50

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Jazz shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of black cherry, plum and black currant followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, vanilla, chocolate, mace, bell pepper and eucalyptus. 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 cherry, plum and black currant. Jazz ages for 18 months in barrique, 8 months in steel tanks and for at least 8 months in bottle.

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



Tango 2009
Ferlino (Tuscany, Italy)

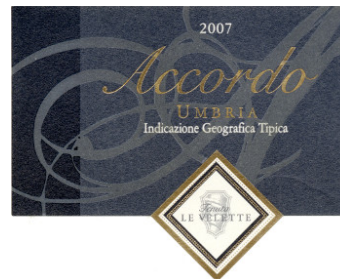
Grapes: Merlot (58%), Cabernet Franc (25%), Petit Verdot (17%)

Price: € 30.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Tango shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of black currant, black cherry and plum followed by aromas of blueberry, violet, vanilla, bell pepper, peony, chocolate and eucalyptus. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of black currant, black cherry and plum. Tango ages for 18 months in barrique followed by 8 months of aging in bottle.

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



Accordo 2007
Le Vellee (Umbria, Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 8.70

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Accordo shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of plum, black cherry and violet followed by aromas of blueberry, vanilla, chocolate, tobacco, mace and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry. Accordo ages for 12 months in barrique followed by 12 months of aging in bottle.

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



Orvieto Classico Superiore Lunato 2011
Le Vellee (Umbria, Italy)

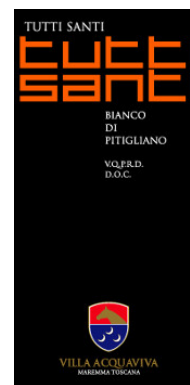
Grapes: Grechetto (40%), Procanico (20%), Malvasia Bianca (20%), Verdello (15%), Drupeggio (5%)

Price: € 6.60

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Orvieto Classico Superiore Lunato shows a pale golden yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of apple, plum and hawthorn followed by aromas of pear, broom, honey, almond, citrus fruits 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 plum, apple and honey. Orvieto Classico Superiore Lunato ages in steel tanks.

Food match: Stuffed pasta, Roasted white meat, Roasted fish, Stewed fish



Tutti Santi 2010
Villa Acquaviva (Tuscany, Italy)

Grapes: Trebbiano Toscano, Malvasia Bianca, Verdello

Price: € 12.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Tutti Santi shows an intense amber yellow color and nuances of amber yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of quince, plum and almond followed by aromas of peach jam, hawthorn, honey, citrus fruit peel, raisin, vanilla and nail polish. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and round, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing sweet hint. The finish is persistent with flavors of quince, almond and raisin. Tutti Santi is made from late harvested grapes,

ages for 12 months in barrique followed by 24 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Roasted white meat, Cheese, Roasted fish



Morellino di Scansano Riserva Bracaleta 2006
Villa Acquaviva (Tuscany, Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese (85%), Alicante, Malvasia Nera (15%)

Price: € 16.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Morellino di Scansano Riserva Bracaleta 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 cherry, plum and dried violet followed by aromas of raspberry, blueberry, dried rose, vanilla, tobacco, cocoa and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing crispness. The finish is persistent with flavors of cherry, raspberry and plum. Morellino di Scansano Riserva Bracaleta ages in cask.

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



Donna Sabina 2008
Villa Sobrano (Umbria, Italy)

Grapes: Grchetto

Price: € 12.50

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Donna Sabina shows a brilliant straw yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of apple, plum and hazelnut followed by aromas of pear, mature peach, medlar, broom, hawthorn, honey and hints of vanilla. 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 apple, plum and hazelnut. Donna Sabina ages for 12 months in cask followed by 12 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Stuffed pasta, Roasted white meat, Roasted fish, Fish soups



Bartolomeo 2007
Villa Sobrano (Umbria, Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese (50%), Merlot (50%)

Price: € 13.50

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Bartolomeo shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of plum, black currant and black cherry followed by aromas of dried violet, vanilla, tobacco, green bean, chocolate, mace and eucalyptus. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and black currant. Bartolomeo ages in barrique for 14 months followed by 24 months of aging in bottle.

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



Colli di Luni Vermentino Sur Lie 2011
Arrigoni (Liguria, Italy)

Grapes: Vermentino

Price: € 16.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Colli di Luni Vermentino Sur Lie 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, plum and honey followed by aromas of hawthorn, citrus fruits, broom, almond, pear and mature peach. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and a sweet hint, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, slight effervescence. The finish is persistent with flavors of apple, plum and pear. Colli di Luni Vermentino Sur Lie ages in cement tanks.

