

# DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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## Touring and Looking for Bacchus

One of the many positive effects of the renewed interests for wine is the increasing curiosity of people about this subject and, with that, to the other subjects which are related to it, such as food and wine traditions and folklore, paying much attention, or, at least, trying to pay more attention, on what it is being eaten and on its quality. The ones who love nice wine and quality wines, also love nice cooking and eating quality foods; the ones who are aware of “wise drinking”, little but good, seem not to be affected by the “temptations” of fast foods, quick and less attentive, and certainly less healthy.

This trend, both to wise drinking and to wise eating, has contributed to give tourism a real and proper boost, in particular to those peripheral areas near artistic cities, incredibly rich in traditional, enological and gastronomical patrimonies. It is more and more happening that in the plans and the journeys of people, they take some time in visiting historical and artistic cities, as well as taking some time in visiting traditional places near to them, in order to know and discover gastronomical and enological cultures and traditions of those places. This trend allowed many receptive structures to specifically organize things in order to offer the possibility of appreciating the nice food of their lands.

Even wineries worked towards getting the advantages of these opportunities: since many years there is a real and proper increasing number of consumers who visit production sites of their preferred wines, wineries happily keep their doors open to people, something that, it must be observed, has always been part of the welcoming traditions of wineries, people can realize themselves how wineries work and produce their wines, breathing the air of those places, and, at the end of the visit, getting back to their houses with an enriched cultural knowledge. Moreover, wineries of the many countries of the world got organized and set a specific day of the year, mostly in holidays, where they open their doors to people, offering them their wines matched to local foods, as well as organizing guided tours to wineries’ production structures. These events, it is now a concrete fact, are getting more and more successful each passing year.

The revaluation of the least renowned wines and, often, produced in pretty small and unknown areas, away from important cities and therefore scarcely visited by people, are having an unexpected moment of glory thanks to the wines which are being produced in those places since ever. Thanks to wine and to the interest people have in getting to know them better, even the so

called “lesser areas”, rural and unknown areas, had the chance to be properly reevaluated; new structures have been built with this explicit goal and helping, as a consequence, the local economies as well. Along with the wines of these places, and if one goes there for drinking, it always and inevitably ends up eating something, had the same opportunity typical gastronomical products as well, some of them were even disappeared, they have been reevaluated and offered to visitors. All that is, of course, an extraordinary and important event, positive and noble, in a world which is going more and more towards the sad homologation of things and habits, with that, unfortunately, gastronomical traditions as well, it is amazing to know all that is useful to the revaluation of the precious and fundamental local cultures and traditions, to be certainly considered as real and proper monuments of our societies.

Reevaluating traditions and products of places also means having the availability of a broader choice of products and opportunities, in every aspect, a good way to escape from routine and to be free, at last, of choosing, a choice inspired by consciousness and not imposed. The so called “wine tours” are certainly welcome, as well as welcome are the opportunities which allow consumers to know new places and new products, which allow them to enrich their culture and their freedom of choice. Moreover, what way would be better, in getting to know anything, than going to meet and to appreciate it in the places where it originated, developed and valued? Lastly, by visiting places

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which are interesting, hopefully, in an enological point of view and therefore the main reason for the visit, will allow to discover other and interesting aspects one could not even imagine.

As summertime is about to come, it is probable that anyone is thinking on how to spend their vacations, people will already have planned what places and what areas are going to be visited in their journeys; by carefully considering the routes, they will certainly realize they will happen to travel in many places and areas which are certainly interesting according to an enological point of view, a good reason to stop by, contemplating the view of those places, hopefully in company of a good glass of local wine.

## MailBox

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

*In the editorial "Bubbles War" published in the issue 7, April 2003, there is a mention about Franciacorta wines and the fact that they are good. Unfortunately I do not have much information about Franciacortas. Are these wines defined as "spumante"? What are the most typical Franciacortas?*

**Sang-Hun Chi – Busan (South Korea)**

Franciacorta wines, produced in the area having the same name in Lombardy, near Brescia (Italy), are certainly to be considered among the best wines of Italy, because of their quality which is now, in general terms, universally considered as high. According to the Italian law, every wine having carbon dioxide and a minimal pressure of 3 atmospheres at a temperature of 20°C, is defined as "spumante". No matter how Franciacortas, according to a simple point of view, have these characteristics, they cannot be defined, according to a specific Italian law, as spumante, as this definition is generic and reductive, but exclusively and uniquely "Franciacorta". These wines are produced with the method of refermentation in bottle, in the Franciacorta area defined as *Metodo Franciacorta*, with *Pinot Noir*, *Chardonnay* and

*Pinot Blanc* grapes, with the exception of the *Satèn* style which is produced only with white berried grapes (Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc). Production times for the non vintage styles requires a period of at least 25 months, at least 18 of refermentation in bottle and in contact with lees, whereas vintage Franciacortas require a minimum of 37 months, at least 30 of refermentation in bottle. The styles of Franciacorta being produced are: *Non Dosato* (or *Pas Dosè*, *Dosage Zéro*, *Nature*) which does not have any dosage and therefore it is very dry; *Extra Brut* (up to 6 grams of residual sugar per liter); *Brut* (sugar less than 15 grams/liter); *Extra Dry* (sugar from 12 and 20 grams/liter); *Sec* or *Dry* (sugar from 17 to 35 grams/liter); *Demi-sec* (sugar from 33 to 50 grams/liter). It should be observed that Franciacortas are also produced as *Rosé* and every style can be, in the best years, vintage.



*I love white wines and in particular Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. I like to try these wines from every country of the world and from any winery as well. I noticed Chardonnays are usually aged in barrique whereas this is rare for Sauvignon Blanc. Why? Is there any specific reason for that?*

**Dennis Rice – Modesto, California (USA)**

Chardonnay, besides being the most cultivated grape in the world, is also extremely versatile and *workable*; this characteristic has practically made it famous in every country of the world because allowed wine makers to create wines in many ways. The same cannot be said for Sauvignon Blanc, a grape having completely different characteristics from Chardonnay, and thanks to its peculiarities, in particular in its aroma, it does not allow the same production "freedom". The enchanting aromas of Sauvignon Blanc are rich, charming and pleasing, they recall flower, fruit, in particular tropical fruit, and the aging in oak would drastically change these aromas. Moreover Sauvignon Blanc is more acid than Chardonnay, therefore an aging in oak would make the wine not much balanced, provided it is not being produced with pretty ripe grapes in order to produce an adequate quantity of alcohol. Chardonnay cannot certainly have the same aromatic strength of Sauvignon Blanc and therefore added aromas of wood are usually a good support and, when used in a balanced way, they do not disturb the aromas of the grape, however and certainly present. It should be noticed and remembered there are many producers in the world that decide, in the aim of producing particular styles of wine, to age Sauvignon Blanc in oak, as well as producers that prefer to avoid the aging in wood for Chardonnay. As always, it is however a matter of personal tastes.

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## Spain

The long enological tradition has always marked this country, here wine and grape have been witnesses of the history of these lands for more than two thousands years

Spain is, indisputably, one of those countries that made both history and success of European wine in the world, a role which certainly has since many centuries. For many centuries Spanish wines, in particular, the renowned Jerez, or Xérès, as it is called by French, or Sherry, the usual name known in England and in the English speaking countries, have lived moments of glory that made these wines famous in many countries. The first thing that is amazingly observed in Spain, as a wine country, is its high vocation for local grapes, in this country seems the huge "invasion" of the so called "international" grapes did not have a clear success, as opposed to other countries of the world. An aspect that, alone, makes Spain a special country, not only for the good wines produced there. Despite of the fact wine is part of the traditions of these lands since thousands years, in case we do not consider the fame and the peculiarity of Jerez, however quality production is something which was adopted by Spain only in recent times. The new and reborn Spanish wines are fully expressed in its generous red wines, in particular the ones from Rioja, and, as always, in the confirmation of that extraordinary wine, Jerez, unique and enchanting in its genre.

The history of enology in Spain has pretty ancient origins. First evidences about viticulture are dated back to a period from 4000 BC to 3000 BC, whereas the first productions of wine are dated back to the era of the Carthaginian occupation, in the second century before Christ. When Romans conquered the lands of Spain occupied by Carthaginians, in 206 BC at the end of the second Punic war, there also are the first evidences about wine trading from Spain to the city of Rome. At those times Spanish wine was also traded, besides Italy, in France, in the Loire Valley, in Britain, in Normandy and in England, mainly distributed to Roman soldiers in charge of guarding the borders of Germany. Spanish wine was also mentioned, in their writings, by Columella, Publius Ovidi Nasonis in his *Ars Amatoria* and, in particular, by Pliny the Elder and Martial who particularly exalted the wine of Tarragon.



Fig. 1: Spain

After the fall of the Roman Empire and the consequent occupation of Visigoths, there are not sure evidences about the viticulture and production of wine in Spain, however it is believed that it continued even during this period. After the overthrow of Visigoths by Moors in 711, the production of wine, surprisingly, did not suffered any limitation because of the Islamic Laws observed by Moors, indeed, the production of wine continued and the trade was taxed. With the conquer of Spanish lands by Christians, about the half of thirteenth century, exports of Spanish wines to the countries of Europe were resumed, in particular to England. During those times the quality of Spanish wine was rather unpredictable, from ordinary to excellent; what was interesting in Spanish wine, according to a commercial point of view, was the fact they were produced in a rather warm area and therefore they were rich in alcohol, a characteristic that made these wines to be preferred for the adulteration of wines produced in other areas and low in alcohol.

In the beginning of the 1500's, the success of the famous Jerez wine started to increase, also thanks to the privileged position of this city, near the Atlantic Ocean and therefore an easy stop for mercantile ships, and it rapidly spread, in particular in English courts. The success of Jerez was however connected to the alternate political events both of Spain and England, the main consumer, and English, as a consequence of the harsh relations they had with Spain because of the wars between the two countries, imposed heavy taxes on Spanish wines. The fame of Jerez wine was reestablished only after 1820, thanks to the zealous work of some businessmen, after a long period of commercial crisis in the country. Malaga wines also benefited from Jerez wine's success and together they succeeded in becoming more popular than Porto and Madeira wines.

Jerez probably was the only Spanish wine that got most the attention; around the half of 1800's, many chroniclers reported about the approximate and ordinary wine making practices related to still wines, something which identified those wines to anything but quality. Production techniques for still wines in Spain were at those times differentiated between south and north, whereas in the northern area the keeping of wine in casks were preferred, in the southern area wine was left in earthenware containers, moreover, in Spain they were used to keep wine in pig skins treated with resin which usually altered wine. These production techniques could not make anyone think about a good progress and development of the enology of the country. Just like in any other country of Europe, at the end of the 1800's appeared phylloxera and oidium, greatly devastating the viticulture of the country, damaging many areas and it took many years before the activity could be resumed. Damages of phylloxera were so high that many of the local grapes varieties of Spain extinguished.

When Spanish enology recovered from the damages of phylloxera, they introduced in the country the production of a new style of wine, sparkling wines, made with the classic method, defined as *Cava*, and they become part of the most important wine aspect of Spain; currently Spain is the first producer of the world, in terms of quantity, for this type of wine. In 1926 was defined the very first region of appellation of origin of Spain, Rioja, whereas in 1932 was introduced in the country the first Spanish

system for quality production. In 1933 Jerez was recognized as a region of appellation of origin followed in 1937 by Malaga. After a period of recession, during the 1930's and 1940's, both because of the internal political events and because of the World War Two, in the 1950's Spanish enology showed new signs of impulse, mainly characterized by the production of huge quantities of ordinary wines made by cooperatives. Quality production in Spain restarted in the beginning of the 1980's, when economic and political conditions allowed a solid development of opportunities in the country as well as the huge investments of wineries in the aim of starting a stable condition for the production of quality wine. During the last twenty years Spain showed the world to have great enological potentialities; its wines continue to be known and appreciated wherever in the world, in particular, red wines.

## Spanish Quality System

Spanish quality system, which is called *Denominación de Origen* (Appellation of Origin), abbreviated as *DO*, was introduced in the country for the first time in 1932 and it was subsequently revised and modified in 1970. The institute which is in charge for the regulation of production areas having appellation of origin status is *INDO*, *Instituto Nacional de Denominaciones de Origen* (National Institute for Appellations of Origin) whose headquarters are in Madrid. The system shows similarities with the analogous French (AOC) and Italian (DOC) systems, they recognize delimited production areas, cultivation practices and wine production techniques, yields per hectare, minimum periods of aging before being released in the market, as well as specific norms about labeling.

About 50% of Spanish production belongs to the *DO* category and each of them is supervised by a proper *Consejo Regulador* which is in charge of verifying the production procedures as well as evaluating every wine with the purpose of making sure it has the right prerequisites in order to be recognized as *DO*. The categories of quality for Spanish wines are as follows:

- **Vino de Mesa, VdM** - Table wine produced with grapes cultivated in different regions of the country
- **Vino de la Tierra, VdIT** - Wine produced in a delimited area, usually larger than DOs. It is the equivalent, in general terms, of Italian's IGT (Typical Geographic Indication) or French's *Vin de Pays*
- **Denominación de Origen, DO** - Wine produced in a region having appellation of origin status which is regulated by specific laws
- **Denominación de Origen Calificada, DOCa** - (Appellation of Qualified Origin) Wine produced in a region having appellation of origin status of high quality. This is the highest level of the Spanish system and it was introduced in 1991. Currently the only region belonging to this category is Rioja.

In the labels of red wines are usually found some indications, and according to Spanish wine laws, they state the aging period

the wine had before being released in the market. Aging can be done in wood or steel containers as well as in bottle.

- **Joven** - Young wine which is usually aged for one year
- **Crianza** - When referred to reds, it is a wine which is aged for two years and at least one of these in cask. When referred to white or rose wines, it means an aging in cask for at least six months. The term *Crianza* is usually regulated by every DO and they usually set aging practices. The term *Sin Crianza* stated in the label indicates a wine which did not have a minimal period of aging and therefore was bottled young
- **Reserva** - Indicates quality wines produced in particular and favorable years. When referred to reds, this indicates a wine which had an aging of at least three years and at least one of these was in cask. When it is referred to white or rose wines, it indicates an aging period of at least two years and at least six months of this period in cask
- **Gran Reserva** - Quality wines produced in particular and favorable years. When referred to red wines, indicates a minimal aging of five years and at least two of them in cask. When referred to white or rose wines, indicates an aging period of at least four years and at least six months of this period in cask

## Production Areas

Spain has the largest area cultivated with vines of the world, however it ranks as the third wine producing country, after Italy and France, because of the high quantity of old vineyards, with pretty low yields, planted in arid or not much fertile areas. Despite of the fact Spain is mainly known for its red wines, it is however a white grape the one to be cultivated the most in the country, *Airén*, particularly common in the central plains of Mancha, south from Madrid, which is generally used to make rather ordinary wines. A characteristic of Spain, according to an enological point of view, is represented by the remarkable use of local grapes they do for making wine; in Spain the phenomenon of the so called "international grapes" seems not to have never had particular or evident success.

The most representative grape of Spain, concerning red berried species, certainly is Tempranillo, which is used for the production of the full bodied wines of Rioja, whereas among white berried species, the most representative one is Albariño which is used to make interesting white wines and with nice aromas, in the Rías Baixas region. Spanish enology is still and strongly bound to its traditions, one of them consists in aging wines in casks for very long period of time, even more than twenty years. It should be however observed that because of the general changes of people's taste, and therefore of the market demands, in Spain are now common the more "modern" practices, even here, just like everywhere else, wines having a more fresh and fruity character are preferred better.

## Rioja

This area is certainly the most renowned one of Spain, in particular for the production of red wines, full bodied, rich and complex. Currently Rioja is the only Spanish region which is entitled to the *Denominación de Origen Calificada, DOCa* status, the highest level of the Spanish quality system. Despite of the fact red wines are the ones which made Rioja famous for more than a century, in this region are also produced white and rose wines. Rioja is located to the northern area of the country, at about one hundred kilometers (63 miles) away from the Atlantic coast and goes along the Ebro river. Vineyards are cultivated in a pretty large plain which is located at an altitude of 450 meters (1476 feet), mainly cultivated, as for red grapes, with Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo and Graciano, and, as for white grapes, with Viura, also known as Macabeo, Malvasia and Garnacha Blanca. Rioja is divided in three subareas, Rioja Alavesa, Rioja Alta and Rioja Baja, the first two to be considered of higher interest.

Most of the production is oriented towards red wines, produced with Tempranillo grape, which are usually aged in wood for rather long period of time, faithful the common enological tradition of the country, just like no other part of the world. Even though the practice of long aging in cask is getting less and less used in favor of shorter periods, some producers still prefer to age their wines for long periods, sometimes even longer than four years. These long aging times give wines the typical character, complex and “earthy” aromas as well as body. In Rioja the same procedure is also used for white wines, aged in wood for long times and followed by a further aging in bottle, however it should be observed that some producers, currently most of them, do not age their white wines in casks therefore favoring the typical crisp and fruity character.

## Ribera del Duero

In this region are mainly produced red wines with Tinto Fino, also known as Tinta del País, by many considered as a genetic mutation of Tempranillo grape. The region is located north from Madrid, about 200 kilometers away (125 miles), and goes along the course of Duero river. In this area are not reported relevant production of white wine, however it should be observed that here is produced a modest quantity of rose wine, generally obtained with Garnacha grape, which is mainly consumed locally. The red wines of this region are also to be considered as the best examples of Spain: full bodied, concentrated and rich. Here, just like in Rioja, the long aging time in cask is a common and used practice. It should be however considered that casks, just like in Rioja, are never used when new and the wood used to make them is usually from the United States of America.

## Priorato

This small wine region, having ancient enological traditions, is to be considered among the most interesting ones of Spain. It is located near Tarragon, in Catalonia, facing the Mediterranean sea. The region is getting more and more recognized as a qual-

ity wine area, mainly for its red wines, and its wines are often looked for more than the ones from Rioja or Ribera del Duero. The grapes mainly cultivated in the region are all red, in particular Cariñena, known in France as Carignan and in Italy as Carignano, and Garnacha, as well as small vineyards cultivated with Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. Wines produced in Priorato are rather full bodied and robust, alcoholic and tannic, concentrated and rich, produced with grapes coming from vineyards producing pretty low yields. Contrary to Rioja and Ribera del Duero, wines of Priorato are not classified as *Crianza*, *Reserva* and *Gran Reserva* and they are usually aged in French oak instead of American oak.

## Rías Baixas

Contrary to most of the wine regions of Spain, this area is particularly known for its white wines, as opposed to the other areas which are mainly oriented to the production of red wines. Here the most representative grape is *Albariño* which does not have rivals in terms of popularity. Every bottle produced in Rías Baixas practically has the name of this grape stated in the label. The considerable worldwide success of the wines of this region were mainly determined by new and modern wine making practices and, in particular, by the fact of aging and fermenting wines in steel tanks instead of wood containers, therefore fully favoring the interesting and pleasing characteristics of *Albariño*. The area is located north from Portugal, near the Atlantic coast and it is part of the Galicia region.

In Spain the Albariño grape is practically cultivated in Rías Baixas only and it is almost absent in all the other regions. The main characteristics of the wines produced with this grape are a prominent and pleasing aromaticity, as well as having very agreeable flavors, are produced and aged in steel tanks and should be drunk, in order to better appreciate their best characteristics, when young.

## Penedès

The region of Penedès represents, as a matter of fact, an exception in the Spanish enology. This interesting area of Catalonia, near Barcelona, is characterized by a rather varied wine production and, as opposed to the other wine regions of the country, here are found a relevant quantity of “international” grapes. The most representative wine which certainly marks Penedès is *Cava*, a sparkling wine produced with the classic method. The production of *Cava* in this region is rather old, the first sparkling wines made with the classic method were produced in 1872, and these are the wines which made this region famous in the world. Cavas are mainly produced with Xarel-lo, Parellada and Macabeo, three local white berried grapes, although Chardonnay is getting more and more used. These grapes are also used for the production of still wines. Moreover, there also is a style to be considered as a rarity: *Cava Rosé*, whose color is obtained by Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha and Monastrell grapes, used alone or together.