Food match: Roasted white meat, Roasted fish, Stuffed pasta



**Cinqueterre Tramonti 2011
Arrigoni (Liguria, Italy)**

Grapes: Bosco (60%), Albarola, Vermentino (40%)

Price: € 16.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Cinqueterre Tramonti shows a pale straw yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of apple, plum and hawthorn followed by aromas of citrus fruits, broom, almond, pear, fennel, mineral and hints of iodine. 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 apple, plum and pear. Cinqueterre Tramonti ferments and ages in barrique for 4 months.

Food match: Stuffed pasta, Roasted white meat, Roasted fish, Stewed fish



**Valpolicella Ripasso Col de la Bastia 2010
Fattori (Veneto, Italy)**

Grapes: Corvina (65%), Corvinone (15%), Rondinella (10%), Altre Uve (10%)

Price: € 28.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Valpolicella Ripasso Col de la Bastia shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of black cherry, blackberry and plum followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate, mace and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, blackberry and plum. Valpolicella Ripasso Col de la Bastia ages in cask.

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



**Amarone della Valpolicella Col de la Bastia 2010
Fattori (Veneto, Italy)**

Grapes: Corvina (65%), Corvinone (15%), Rondinella (10%), Altre Uve (10%)

Price: € 35.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Amarone della Valpolicella Col de la Bastia shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of blackberry, plum and black cherry followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, mace, chocolate and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of blackberry, plum and black cherry. Amarone della Valpolicella Col de la Bastia ages in cask for about 24 months.

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

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

Lodi and Traditional Balsamic Vinegar

A love story for traditional balsamic vinegar, magnificent condiment born in Modena, land of Emilia, and then adopted in Lodi

One of the discriminating factors between falling in love and love is time. It is easy to fall in love with traditional balsamic vinegar, however it takes more to love it, just as the same when you decide to dive in the deep after having been fascinated by the beauty of the sea. After having met vinegar, even by chance, it takes culture, curiosity and an open mind, the will to understand the meaning of long time, patience of waiting, the will to mix a piece of your vital processes with this product, taking its origin from nature which however needs attention and care (just like us), in order to make the decision to take it with us in our journey.

This is what happens to a young accountant with a degree from Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) and having a pretty marginal interest for wine and its products, when Modena's balsamic vinegar crosses his way. From that meeting born an initial and discrete interest, however enough to light the sparkle of a growing curiosity. It is then revealed a story dated back to the fifteenth century, of a food the brides of the higher society of Modena and Reggio Emilia brought with them as a dowry. A story made of ancient traditions and that patriarchal families passed from a generation to another, passing the invaluable heritage of the set of small barrels required to make vinegar according to the recipe every family secretly kept as a distinctive mark. A truly fascinating story which led our young accountant to write his own story to be added to such an important story: an attempt of personal production (and with the risk of ending up being ambitious) in Lodi, his city, in Lombardy, Italy, in order to replicate the legend of Modena's balsamic vinegar.

He studies a lot, he gets the wine and three small barrels (the minimum number required by vinegar productive laws) and begins his adventure. Life sometimes does not care about our will or our expectations, sometimes has different plans for us. It will be then his father, with his sorrow, to let his son's dreams come true, made of projects and sketches, in order not to send them in the dark of a tormenting sorrow. It may seem not that much, but it is the only way left to him in order to continue considering himself a father, to take care of his son's dreams and to put all of his efforts in those projects and, in my opinion, the will of passing to his granddaughters the interest for ancient traditions. He has no doubts: he sets up a proper loft, with no heating system, as set by the production disciplinary and, after having completed it, also sets up seven barrels made of different woods and with a decreasing size. In the bigger barrel will be kept the younger product, in the smaller one the mature vinegar. A set of barrels made like this: cherry wood (50 liters), ash wood (40 liters), oak (30 liters), acacia (25 liters), mulberry-tree (15 liters), juniper wood (15 liters), oak (10 liters) and destined to the evolution and aging of vinegar.