The Penedès region also produces good and interesting still wines, both white and red, obtained by local and international grapes. The most cultivated white berried grapes in the region are

the one already mentioned for the production of Cava, whereas red berried grapes include Cariñena, Garnacha, Monastrell, Ull de Llebre, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

## Jerez

This area, located in Andalusia, in southern Spain, is famous for the production of the excellent and charming fortified wine which is named after the city where it is mainly produced. Talking about Jerez, or Xérès or Sherry, as it is commonly known respectively in France and in England, tributing this extraordinary wine the proper and right honors, which lived glorious moments in the past, would certainly need a proper and better explication. Sadly, Jerez is currently to be considered as one of the most underrated wines of the world, it is only in recent times its production is experiencing an impulse, indeed this is a wine that would certainly deserve a better consideration. These wines are incredibly complex, rich and produced with specific and amazing methods which give them truly unique characteristics. Jerez wines are available in many styles, from elegant *Finos* to charming *Olorosos*. Among fino styles, dry and crisp, there are *Manzanilla*, *Fino*, *Amontillado* and *Palo Cortado*, whereas among oloroso styles, full bodied, dark and usually sweet, there are *Oloroso*, *Cream* and *Pedro Ximénez*.

The production of Jerez, which generally has an alcohol by volume from 15 to 22 percent because of fortification, that is to the added alcohol, is complex and takes long period of time, by making use of the famous *Solera* method, as well as a specific technique which gives them the typical oxidized character known as "*rancio*". The grapes cultivated in the area and used for the production of Jerez are exclusively white: Palomino, Moscatel and Pedro Ximénez.

## Other Production Areas

Among the other production areas of enological interest in Spain, there are Valdepeñas, where are produced light red wines; Navarra, near the Rioja, known for the production of its rose wines; Somontano, located near the Pyrenees, which produces white wines with Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc, as well as good reds produced with Monastrell, Garnacha, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir; Rueda, mainly known for its white wines produced with Verdejo grape; Toro, near Rueda, west from Ribera del Duero, where are produced red wines with Tempranillo grape.

## WINE TASTING

# Tasting Red Wines

After the delicate and enchanting fresh flowers fragrances of white wines, this months we will discuss about the evaluation of red wines

Red wines, certainly more complex in the evaluation than whites, are generally considered, in the common sense about this subject, the ones that usually are associated with the idea of wine. These types of wine, produced with different methods than whites, have specific organoleptic characteristics which requires an adequate evaluation strategy in order to find out and appreciate their best properties. In general terms, what is usually adopted for white wines, does not have the same efficiency when applied to red wines, mainly because of the presence of other factors usually absent in any other style of wine. The differences are clearly evident as soon as appearance is considered, aromas are different as well, most of the time are the result of the aging in a cask, and in the flavor are usually found elements which are absent in other wines, such as astringency.

## Color

The color of red wine, even when it is quickly evaluated, allow the determination of some of its main characteristics. The range of colors in this type of wine is rather vast, determined by the type of grape, area and cultivation practices, the way the grape was turned into wine and the evolution process, in other words, its aging level. A first consideration that can be made about the colors of these wines is that, contrary to white wine which tends to get darker in color as time goes by, red wines tend to get lighter in color with time.

Talking about colors in red wines it should be said that, as opposed to what it is usually believed, the intensity of its color is not always a sign of quality. The intensity in red wines must be considered according to the variety of grape used for its production and, in particular, the coloring capacity of the grape, that is, the quantity of pigments it contains, last but not the least, the way they were transformed into wine. A red wine having a color not much intense could indicate an absolutely normal condition and coherent with some types of grapes, however, it could also indicate a short period of maceration, or grapes from harvests of high yields or from a particularly rainy season. In order to make this concept clearer, it could be useful to observe the color of two wines very different from each other, such as a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Pinot Noir, and realizing that, no matter they both are excellent wines, the one produced with Pinot Noir will certainly have a less intense color when compared to the other. Not all the grapes are the same, and this is true for the color of wines they produce.

In youth red wines will show, in a more or less evident way and according to the grape used for their production, strong blue or purple nuances, mainly observable in the rim of the liquid mass while keeping the glass tilted. As time goes by, these blue

and purple nuances will tend to disappear and the color of wine will get a more strong red tint, in particular ruby red, and it will subsequently get garnet tints and, as the aging process goes by, red tints will tend to diminish while getting orange or brick tints, and therefore getting, at the end of its life cycle, brown or mahogany colors, a sure sign the decay has finally come to an end or because of strong oxidations. It should be however observed that by evaluating the evolution of colors it can be uniquely determined the process of the aging evolution of a wine, not its age considered as the quantity of years passed from harvest. The velocity at which the aging process takes place depends on many factors, among the many, the kind of grape used to make the wine and how the wine was kept, and the quantity of time in which a wine reaches a specific level of aging is variable from wine to wine. It must also be considered that the most reliable information about the level of aging of wine can be determined by observing the colors nuances, that is the color of the rim of the liquid mass in a tilted glass, instead of its tint, that is the overall color of the liquid mass. The following list contains the most common tints in red wines and the information that can be determined:

- **Purplish Red** - This is the typical color of young wines, and in case blue or violet tints are very evident, it could also be the sign of an immature wine whose fermentation process ended recently. However it should be observed not all young wines show this color; the many species of grapes have quantities and qualities of pigments rather different from one each other, therefore grapes which are rich in blue/violet pigments will usually tend to produce wines that in youth will be characterized by this color and in other cases, the purplish tint will be evident even when the wine will have reached an advanced level of aging
- **Ruby Red** - Represents the color of the first aging level which follows youth and the loss of the purplish tint. In general terms, red wines get this color after about one or two years of aging. This color is certainly the most common one in red wines and, in particular wines produced with specific grapes, this could also indicate the best aging level, the one that would allow the best appreciation. In case of wines destined to long aging periods, this color should be considered as a sign of youth
- **Garnet Red** - This color usually indicates a wine whose aging process is proceeding towards maturity while leaving its youth time. According to the type of wine as well as the grape used to make it, this color is usually observable after two or four years of aging and it can accompany the evolution of red wines even for many years before getting to a full and complete maturation
- **Brick/Orange Red** - Represents the tint which is typical in wines that finally reached full and complete maturation conducted in excellent keeping conditions. It should be observed that not all type of wines, according to the grapes used for their production and the technique of wine making, can reach this level while keeping at the same time excellent organoleptic characteristic. For some wines, that certainly

should have been consumed earlier in their youth, this color indicates the loss and the degradation of their best characteristics. It must also be observed that this color can also be caused by oxidation, therefore the wine is not appreciable anymore. In case oxidation occurred, this can be easily confirmed by the olfactory evaluation. This color, when observed in young wines, can be the sign of a rapid aging probably because of a too high keeping temperature. The time needed for wines kept in the best conditions to get to this color, in general terms, can vary from five to ten years, in some wines, it could also take longer

- **Mahogany** - In case this color is observed in wine's tint, that is in its overall color, it is the result of a strong and excessive oxidation as well as being sign of some degenerative diseases, therefore the wine is not drinkable anymore. This color can be considered as a positive sign only and uniquely in rare, very rare cases and when met in wines of excellent and magnificent quality, which reached the apex of an extraordinary aging process conducted in excellent and impeccable keeping conditions. It can be observed, in case of such magnificent wines, after an aging period in bottle for more than twenty years and, often, these wines can remain in excellent conditions for many other tens of years, before taking their way for decay. Once again, it must be said this condition belongs to few, very few wines; most of the cases, as well as when amber nuances are being observed, when this tint is present in wines aged for some years, it always represents a negative factor

## Aromas

The aromatic range of red wines is rather vast, in particular, it is rather high the expectations of the taster when he or she is about to taste a red wine. These types of wine are considered, at least for the majority of wine lovers, the ones which are usually associated to the idea of wine, therefore one usually expects from these wines superior characteristics because of this "prejudice". Indeed, the aromatic variety in reds seems to be more complex because of its higher versatility and suitability to aging, a characteristic which allows aromas to evolve and to get "important" connotations. However it should be remembered that red wines are produced with a fruit, the grape, and therefore will be the aromas of fruit, just like in any other wine, the ones that will be more frequently perceived in its olfactory assessment.

Whereas in white wines are frequently found aromas of flowers, in red wines are fruit aromas the ones that will prevail, in particular fruits having a red pulp or skin, such as raspberry, strawberry and cherry, or black, such as black currant, blackberry and blueberry. However aromas of flowers can be found as well, even though they are less frequent than fruit, such as rose, violet, peony and cyclamen. Aromas of fresh fruit will be common in young red wines as well as in those wines which are beginning their aging process. As time passes by, aromas of fruit start to evolve and to turn into cooked fruit, in particular jams, and subsequently in candied fruit. Even aromas of dried fruit, such as

hazelnut or dried fig, can be found during the aging process in a red wine and these aromas can be perceived after a very long time of aging. In red wines can also be perceived, during the aging process, aromas of seasoning and aromatic herbs, such as rosemary, thyme and mint.

During the evolution of the aging process in red wines, other aromas develop as well, usually having nothing in common with fruit, as a consequence both of production factors and of evolution. The most easy ones to be perceived are the ones passed by wood to wine during the aging in cask. These aromas can resemble toasted, smoked and vanilla. Moreover, “unusual” aromas can be perceived as well, such as coffee, cocoa, chocolate and tobacco, as well as spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and black pepper. In some wines, as a consequence of long time of aging, there can also be perceived aromas of tar. An aroma which is often found in red wines, particularly in quality wines, is licorice, an elegant aroma that, when present, gives wine a touch of class.

The long aging of wines in bottle can result in reductive conditions, that is the progressive diminishing of oxygen, and as time goes by, it contributes to the formation and to the development of particular and complex aromas, as a consequence of years of patient and long aging. The aromas which usually originates from this condition are of animal and *foxy* nature, a condition which is usually preceded, in those wines which are subject to this kind of evolution, by aromas of leather. The series of “animal” aromas evolves with time until getting real and proper smells of animal’s fur, wet fur and game, as well as aromas of civet and musky secretions.

Moreover, the aromatic range in red wines is enriched, in some cases, with balsamic essences, such as eucalyptus, pine, resin and incense, as well as aromas of vegetal origin such as bell pepper and truffle. In particular, the aroma of bell pepper, especially the green one, can be indicative about the variety of grape, as well as the maturation level of grapes used to make the wine. This aroma particularly indicates the presence of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, sometimes it can be perceived in Merlot grape as well, however it can be perceived in wines produced with grapes not perfectly mature at the time of harvesting. Another aroma which usually indicates a specific type of grape is the one of black pepper, generally associated to Syrah grape, however it can also be found in other wines, especially when are aged in cask. Violet is an aroma which usually identifies Nebbiolo and Sangiovese grapes, as well as rose is a characteristic of Brachetto grape.

## Taste and Balance

During the gustatory evaluation, red wines are usually more complex than white wines. The main cause of this “complexity” is astringency, because of the presence of tannins, both passed from cask’s wood and the ones extracted from grape’s skins. Astringency in red wines, caused by tannins, is usually the element which plays a fundamental role in the determination of balance. A fundamental element which is capable of balancing astringency in red wines is alcohol and, besides that, it is also

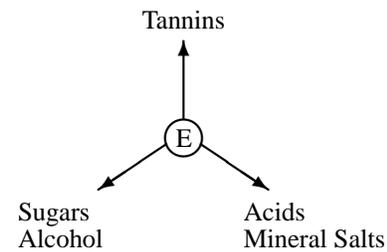


Fig. 2: Balance in Red Wines

responsible for balancing any acidity or sapidity in wine. Diagram shown in figure 2 illustrates the relation among the many elements present in red wines responsible for balance.

It must be observed tannins and acidity tend to exalt one each other, therefore a red wine, in order to be balanced, in case is characterized by a high quantity of tannins it will have a pretty low acidity, on the other hand, a crisp red wine, that is having an evident acidity, will not have much tannins. As a consequence, alcohol, responsible for the burning sensation in the mouth, must be present in adequate quantities in order to balance the sum of quantities of both tannins and acid.

## Practical Application

The best way to understand red wines, just like any other style of wine, is to personally evaluate them by means of one’s own senses. The practical application that we are going to suggest for red wines allow the evaluation of the many organoleptic characteristics and, in particular, how the presence of the many element can influence balance. In order to try the practical application we suggest, it is required to have three wines: a plain Cabernet Sauvignon produced in Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy), a Merlot having two or three years of aging in bottle as well as aged in barrique, possibly produced in Tuscany (Italy) or California (USA), and a Pinot Noir aged for two or three years and produced in Bourgogne (France) or in Alto Adige (Italy).

The appearance of the three wines shows rather different intensities and colors. Pinot Noir will be one having the lighter color of them all and will show a higher transparency, whereas Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot will both have colors and nuances practically similar. The first information that can be determined by these observations is that Pinot Noir has a lesser coloring capacity, that is contains a little quantity of pigments, as opposed to the other two grapes, however this does not mean it produces low quality wines, indeed, Pinot Noir is considered among the great grapes capable of producing high quality wines. This initial evaluation should help in suppressing the prejudice that wines having light colors are usually not very good, provided they are produced with quality production criteria. Even at the nose the three wines will offer different aromas. In Pinot Noir will be perceived aromas of cherry, raspberry, red currant and

strawberry, as well as aromas of vanilla as a sign of the probable aging in cask. Merlot's aromas will probably be rather different. In this wine will be perceived, first of all, aromas of vanilla and oak because of the aging in cask, however it will be possible to perceive clear aromas of black cherry, blueberry, plum, probably aromas of blackberry, as well as aromas of jams and violet. In Cabernet Sauvignon will emerge an aroma that could be pretty surprising and that would not be expected to be found in a wine: the aroma of green bell pepper. This "curious" aroma will not probably be the dominant one, however it will be clearly recognizable among other good aromas of black currant, blueberry, black cherry and, more likely to be, even eucalyptus. Lastly, it could be perceived, also in this wine, an aroma of vanilla, sign of the aging in cask.

Even in the mouth the wines will taste differently. Pinot Noir will seem to be more crisp, that is more acid, if compared to the other two wines, and its astringency, produced by tannins, will be pretty low. Merlot will certainly have a lower acidity, however a higher astringency will be perceived, even though smooth and pleasing, produced by tannins. Merlot will seem to have a greater structure and more body as opposed to Pinot Noir. Lastly, Cabernet Sauvignon will have an even greater astringency if compared to the other two wines, a sensation of astringency more aggressive and less smooth, and a good body. It should be considered that quantity of alcohol will probably be the same in all the three wines, probably from 12 to 13 percent of alcohol by volume, however the wines, although having different levels of astringency, will be balanced. In Pinot Noir, having a low astringency, balance is obtained thanks to the higher quantity of acid whereas in the other two wines acidity is lower while the astringency is higher.

## Wines of the Month

Score legend

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

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



### Barbera del Monferrato Rossad'Ocra 2000 Cascina Maddalena (Italy)

Grapes: Barbera

Price: € 13,00

Score: ◇◇◇

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals intense aromas of fruit, in particular black cherry, blueberry, blackberry, plum, violet and hints of vanilla. In mouth is correspondent to the nose, has a crisp attack balanced by tannins and alcohol, good body and intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry and blueberry. Rossad'Ocra is aged in barrique for about 12 months.

*Food match: Roasted meat, Braised meat with mushrooms, Hard cheese*



### Monferrato Rosso Bricco della Maddalena 1998 Cascina Maddalena (Italy)

Grapes: Barbera

Price: € 25,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇ ★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals clean and intense aromas, mainly of fruit, such as black cherry, blueberry and plum followed by aromas of violet cinchona, pine tree, licorice and vanilla. In mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp and tannic attack however balanced by alcohol, present in good quantities. Good body and intense flavors. The finish is persistent with good flavors of black cherry and plum. This wine is aged in barrique for 12-15 months.

*Food match: Game, Braised and stewed meat with mushrooms, Hard cheese*



**Grechetto dei Colli Martani Terre di San Nicola 2001  
Di Filippo (Italy)**

Grapes: Grechetto

Price: € 4,60

Score: ◇◇◇★

The wine shows a light straw yellow and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean and pleasing aromas of pineapple, banana, hawthorn, jasmine, lemon, apple, hazelnut, pear and peach. In mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a pleasing crisp attack however well balanced by alcohol. Intense and very agreeable. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of pear, lemon and apple. This Grechetto is aged in steel tanks.

*Food match: Boiled fish, Crustaceans, Pasta and risotto with vegetables and fish, Sauteed meat, Appetizers*



**Colli Martani Sangiovese Riserva Properzio 1999  
Di Filippo (Italy)**

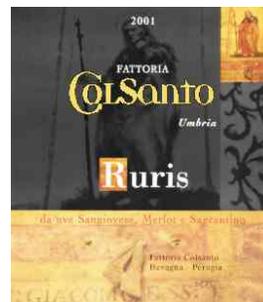
Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 5,80

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals refined, clean, intense and pleasing aromas of black cherry, blueberry, plum, violet, carob, licorice and vanilla. In mouth has a tannic attack however balanced by alcohol, good correspondence to the nose, intense flavors and good body. The finish is persistent with good flavors of plum, black cherry and blueberry. A well made wine which will give its best within 2 years, however it is already drinkable. Properzio is aged in barrique.

*Food match: Game, Broiled meat and barbecue, Roasted meat, Hard cheese*



**Ruris 2001  
Fattoria Colsanto (Italy)**

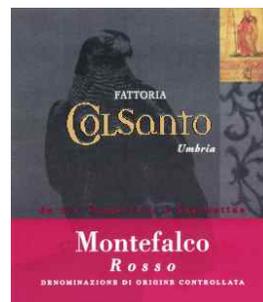
Grapes: Sangiovese, Merlot, Sagrantino

Price: € 8,00

Score: ◇◇◇★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean and elegant aromas, mainly of fruit, such as black cherry, blueberry, blackberry, plum and black currant followed by good aromas of vanilla, caramel and cocoa as well as hints of green bell pepper. In mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack however well balanced by alcohol, good body and intense flavors. The finish is persistent with good flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry. Ruris is aged for 10 months in barrique.

*Food match: Roasted meat, Hard cheese, Stuffed pasta*



**Montefalco Rosso 2001  
Fattoria Colsanto (Italy)**

Grapes: Sangiovese, Sagrantino

Price: € 9,00

Score: ◇◇◇★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, pleasing and clean aromas, mainly of fruit, such as black cherry, raspberry, blueberry, blackberry and violet followed by pleasing aromas of vanilla, licorice as well as hints of coffee. In mouth reveals good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack however well balanced by alcohol, good body and intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, blackberry and plum. This wine is aged for 15 months in barrique followed by 3 months of aging in bottle.

*Food match: Roasted meat, Stewed meat, Hard cheese, Stuffed pasta*



**Chianti Classico Lucarello Riserva 1999  
Borgo Salcetino (Italy)**

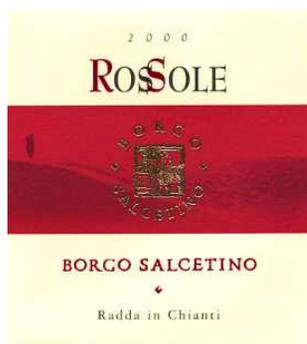
Grapes: Sangiovese, Canaiolo Nero

Price: € 13,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals pleasing, intense and elegant aromas, mainly of fruit, such as black cherry, raspberry, blueberry, blackberry and plum followed by intense and good aromas of violet and vanilla as well as hints of chocolate. In mouth is round and pleasing, very balanced, with smooth tannins and good body, intense flavors and good correspondence to the nose. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of black cherry, blueberry and plum. A well made wine. This Chianti reserve is aged in barrique followed by a long period of aging in bottle.

*Food match: Braised meat with mushrooms, Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Hard cheese*



**RosSole 2000  
Borgo Salcetino (Italy)**

Grapes: Sangiovese (70%), Merlot (30%)

Price: € 10,40

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine has an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, elegant and refined aromas of black cherry, blackberry, plum and black currant followed by good aromas of vanilla, licorice and cocoa as well as hints of menthol. In mouth is elegant and round, with pleasing tannins and good correspondence to the nose, good balance, intense flavors and good body.

The finish is persistent with good flavors of black currant, black cherry and plum. A well made wine. RosSole is aged in barrique for 14 months followed by a long period of aging in bottle.

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



**Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Gioé 1997  
Santa Sofia (Italy)**

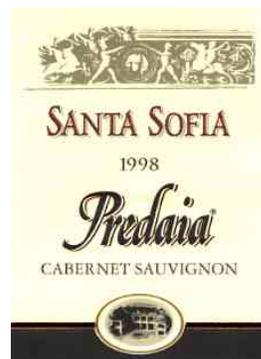
Grapes: Corvina (65%), Rondinella (30%), Molinara (5%)

Price: € 35,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose reveals personality with elegant, intense, clean and refined aromas mainly of jams. There can be perceived good aromas of black cherry jam, blackberry jam and plum jam followed by pleasing and clean aromas of black cherry macerated in alcohol, cocoa, caramel, leather, licorice, enamel, violet and vanilla. In mouth has a tannic attack which is well balanced by alcohol, excellent correspondence to the nose, intense flavors and full body. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of blackberry jam, black cherry jam and plum jam. A very well made wine. Amarone Gioé is produced in limited quantities and only in particularly favorable vintages and ages for 48 months in cask and 8-12 months in bottle.

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



**Predaia 1998  
Santa Sofia (Italy)**

Grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon (85%), Corvina and Rondinella (15%)

Price: € 12,50

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine has a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes good personality with elegant, intense, clean and refined aromas of black cherry, blueberry, bell pepper, plum, black currant and violet followed by good aromas of vanilla, toasted, caramel and chocolate. In mouth is round, agreeable and balanced, with good correspondence to the nose, smooth tannins, intense flavors and good body. The finish is persistent with clean and pleasing flavors of plum, blueberry and black cherry. A well made wine. Predaia is aged for 12 months in barrique and for 24 months in cask followed by 8-12 months of aging in bottle.

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



**Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 1997  
Le Ragose (Italy)**

Grapes: Corvina (50%), Rondinella (20%), Molinara (20%), other grapes (10%)

Price: € 23,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean and elegant aromas such as black cherry jam, blackberry jam, plum and dried violet followed by caramel, white pepper, cocoa, walnut and vanilla. In mouth reveals good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack well balanced by alcohol, intense flavors and full body. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of plum, blackberry jam and black cherry jam. This wine is aged for 12 months in steel tanks followed by 4-5 years of aging in cask.

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



**Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Marta Galli 1997  
Le Ragose (Italy)**

Grapes: Corvina (50%), Rondinella (20%), Cabernet (5%), other grapes (25%)

Price: € 28,50

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose reveals personality with pleasing, clean, intense and elegant aromas, in particular of jams, such as black cherry jam, cherry jam, strawberry jam and blackberry jam followed by intense and clean aromas of black cherry macerated in alcohol, caramel, chocolate, plum, dried violet and vanilla. In mouth denotes good correspondence to the nose, a tannin attack well balanced by alcohol, intense flavors and full body. The finish is persistent with clean flavors of blackberry jam, cherry jam and plum. A very well made wine. This Amarone is aged for 3 months in steel tanks and for 2 years in cask followed by an aging in bottle for at least one year.

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

**Hauer**



**Rosso Antonello**

indicazione geografica tipica SALINA  
Imbottigliato da Hauner Carlo s.r.l. agr. srl in Salina, Isole Eolie  
ml 750 € ITALIA 13,5% vol

**Rosso Antonello 1999  
Carlo Hauner (Italy)**

Grapes: Calabrese, Sangiovese, Corinto Nero

Price: € 13,20

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals clean, intense and elegant aromas, mainly of fruit, such as black cherry, blueberry, blackberry, plum and carob followed by good aromas of dried

rose, violet, cocoa and vanilla. In mouth had good correspondence to the nose, good balance, intense flavors and good body. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of black cherry and plum. Rosso Antonello is aged in barrique followed by 9 months of aging in bottle.

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



**Malvasia delle Lipari Passito 2001  
Carlo Hauner (Italy)**

Grapes: Malvasia delle Lipari (95%), Corinto Nero (5%)

Price: € 18,00 (500ml - 16.9 fl.oz.)

Score: ◆◆◆◆◆

Simply a great wine. It shows a beautiful and brilliant amber yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals great personality with intense, elegant, refined, rich and pleasing aromas of apricot jam, peach jam, candied fruit, date, dried fig, dried flowers, almond, orange marmalade, honey, hazelnut, citrus fruit peel followed by a pleasing hint of rosemary. In mouth is rich and charming, adequate sweetness, smooth and round with intense flavors, very balanced. Excellent correspondence to the nose. The finish is very persistent with pleasing and long flavors of apricot, peach, honey, citrus fruit peel and candied fruit. A truly well made wine, extraordinary also when tasted alone. This Malvasia delle Lipari is produced with late harvested grapes which are subsequently dried on mats. The wine ages for 18 months and for 6 months in bottle.

*Food match: Confectionery, Dried fruit tarts especially of almonds, Hard and piquant cheese*

WINE PRODUCERS

**Villa Matilde**

Falerno was one of the first great wines produced in Italy, praised and appreciated everywhere in ancient times, today this magnificent episode of enological history continues its tradition thanks to the efforts of this winery

*Falerno*, a prestigious wine, very renowned during the times of ancient Rome, has always been of interests for researchers of the history of enology, praised and appreciated in ancient times, for a long period it seemed to be practically disappeared from the wine scene while being bound to his prestigious fame, almost a legend, of the great times when it had a magnificent splendor. Falerno sets its roots in classic ancient times. During those times it was a wine very appreciated and Pliny the Elder believed it had therapeutic qualities, it was considered by Horace his preferred wine, as well as by Virgil that in the second book of *The Georgics* wrote «*Nec cellis ideo contende Falernis*» (therefore no wine can be compared to Falerno). Many other illustrious people of the Roman times praised the qualities and the nobility of Falerno, whose maximum spreading was promoted during Julius Caesar's times. In recent times it was appreciated by Russia's Zar and it was the preferred wine at the court of King Gustave of Sweden and it also became the official wine of the Palace.

After having lived a flourishing period of splendor and fame, which continued until the end of the 1800's, the production of Falerno suddenly stopped for more than half a century because of the terrible devastations of phylloxera which destroyed 95% of vineyards. To the catastrophic events of phylloxera survived few vines which subsequently formed the raw material to which Falerno would have been reborn thanks to the passion of a Neapolitan lawyer, Francesco Paolo Avallone, father of Salvatore and Maria Ida, current proprietors of Villa Matilde, that in his youth was assistant of Roman Law at the University of Naples and in his studies, done in books written by great classical authors, he often found mentions and praises for this great wine. Fascinated by the written witnesses found in the great classical books about Falerno wine, about 45 years ago, lawyer Francesco Paolo Avallone decided that we would have tried to revive this legendary wine. Lawyer Avallone began his studies and, with the help of some researchers of the Agricultural University of Naples, he started a project whose aim was to find out the proper characteristics of the grapes used in Roman times for the production of Falerno, by deducting them from the books of Pliny, Catullus, Columella and all the other authors that directly or indirectly left witnesses useful to the definition of the grape species to be used.

As a result of these preliminary researches they started investigating about the ancient lands of Falerno, in particular the area of "Massico", in order to verify whether there still were grapes having the requisites emerged by the researches. At the end of these investigations they found the vines to be used and they exactly found 20 vines having the requisites they were looking for:



A view from Villa Matilde's vineyards

10 were of Aglianico, that is the ancient *Hellenico* grape, a vine introduced in the colonies of ancient south Italy by Greeks, 5 of Piediroso, (literally “red foot”), so called because of the characteristic color of the stem; two variety of grapes that opportunely vinified and aged would have produced red Falerno, and 5 of Falanghina, the grape used to produce white Falerno, the famous *Vinum Album Phalanginum* mentioned in the books of the renowned Medical School of Salerno. It seems that Falerno name derived from the deformation of term *Phalanginum* into *Phalernium*; therefore it is probably that the original Falerno wine was white.

By using these few survived vines as a base material on which reviving the fame of Falerno, it was conducted a patient work on reproduction done by experts that allowed to save and propagating those few and precious survived vines and that were saved from the devastations of phylloxera. The vines from which the needed material for the reproduction was to be used, were scrupulously selected and grafted in sprouts resistant to phylloxera and then, little by little, they were successful in replanting the vineyards in the hills of *Ager Falernus* that produced for many centuries not particularly abundant harvest but of the best quality. The original plants are still kept at Villa Matilde winery and every time it is needed to plant new sprouts, the vines used for the propagation are directly taken from that old vineyard. Thus, after more than a century of absence, the first bottles of Falerno got again their way to the tables of connoisseurs.

The current production of Villa Matilde, besides including the “Falerno del Massico” wines, also offers other wines, both white



A vineyard of Villa Matilde

and red, produced with local grapes. Falerno del Massico is produced as white and red by using the ancient grape composition, faithful to the historical tradition of these wines. The white is exclusively produced with Falanghina, whereas the red, of which is also produced in the best years only a reserve as well, is obtained by Aglianico and Piediroso grapes. With the very same grapes are also produced three “mono varietal” wines.

Concerning the production of white wines, there is “Tenuta Pietre Bianche”, a young and crisp wine mainly produced with Falanghina and Coda di Volpe. The “Falerno del Massico Vigna Caracci” is a white wine produced with Falanghina grape harvested in a tiny vineyard of about three hectares (about 7.5 acres) and located in the hills near the volcano of Roccamonfina. The grape is harvested when it is fully ripe in order to exalt the aromatic characteristics and the wine ages in barrique for about five months. Another white wine produced by Villa Matilde is “Campostellato”, a particular reserve of Falanghina produced with selected grapes from which is obtained a particularly concentrated must, rich in aromas and acidity, that will be transformed in a full bodied wine.

Talking about the production of red wines there is “Terre Cerase”, obtained by Aglianico grape, and “Poggio alle More”, produced with Aglianico and Red Coda di Volpe as well as other local grapes. Result of many years of selections is “Vigna Camarato”, a wine produced with Aglianico grape harvested in the vineyard having the same name, one of the oldest and best exposed vineyards in the estate's hills, located at the base of the volcano of Roccamonfina. The wine is aged in cask as well as in bottle for 18 months. Another interesting red is “Cecubo”, produced with Piediroso, Abbuoto and Primitivo grapes, aged in cask. With dried Falanghina grapes, left on the plant until November, is produced “Eleusi”, an excellent *late vintage*. After the grapes have been harvested they are allowed to dry in mates under the sun and the must which is obtained is subsequently fermented and aged in barrique for three months followed by a long aging in bottle. The production of Villa Matilde is completed by two grappas, both produced with Falanghina pomace, and olive oil produced with olives harvested in the winery's estates.



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



**Falerno del Massico Bianco 2002**  
**Villa Matilde (Italy)**

Grapes: Falanghina

Price: € 5,50

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a firm greenish yellow color, very transparent. The nose reveals elegant, refined and delicate aromas of acacia, pineapple, banana, litchi, apple, hazelnut, pear and peach. In mouth has a pleasing crisp attack however well balanced by alcohol, good correspondence to the nose, intense and agreeable flavors. The finish is persistent with clean flavors of pineapple, pear and banana. A well made wine.

*Food match: Boiled fish, Crustaceans, Pasta and risotto with vegetables and fish, Sauteed meat, Appetizers*



**Falerno del Massico Rosso 2001  
Villa Matilde (Italy)**

Grapes: Aglianico (80%), Piediroso (20%)

Price: € 6,70

Score: ◇◇◇★

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose has fruity, clean and intense aromas of black cherry, raspberry, blueberry, plum, violet and vanilla. In mouth reveals good correspondence to the nose and good balance. Intense flavors and good body. The finish is persistent with good flavors of plum and black cherry. This wine is aged in cask for 10-12 months.

*Food match: Meat with mushrooms, White roasted meat, Soft cheese, Stuffed pasta*



**Falerno del Massico Vigna Caracci 2001  
Villa Matilde (Italy)**

Grapes: Falanghina

Price: € 10,60

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine has an intense straw yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose is elegant, refined and of personality with aromas mainly of fruit and an agreeable hint of wood aroma which does not disturb the perception of other aromas. There can be perceived good and intense aromas of acacia, pineapple, banana, broom, litchi, apple, hazelnut, pear, peach and vanilla. The mouth denotes a pleasing crisp attack promptly balanced by alcohol and a good correspondence to the

nose. Good and intense flavors of fruit, very elegant and pleasing. The finish is persistent with flavors of peach, pineapple and pear. A well made and pleasing wine where the typicality of the Falanghina grape is well recognizable. This wine is produced by cold maceration and fermentation in barrique followed by a 5 months aging in barrique.

*Food match: Fish appetizers, Pasta and risotto with fish, Fish and crustaceans*



**Cecubo 2000  
Villa Matilde (Italy)**

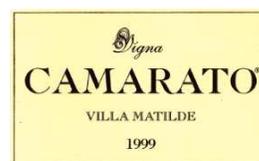
Grapes: Abbuoto (45%), Primitivo (35%), Piediroso (20%)

Price: € 11,20

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a beautiful and deep ruby red color and nuances of purplish red, little transparency. The nose is full of clean and intense aromas, mainly of fruit, neat and pleasing. There can be perceived good aromas of black cherry, cocoa, licorice, blueberry, plum, black currant, violet and vanilla. In mouth reveals a tannic attack however well balanced by alcohol and a good correspondence to the nose, intense. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of black cherry, blueberry, licorice and plum. Cecubo is aged in barrique for 12 months.

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



**Falerno del Massico Vigna Camarato 1999  
Villa Matilde (Italy)**

Grapes: Aglianico

Price: € 22,50

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals personality and elegant, refined, intense and clean aromas such as black cherry, cherry macerated in alcohol, chocolate, licorice, blueberry, black pepper, plum, violet and vanilla. In mouth has a good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack promptly balanced by alcohol, intense flavors and good body. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of black cherry and plum. A well made wine. Vigna Camarato is aged in barrique for 12 months and in bottle for 12 months.

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



**Eleusi Passito 2001**  
Villa Matilde (Italy)

Grapes: Falanghina

Price: € 18,30 (500 ml)

Score: ◆◆◆◆◆

The wine shows a beautiful and deep amber yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals great personality, with elegant, refined and clean aromas. There can be perceived intense and clean aromas of dried apricot, candies, caramel, quince jam, dried fig, litchi, cooked apple, honey, hazelnut, nut and pear. In the mouth denotes an excellent correspondence to the nose and a pleasing crispness and sweetness which make this wine very balanced. The finish is very persistent with long and pleasing flavors of dried apricot, litchi, honey, dried fig and nut. A great wine. Eleusi is produced with grapes left to dry on the vine until November and it is fermented in barrique and aged in barrique for 3 months followed by a long aging period in bottle.

*Food match: Hard and piquant cheese, confectionery, jam tarts*

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## Cellar Journal

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

### EVENTS

## News

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

### CORKSCREW

## Matching Food with Sparkling Wines

Bubbles are usually associated with moments of celebration and parties, often forgotten when a food is to be matched, indeed they are excellent companions of the table

As the summer season is about to come, people's preferences move towards a consumption of white wines and sparkling wines, while forgetting, like to say, red wines until cold season will come again. In general terms, in the meals consumed during warm seasons, foods are more simple and less elaborated, fish and vegetables are preferred, dishes based on meat get less rich and lighter, as well as sauces for pasta and rice. Even the preference for wines tends to favor the fresher and lighter ones, easily drinkable, in particular, the ones that can be served at lower temperatures, therefore white wines are the ones mainly matched with foods in warm seasons. However there is a category of wines that would be excellent in summertime, not only to be drunk alone, but also, and particularly, matched to food: sparkling wines. The so called "bubbles", of which any wine producing country can offer a huge selection of styles, have such characteristics as to be extremely versatile and adequate for summertime, in particular with the dishes of this season, they are usually served at low temperatures, a condition which is usually appreciated during hot days. The versatility of these wines allows them to be excellently used in the enogastronomical matching, no matter the season.

## A Vast Selection of Products

Sparkling wines are now produced in every country of the world which produces wine, the range of products available on the market is vast, with a broad selection both of prices and styles. Among the wine producing countries of the world, the ones that certainly have an important and fundamental role in the enology "bubbles" scene, mainly because of quantity, and certainly for quality as well, are France, Italy and Spain, including all the other countries where modest quantities of sparkling wines are produced, such as Germany, South Africa, Australia,

United States of America and New Zealand, as well as other countries of the world where some producers offer this type of wines.

France, the country which is mainly and easily associated to bubbles, offers a vast selection with its *Champagne* available in different styles and qualities, exclusively produced with the *Méthode Champenoise*, or classic method of the refermentation in bottle. The vast selection of Champagne, from *extra-brut* to sweet, from elegant *Blanc de Blancs*, exclusively produced with Chardonnay grape, to the bodied *Blanc de Noirs*, produced with Pinot Noir grape and sometimes Pinot Meunier, without forgetting about *Rosé*, from the easy drinking, and surely interesting as well, *Sans Année*, that is non vintage and produced with wines from many vintages, to the elegant and rich *vintage*, make this wine very suitable to the enogastronomical matching and it also allows the matching of a whole meal, from aperitif to dessert, exclusively matched with Champagne. In France are also produced other sparkling wines with the classic method and that come from areas outside Champagne: *Crémant*. These sparkling wines, even though they are less famous than Champagne, may offer excellent opportunities for enogastronomical matching. Among these wines must be certainly mentioned *Crémant d'Alsace*, *Crémant de Die*, *Crémant de Bourgogne*, *Crémant de Loire*, *Crémant de Limoux* and *Crémant de Bordeaux*. In Luxembourg, with the same name and with the same method, is produced the *Crémant de Luxembourg*. Moreover in Gaillac, France, is produced a sparkling wine by means of the *Méthode Ancestrale*, which is called *Gaillac Mousseux*.

Italy offers a vast selection of sparkling wines and every region practically produces its own, most of the times regulated by disciplinary of production of the many DOCs (Denominazione d'Origine Controllata, Appellation of Controlled Origin), such as, for example, Oltrepò Pavese and Trento. *Franciacorta* certainly is to be considered among the best bubbles wines of Italy, produced with the *Metodo Franciacorta*, not very different from the classic method. These wines, according to an Italian law cannot be called with the general term *spumante* but exclusively *Franciacorta*, are available in a vast selection of types, different levels of sweetness, from the extremely dry *Non Dosato* (or *Pas Dosé*, *Dosage Zéro*, *Pas Opéré* or *nature*) to sweet *Demi-Sec*, from refined *Satèn*, exclusively produced with Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc grapes, to the more bodied *Franciacortas* where Pinot Noir grape is used as well, this style also includes *Rosé*, from the *Senza Annata*, (non vintage), produced with wines from different vintages, to the refined and important *millesimati* (vintage). A vast and complete selection of types which allows, even in this case, the possibility of matching a whole meal exclusively with *Franciacorta*.

Even *Talento*, produced in some northern regions of Italy, is an interesting sparkling wine and they also come in different styles and are produced with the classic method. *Talento*s, which usually come as *Extra-Brut* or *Brut* and also produced in the *riserva* styles as well as *millesimati*, offer excellent opportunities for the enogastronomical matching. Another dry sparkling wine produced in Italy, famous in every part of the world, is *Prosecco di Valdobbiadene*, mainly obtained with the *Prosecco*

grape, is a wine produced with the *Charmat method* and it is available in many styles, usually dry, of which the *Superiore di Cartizze* is the most renowned one. Even *Prosecco* offers interesting possibilities for the enogastronomical matching. In Piedmont are produced two sweet sparkling wines, famous everywhere, *Asti spumante* and *Brachetto d'Acqui*. *Asti spumante*, or simply *Asti*, is produced with *Muscat Blanc* grapes which give this wine a pleasing and strong aromaticity, as well as its characteristic sweetness, make this wine particularly suited for the matching of desserts. *Brachetto d'Acqui*, produced with *Brachetto* grapes, fascinates for its light red color, as well as for its strong aromas of rose and strawberry, as well as for its typical sweetness, it is an excellent wine to be matched with desserts.

Even Spain offers a vast selection of sparkling wines with its *Cava*. These wines are produced with the classic method and are available in different levels of sweetness, from the extremely dry *Brut Nature* to the sweet ones, as well as *Rosé* styles, produced both as *non vintage* and *vintage*, as well as *reserve*. Even *Cavas*, thanks to the many production styles, allow the matching of a whole meal. Other countries that can offer sparkling wines, suited for the enogastronomical matching, are Germany with its *Sekt*, a sparkling wine mainly obtained by *Riesling* grape and generally produced with the *Charmat method*; South Africa that offers good sparkling wines produced with the *classic method*; United States of America, in particular California, with a production of classic method sparkling wines, as well as Australia and New Zealand.

## Matching with Food

Matching food with sparkling wine can be realized by means of the evaluation and the consideration of two fundamental elements: glass in which wine is being served and the specific organoleptic qualities of the sparkling wine. The glass in which sparkling wine will be served must be chosen according to the type and, in particular, to the method of production of the wine, as well as its aromatic complexity. Sparkling wines produced with the *Charmat method* are usually served in the *demi-flûte*, a glass not much tall and tight, which will however allow the correct development of *perlage*, certainly not as refined as the one of wines produced with the classic method. In case a wine is produced with the *long Charmat method*, that is with a prolonged production time as opposed to the normal production, the wine could have developed more complex aromas and therefore they must be valued with a *flûte* glass having a larger body. Non vintage *classic method* sparkling wines will be served in a regular *flûte*, whereas the vintages will be served in *wide flûte*, a particular glass having a tight and stretched base and a wider body and opening in order to allow a correct development of complex aromas of these wines. Sweet and aromatic sparkling wines are the ones that will be served in the *cup glass*, short and with a wide opening, in order to allow the appreciation of wine's aromaticity as well as allowing the development of the more delicate aromas.

The matching of sparkling wines and food will consider the main characteristics of these wines: effervescence and acidity, two factors that are particularly perceived in the tasting of "bub-

bles” wines. Although these two characteristics are the most dominant and perceptible ones during the first impression the wine gives to the mouth, in sparkling wines will also be considered the quantity of alcohol, its roundness, that is how it is *smooth to the mouth* and, last but not the least, the level of sweetness. It must be remembered a *brut* sparkling wine, even when it tastes dry, can even contain as much as 15 grams of sugar and even though the sweet perception will be greatly diminished because of carbon dioxide, it will however contribute to wine’s smoothness and roundness. Even body will be important when considered for matching: sparkling wines exclusively produced with white berried grapes, the so called *Blanc de Blancs*, will have a lesser body, that is structure, when compared to the ones produced with both white and red berried grapes, moreover *Blanc de Noirs* will have an even greater body, and the body of *Rosé* will be even greater than that. Body in a wine will be also determined by the aging period; in general terms *vintage* wines will have a greater body and complexity when compared to *non vintage* wines. The same is also true for the production method: sparkling wines made with the *classic method* will be more structured than the ones produced with the *Charmat* method. For these reasons, *Charmat* sparkling wines usually precede *classic method*, *vintages* comes after *non vintages*, *Rosé* will be served after white sparkling wines. Even the level of sweetness is important in the sequence of service; at the beginning will be served the most dry ones up to the most sweet ones.

Effervescence in sparkling wines is particularly useful in the enogastronomical matching of foods which tend to be sweet in taste, such as cereals, rich in starch and therefore pasta and rice, vegetables and shellfishes, as well as dishes being pretty fat or having fat seasonings or sauces. The same function is also done by acidity, found in sparkling wines as well, therefore it must be considered, in this case, that effervescence and acidity in these wines work together perfectly contrasting sensations of fat tastes or slightly sweet tastes in foods. According to these two “simple” rules we can set, in general terms, that a good *risotto with shellfishes* can be matched with a sparkling wine.

Alcohol will be useful in balancing the sensations of *succulence*, the physiological reaction of salivation originated by foods rich in proteins, as well as foods seasoned with *unctuous* ingredients, characteristics usually found in meat, cheese and in some elaborated dishes of fish. Roundness in a sparkling wine, determined by its level of sweetness, will be useful for the matching of tasty foods as well as for ingredients that will tend to be *acid* or *bitter*. The persistence of sparkling wines will be useful in balancing those dishes having strong flavors as well as persistent, and the body of the wine will be of help in balancing elaborated and complex dishes. Finally, the clearly perceptible sweetness of some sparkling wines, such as Asti and Brachetto, as well as sweet Champagne or demi-sec Franciacorta, will be the perfect companion for desserts, in particular the ones prepared with creams or desserts with ice creams.

As it can be seen, there are sufficient elements in order to “demolish”, at last, the prejudice that sparkling wines are exclusively suited for moments of celebrations and parties: their characteristics make them perfectly and magnificently suitable for



Franciacorta, served in its glass designed by the consortium, is an excellent companion in the enogastronomical matching

the enogastronomical matching, moreover, obeying to the rules of the sequence of service for wines, it is certainly possible to match a whole meal with bubbles only and the experience, try it to believe, will be very exciting and rich in amazing surprises.

## A Practical Example: Franciacorta

The best way to test the validity of a theory, no matter what, it is to confirm it by means of a practical application. In order to prove the efficiency and the versatility of bubbles in the enogastronomical matching, we will make use of Franciacorta, thanks to the rich and vast availability of styles, it will allow us to use it for matching very different dishes. The first aspect we will consider is the type of glass to be used for this wine. The Consortium for the Safeguarding of Franciacorta has designed a particular and efficient glass, marked by the Franciacorta symbol, the unmistakable embattled letter “F”, printed at the base of every glass. The wide and stretched body allows the proper development and appreciation of perlage, whereas the rounded tulip shape will allow an adequate development and appreciation of aromas; a glass that certainly and rightly exalts the best characteristics of this excellent wine.

Franciacorta wines are available in many levels of sweetness and styles; factors that allow this wine to be perfectly used for the matching of the many dishes in a meal, from aperitif to dessert. **Franciacorta Non Dosato**, the most dry one of them all, can be served as an excellent aperitif, moreover, it can be matched to fish appetizers, vegetables and cheese, shellfishes and crustaceans, as well as pasta and risotto with fish and vegetables. **Franciacorta**

*Satèn*, exclusively produced with white berried grapes, thanks to its elegance and delicacy, can be served as aperitif, or matched to appetizers and main courses made of fish and white meat, or with vegetables pies. **Franciacorta Brut**, enriched in its structure by Pinot Noir grape, is a good match for main courses made of fish and vegetables, roasted and broiled fish, as well as dishes made of white meat, and in particular the *vintage*, can be matched to red meat, roasted or sauteed and, in case of particularly structured vintages, even to rich and elaborated dishes made of meat. Lastly, this style of Franciacorta can be matched with soft cheese as well as fatty cheese, such as robiola and mozzarella, and fried foods, in particular, fried fish. **Franciacorta Rosé** will be a good match for cold cuts, even tasty, main courses made of meat and mushrooms, rich dishes made of vegetables, such as *parmigiana*, roasted fish, rich and tasty fish and vegetables soup, as well as dishes made of red meat. At the end of the meal, **Franciacorta Demi-Sec**, thanks to its sweet taste, will perfectly match a dessert with cream and fruit, as well as ice cream tarts.

Finally, we would like to end this short, but significative, list of examples of enogastronomical matches with bubbles with another suggestion related to one of the most famous dishes of the Italian cooking known everywhere in the world. Did you ever think about matching Franciacorta Brut with a tempting pizza? This colored and tasty dish is a joy of ingredients: the base, rich in starch, therefore having a taste tending to sweet, will be well matched to the effervescence and crispness, the other ingredients, such as tomatoes, mozzarella, mushrooms, vegetables and cold cuts, common in many pizzas, will have a loyal companion in the richness of these “bubbles”. Enjoy the meal!

NOT JUST WINE

## Coffee

Among the most known and consumed beverages of the world, coffee fascinates for its strong aromas and its taste

### Historical Facts

The etymological origin of coffee is uncertain. “Qahwah”, in the Arab language, meant a dark beverage having stimulant and exciting effects, sometimes also used as a medicine. It seems that with time “Qahwah” was transformed into the Turkish term “Quahvè” whose meaning is coffee. Others believe this word came from an Ethiopian region in which a plant similar to coffee wildly grows up. However the exact scientific term is “*Coffea Arabica*”. Even the origin of coffee itself is not certain. Just like other plants, its spreading was a consequence of wars and colonizations and, in particular, trading. Still today, some African people are used to dry the coffee grains which are subsequently toasted and transformed into “breads” to which salted butter is added, excellent to be consumed during the journeys. Even Arab warriors consumed it because caffeine gave them courage and

aggressivity. It seems that coffee was known among monks in Yemen and goats, which used to eat certain grains from an ever-green plant, subsequently became nervous and sleepless. Monks thought of using the properties of these grains in order to prolong their period of praying. The beverage started spreading with the name of “Arab’s wine”, among Egyptians first and then among Turks.

In the half of 1700’s the plantations were mainly located in the tropical area, therefore were French that, with their colonies, took the highest benefits from the trading of the precious fruits. From 1800’s on were the English to get considerable commercial profits because of the trading of coffee. The profits of the French, English, Spanish and Portuguese colonies moved the cultivation area from tropical Asia to Latin America. In the half of 1600’s coffee was introduced in Europe and in particular to Marseille, Amsterdam, Paris and London, where the first coffee shops were established. From 1720 to 1882 in Italy were established 6 coffee shops. In 1727 they started new plantations in Para, Brazil, and subsequently the cultivation of coffee spread all over the country, sometimes replacing the plantations of sugar canes. The production rapidly increased and at the beginning of 1900’s, it could satisfy more than 50% of worldwide needs.

Consumption of coffee rapidly increased and at the beginning of 1800’s in the Martinica island were started new plantations which arrived to produce as much as 20 millions plants of coffee: in a short time the activity of coffee planter rapidly spread all over the islands of Antilles. From that moment on, slowly, the “oriental” production will face a progressive decay. Currently south America can satisfy almost 100% of worldwide production and Brasi is the first country which produces the highest quantity, whereas Columbia ranks second for quantity while being the first for quality. Another important country for the production of coffee is Ivory Coast, important producer of Robusta quality. As far as Arabic quality is concerned, among the largest producers are Costa Rica, Guatemala, India, Vietnam, Yemen as well as others which complete the worldwide scene of coffee production in the world.

It is said that after the defeat of Turks and after they were sent away from Vienna, many sacks containing dark grains were found, never seen before, and no one did not know how to use them. It is said that Mr. Kolschitzky, who lived for a long time in Turkey, took the sacks and established the first coffee shop. In the beginning that strange beverage, having a bitter taste, was not pretty successful, but as honey and milk were added, it became a striking success which is still continuing nowadays.

### Consumption and Spreading

In Italy coffee were imported by Venetians around 1570, however it was the Paduan Prospero Alpino the first one who introduced it from east. In the beginning only rich people could afford the luxury of coffee, the beverage with a very high price was sold in pharmacies only. After the first coffee shop was established, other followed and coffee became a very appreciated beverage; in 1763 Venice had more than 200 shops where coffee was served. Lovers, instead of giving roses to their fiancées, used

to give trays of coffee and chocolate. Coffee was also used as a corroborating and medicinal beverage and it was even prescribed by some physicians.

The beverage was popular among Arab, Yemenite, Syrian and Egyptian people since the fourteenth century, these people were used to drink coffee in order to prolong the night vigil. In the fifteenth century there were public shops were dense and bitter coffee was sold. However coffee did not have an easy life, it was often banned by religious authorities because it made people desert mosques, for this reason they started a propaganda against coffee in order not to have their authority compromised. However this activity was not detrimental to the spreading of coffee all over the country and the popularity was so high that it was called "wine of Islam".

In France coffee was introduced by some merchants from Marseille around 1644 as they came back from the east and it was in this city that the first coffee shops were established. The new beverage was successful since the beginning and the success was so high that French viticulturists were worried for their business, and therefore they started a denigratory propaganda against coffee, which did not have any negative effect, and people continued to drink coffee while allowing the spreading to the cities of Toulouse, Lyon and Paris where many coffee shops were established. The real success of the new product was after the beverage was introduced to the court of Louis XIV. The king was so fond of the beverage that he even personally prepared it, even when he had guests. In 1686, near the "*commedie franacaise*", a new coffee shop was established which was used as a model in all the other European countries. However there was another shop which was more popular, *café Procope*, established near the "commedie franacaise", attended by famous philosophers and artists, and it became a symbol known all over Europe.

In Germany coffee spread slowly because of the general preference of people for beer. Inexorably, coffee started to conquer higher positions in the market while inducing a slight decrease in the consumption of beer. It was an English businessman to start the first coffee shop in Germany, precisely in Hamburg, and other were started in Frankfurt, Leipzig and Berlin. The increasing consumption of coffee reached levels so high that beer producers started to worry, and this also caused some problems in the country's economy.

In England was introduced by a merchant, coming back from a journey in the East, who brought back some coffee and started to drink it in company of some friends of him. Soon after others started to imitate him. New clubs were established where people usually gathered together in order to drink the beverage and to talk. Because of the evident success, some businessmen started to sell the beverage in shops. The fortune of coffee in England was also supported by its usage, offered as an alternative beverage, in order to contrast alcoholism. The custom of establishing exclusive clubs excluded some social classes and in particular most of women, and because they felt they were excluded from the consumption as well as being neglected by their husbands, they started a campaign against coffee. In the New World coffee was introduced by European settlers around 1670 and they started to spread the beverage in every city of America. However

the real spreading of the beverage was only after the half of the 1700's.

Sweden takes part to the history of the spreading of coffee because of a pretty funny event. In the 1700's there were two factions, one was supporting the consumption of tea and the other the consumption of coffee. The argument became so harsh that the King decided to make an experiment in order to show, in an indisputable way, what was the superior beverage. It is said that in the Royal jails there were two twins: the King decided that one would have had tea and the other would have had coffee. During the experiment the two subjects were observed while waiting to see who was the first one to die. The funny thing was that both the physicians in charge to conduct the experiment as well as the King died before the two prisoners. As a matter of fact, the twin forced to drink tea died first, because of his old age and not because of the beverage we was forced to drink, at age 83. The other died at the age of 100 and therefore decreeing the victory of coffee over tea.

In Turkey, as coffee started spreading, the businessmen introduced rumors about Allah drinking tea and coffee before he started the creation of the world. During the reign of Soliman the great, in Constantinople were started coffee shops reserved to respectable people where they could drink the new beverage and they could spend some time talking. The famous shops spread everywhere.

## Qualities of Coffee

Among the known species, 60 belong to the variety "coffea", of these only 25 are marketed, and only 4 are the most important ones: *coffea Arabica*, *coffea Robusta*, *coffea Liberica* e *coffea Excelsa*. *Coffea Arabica*, mainly cultivated in Arabia, has an intense and aromatic smell, and the most renowned variety certainly is "Moka", other varieties include "Tipica", "Bourbon" e "Maragogype". *Coffea Robusta*, with its characteristic "umbrella" flowering, produces grains which are richer in caffeine and as they are toasted become very aromatic. *Coffea Robusta* discovered in Congo is very cultivated both for its abundant production and for its resistance to diseases as well as for its adaptability. This variety is spread in India, Western Africa and Indonesia. By the crossing from *coffea Arabica* and *coffea Robusta* has been created the "Arabusta" variety.

*Coffea Liberica*, coming from Liberia and Ivory Coast, is a longeval plant, strong, very resistant to parasites, even though it needs an adequate climate and lots of water in order to grow up well. For this reason it is usually used to obtain, by means of crossing, other varieties. Despite of the fact its fruits are of inferior quality, they are however aromatic and pleasing. *Coffea Excelsa* is a species very resistant to drought and to diseases, it gives very low yields, and its grains produce a very aromatic and pleasing coffee similar to *Arabica* quality.

The plant of coffee is spread in almost every country of the world therefore the period of harvesting is variable and it depends by the quality and the place where it is being cultivated. The ideal condition consists in harvesting the grains when they are at their right maturation in order to get the highest quality

possible, however this scrupulous operation done by hand is very expensive and, for this reason, in some countries, the grains not perfectly ripe are harvested as well in order to decrease costs of workmanship while obtaining a product of lower quality.

Consumption in Italy occupies a relevant position and the country imports more than 320.000 tons of green coffee, equally divided from Arabica and Robusta. Statistics show that the consumption of coffee in bars is of about 14 billions of cups. In France is preferred a more diluted coffee and the consumption is of about 180.000 tons. In Germany is preferred a coffee with a lighter roasting, whereas English generally use soluble coffee. Finnish consumes about 12 Kg (26 lbs.) of coffee per capita and are very exacting about quality. In Japan coffee, besides being very expensive, is highly esteemed by people and they even dedicated to it a holiday, October 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Keeping and Brewing Coffee

Coffee can be kept in a regular sack at room temperature, however it must be observed that within two weeks the aroma will be completely dispersed. In order to avoid this inconvenience, coffee can be kept in azote, a condition that can make it last for many years. Toasted grains or ground coffee must be kept in a vacuumed container in order to preserve its organoleptic characteristics. It should also be considered that during the process of roasting it is lost up to 22% of humidity, therefore coffee is very hygroscopic and attracts humidity and odors. Many people scrupulously keep coffee in hermetic containers without considering temperature which should not be below 10°C (50°F) in order not to freeze natural oils and fats, therefore compromising both the aromaticity and the brewing of a good coffee.

The process of roasting is done by heating grains at a temperature of about 210°C (410°F) until the grain does not get a dark brown color. During this process the grain loses about 20% of its weight, mainly water. This operation is extremely important because the grain must be homogeneously roasted both to the inside and to the outside. During the process of roasting, internal oils, made of more 600 chemical substances, come out to the surface giving coffee its typical aroma.

There are many ways for brewing coffee and every country has its customs and traditions. One of the most popular methods is the one which makes use of a "percolator", boiling water is poured on a filter made of fabric or paper which contains ground coffee. Among the most popular methods there is also the famous "Italian Espresso" where water at a temperature of 90°C (194°F) and a pressure of 9 atmospheres is forced to pass through a filter filled with coffee. Famous is also the Turk method where the coffee finely is grounded and put, together with sugar, in a pot and then boiling water is added. In the brewing by using the "Moka", the water contained in a boiler, because of the effect of boiling, is pushed through an upper filter in order to be transferred in the upper part of the coffee pot. In order to brew a good coffee it should be remembered that the coffee powder must not be pressed in the filter and it must not have any clot, fire must be medium and the coffee pot must be clean from any coffee stains or residuals and without making use of any soap.

According to a nutritional point of view, coffee is not an indispensable food for the body, however certain substances it contains are beneficial to the organism. Caffeine is an alkaloid having stimulating effects on the nervous central system and when assumed in the right quantity provokes the releasing of adrenaline. When assumed in right quantities it is beneficial to humans, to their intellectual and sexual needs, and it also has some defensive actions for the body. Coffee is a stimulant beverage having effects on the nervous central system and provoking a sense of general wellness, promotes a higher condition of awake and working activity, not only physical, but also and in particular for the kind of works requiring promptness. However it should be remembered that abuse is always harmful to the body.

## Wine Parade

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

Rank		Wine, Producer
1	↔	Capo di Stato 1998, Conte Loredan Gasparin
2	↗	Teroldego Rotaliano Granato 1998, Foradori
3	↗	Masseto 1998, Tenuta dell'Ornellaia
4	↗	Semillon Sauvignon 2001, Cape Mentelle
5	↗	Château Laroque Saint-Émilion Grand Cru Classé 1998
6	↗	Château Lynch-Bages Pauillac 2000
7	↗	Shiraz 2000, Plantaganet
8	↗	Muffato della Sala 1999, Castello della Sala
9	↗	Chardonnay 2000, Planeta
10	↗	Sauvignon Blanc 2000, Cakebread
11	↗	Colli Bolognesi Pignoletto Superiore "Prova d'Autore" 2001, Bonfiglio
12	☆	Fumé Blanc Napa Valley 2001, Grgich Hills
13	↗	Trentino Bianco Villa Margon 2000, Fratelli Lunelli
14	☆	Meursault 2000, Bouchard Aîné & Fils
15	☆	Hill of Gold Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Rosemount

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry

## Classified

In this column we will publish your classifieds. Send your classified, with a length up to 255 characters, at the address [Classified@DiWineTaste.com](mailto:Classified@DiWineTaste.com) or fill in the form available at our WEB site [www.DiWineTaste.com](http://www.DiWineTaste.com). The classifieds are published for free in three consecutive issues. Please specify the edition where you want your classified to be published (italian edition or international edition). Classifieds are required to be written in italian for the italian edition or in english for the international edition. DiWineTaste will never be responsible for the correctness or the contents of the classifieds.