He contacts a vinegar maker in Modena and therefore gets some cooked must - obtained from the indigenous Trebbiano di Spagna grape - which will be kept in the barrel, currently defined in Modena as "*Badessa*" (Italian for "abbess"), the bigger of the set and destined to feed and support all the other ones. The method, in fact, provides for the integration of the liquid fractions evaporated with time or drawn off from the last barrel (the smaller of the set) by replacing it with the product of the preceding barrels, with an equal quantity of vinegar. The system is



The set of barrels used for the production of traditional balsamic vinegar

similar to the Soleras method used for the production of Sherry (Jerez) or Marsala.

After having obtained the supervision of the productive phases, production techniques and the control of the many processes, the story started by the son can finally be written, with scruple, daily attention and a loving care. Finally, traditional balsamic vinegar, born in Modena and adopted in Lodi, reaches in 2009 the goal of the minimum aging of 12 years and it is now ready for tasting by drawing it off from the smaller barrel. Here they are the organoleptic notes I written in its identifying card, fruit of the very personal tasting I did as a sommelier and without any claim of being official. In fact, in this case it would be needed the title of traditional balsamic vinegar expert taster, a title I don't possess. It is just a simple attempt, made with the humbleness of a passionate lover of His Majesty Modena's traditional balsamic vinegar:

Appearance: dark and brilliant brown color, very limpid, good and syrupy density;

Smell: fine aromas, pleasing, balanced and persistent supported by a good acidity promptly balanced by a round touch;

Taste: sweet and sour, harmonic; the attack is acid and seems to prevail over the rest, rapidly replaced by round flavors and producing a balance for a very long time in which can be perceived balsamic and spicy flavors with a correspondence to the aromas perceived to the nose;

Overall: a product still young and in evident evolution, with a strong attack followed by a round sensation on a pleasing acidity hard to forget.

Our traditional balsamic vinegar produced in Lodi, has something more than its noble brother of Modena. To the taste-olfactory sensations is added the charm of the heart: the meeting of someone capable of being a generous and discreet fellow, capable of sharing his life and to mix up personal stories, different and sometimes complicate, in an unique vital project in continuous evolution, thanks to a mutual exchange of energy and emotions. For this reason, it cannot be, and does not want to be, considered in any way as a commercial product, as it is just a product of personal sentiments and of disinterested relationships in order to show, once again, the strong connection between wine culture and history of man.

Rino Lombardo

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 Morellino Essenza di Nero 2004
Villa Acquaviva (Tuscany, Italy)
 (Distiller: Distilleria Nannoni)

Raw matter: Pomace of Morellino di Scansano

Price: € 35.00 - 50cl

Score: ◆◆◆

Acquavite di Morellino Essenza di Nero is colorless, limpid and crystalline. The nose denotes intense, clean and pleasing aromas of black cherry, violet, hazelnut, plum and raspberry, with almost imperceptible alcohol pungency. In the mouth has intense flavors with alcohol pungency which tends to dissolve rapidly, good correspondence to the nose, pleasing roundness, balanced sweetness. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and hazelnut. Acquavite di Morellino Essenza di Nero is produced with discontinuous steam operated alembic still. Alcohol 42%.



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 | ↔ | Avvoltore 2009, Moris Farms (Italy) |
| 2 | ↔ | Trento Talento Brut Riserva 2007, Letrari (Italy) |
| 3 | ↗ | San Leonardo 2006, Tenuta San Leonardo (Italy) |
| 4 | ↘ | Franciacorta Pas Dosé Récemment Dégorgé 2006, Cavalleri (Italy) |
| 5 | ↗ | Confini 2007, Lis Neris (Italy) |
| 6 | ↘ | Sagrantino di Montefalco Collepiano 2007, Arnaldo Caprai (Italy) |
| 7 | ↗ | Trento Brut Riserva Methius 2006, Dorigati (Italy) |
| 8 | ↘ | Adarmando 2009, Tabarrini (Italy) |
| 9 | ↗ | Camartina 2008, Querciabella (Italy) |
| 10 | ↗ | Brunello di Montalcino 2007, Donatella Cinelli Colombini (Italy) |
| 11 | ↗ | Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Podium 2010, Garofoli (Italy) |
| 12 | ↘ | Batàr 2008, Querciabella (Italy) |
| 13 | ↗ | Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi 2007, Tedeschi (Italy) |
| 14 | ↗ | Offida Rosso Il Grifone 2006, Tenuta Cocci Grifoni (Italy) |
| 15 | ↘ | Gran Masetto 2007, Endrizzi (Italy) |

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry