

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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The Charm of Wine

Wine - as it is commonly known - has been, in the course of centuries, a beverage of primary cultural importance in every place where the vine was present. Its importance, as well as its magic and charm, has always had a strong influence on social, cultural, religious and traditional life of people. The charm and the evocative aspect of wine have been such that in many cultures this beverage was considered as sacred and used for the celebration of religious rites, frequently its consumption was exclusively allowed to the ministers of the many religious cults. Its symbolic and ritual importance is still kept and alive today: a good example is represented by the celebration of Eucharist in the rites of Christian religions. However wine also played a role of primary importance in the celebration of festivals and social meetings, such as the renowned symposia and Dionysiac orgies of ancient Greeks and bacchanal festivals of ancient Romans.

Soon after wine also became a distinctive sign of many social classes, leaving its sacred and religious role, it represented for many centuries - a distinction that can be still noticed today - one of the many characteristic elements of the prosperous social classes as opposed to the poor ones. It is enough to think about Champagne - so to mention one of the many possible examples - that since the very beginning of its history it has always been present in the tables and in the houses of the many noble classes and of the ones who had conspicuous economic possibilities, whereas it was completely absent in the glasses of the poor social classes. This distinction and role have greatly contributed to the charming of Champagne while giving it the indisputable role of the wine of great class, so to say, a "rich men stuff" that has always evoked charm and mystery in the ones who had only heard of it while leaving the rest to their fantasy and imagination.

The charm of certain "impossible" and "unreachable" wines is still common today and it is - now as it was then - fed by both commercial and speculative reasons, as well as by aspects of social identifiability. The charm of wine is also the one produced by words capable of evoking emotions and suggestions, in particular for those wines people have only heard of them and that were never poured in their glasses. Moreover,

there is the charm of words about wine - sometimes too sumptuous - spoken by some persons who struggle himself or herself in order to appear as an expert in the hope of being distinguished from the others, while forgetting, maybe voluntarily, that wine, in order to be truly understood, is to be tasted and it must not be read or listened in the confusion of a flooding of useless words. After all the charm of wine is also the intimate relation which originates from what it is inside the glass and the person who trusts his or her senses in order to understand it, therefore creating an intimate and personal relationship.

There is also the charm of wine as a social and socializing beverage, a strong characteristic the beverage of Bacchus has always had, perhaps, like no other. Maybe it is because of the evocative traditional and historical meaning that wine has kept in the course of centuries, or maybe it is because of its capacity of "promoting cheerfulness", anyway it is enough a simple glass of wine in order to make pleasing and friendly both the talking and the company, while remembering - always and however - that the pleasure of these moments has moderation as its best ally. Not so long ago, when it was still common the habit of producing home made wine, the charm of this beverage began with the harvesting, when relatives and friends gathered and worked together while relieving fatigue and the heat of the sun with generous glasses of wine and with cheerfulness. This simply is one of the many effects wine has in social life of people, the beverage of Bacchus has always been present - and it is still present - in many social activities of human beings, from leisure to work.

Wine is also connected to the charm of the memory of

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pleasing moments, a characteristic which certainly is common to any other circumstance and any other beverage. Maybe every wine lover at the sight of a specific wine, as well as during its tasting, remembers and associates a specific moment of his or her life - sometimes also important - in which that very same wine was present. Even that certainly is part of the charm wine can evoke in the ones who appreciate it. Talking about special moments it is almost impossible not to mention that in such occasions wine is practically and always present, ready to emphasize the importance of a solemn and joyful moment. It is enough to remember, for example, the charm sparkling wines have during the celebration of parties and of special dates. Lets admit this straight, even though this is the result of a common and traditional habit, a too common habit, anyway a celebration does not look like a real celebration in case there are no bubbles to cheer the glass - and the taste - of participants.

Countless citations and historical facts remind us that during solemn and crucial moments in the history of humanity wine was present to emphasize the importance of an agreement or the making of a decision. These circumstances - something we can be certain of - have certainly contributed to give wine the charm men and women recognize to it and to which they joyfully abandon themselves. What makes wine so charming is its extraordinary capacity of being always different and always surprising - while still remaining wine anyway - where the charm of a place, of a grape, of a vintage - as well as the mastery of the one who made it - are revealed in a glass always telling different stories to the ones who have the curiosity and wisdom of listening. How many stories and how many talking have their origin in a group of friends sharing the same wine while talking about it all together! Even that is part of the charm of wine.

Whether it was the result of scrupulous and conscious events controlled by the human genius, or simply the result of accidental and natural circumstances, or even the gift of benevolent gods, it is indisputable wine has kept in the course of its history its surprising charm unaltered. Its role in the activities of the human genre has always been of primary importance and its charm will probably continue to accompany the activities and circumstances typical of human beings. Wine has also given pleasing moments to wise men - certainly full of charm and magic - as well as a punishment - the ridiculous and deprecation of drunkenness - reserved to the foolish who only recognize in wine the charm of thoughtless and distracted abuse. Probably the charm of respect this beverage deserves also contributes to augmenting that magic made of delicious aromas and tastes which men still continue calling, since more

than two thousands years, 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 or fill in the form available at our site.

I often hear talking about "brett" smell. What does this mean?

Andrew Norman – San Francisco, California (USA)

The term "brett" is used in the English wine parlance to refer to *brettanomyces*, a kind of yeast which usually develops both in grapes and in rooms where wine is being made and stored. This yeast, that in high quantities gives wine negative aromas and tastes, is extremely hard to defeat and the most efficient prevention adopted by producers is to limit its development as much as possible. Preventions adopted in order to avoid the development and formation of *brettanomyces* in wine consists in special filtering processes. The perception of *brettanomyces* is pretty subjective: for some it contributes to increase wine's aromatic complexity, for other even the faintest trace of this yeast is the sign of evident faults, whereas other cannot even perceive it when it is present in small quantities. *Brettanomyces* gives wine manure, stable and saddle aromas, characteristics that when present in small quantities can also be pleasing for someone as well as also being a precise productive choice of a winery. When they are present in high quantities, these aromas are predominant and the wine is considered - and here every wine lover agrees - faulty and spoiled by *brettanomyces*. Even taste is altered by this yeast and wines in which it is present tend to have a pretty sour and acid aftertaste. Moreover it should be remembered that wines strongly spoiled by *brettanomyces* tend to worsen with the aging in bottle.



What is volatile acidity?

Maurizio Giannoni – Grosseto (Italy)

Volatile acidity is one of the factor making the so called total acidity of a wine together with fixed acidity. Volatile acidity is made of acids whose presence is variable according to natural, chemical and physical factors and that - as opposed to fixed acidity - they can evaporate therefore lowering their quantity. The main acid which makes it is acetic acid - which is always and however present in a wine - and in small quantities it contributes both to the development of aromas and flavors. When it is present in excessive quantities, wine gets the typical aromas and tastes of vinegar, therefore it is considered as a serious fault. Acetic acid is determined by the presence of acetic bacteria, that attacking alcohol they transform it into acetic acid and water, and it usually develops during fermentation. The light perception of vinegar aromas in a wine signals the beginning of the development of acetic acid that will lead to acescence when the wine will get the typical characteristics

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of vinegar.

ABC WINE

Mosel-Saar-Ruwer

Homeland of the enchanting and delicate wines of Germany, this region, which goes along the course of three rivers, is renowned all over the world as a synonym of elegance and finesse

Germany has always been associated, according to an enological point of view, to its white wines, as well as to its excellent *eiswein*, both considered as examples of elegance and finesse. Among the many wine regions of Germany, the one that more than any other else is remembered for its delicate, refined and charming wines, certainly is Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, usually simply defined as Mosel. The magic and charm of wines from Mosel is represented both by the environmental conditions - most of the time prohibitive - in which viticulture is done, and by the grape which made great this region and Germany, now considered as an international grape appreciated and looked for in the world: Riesling.

This enchanting region is located in the western part of Germany and goes along the course of the Mosel river from the point in which enters Germany, in the borders of France and Luxembourg, to the neighboring of the city of Koblenz where the river joins the Rhein. This wine region also includes the neighboring territories of the Saar and Ruwer rivers - two tributaries of Mosel - whose names complete the definition of the wine region, or according to the German language, of the *Anbaugebiet*, that is *quality wine region*. Mosel-Saar-Ruwer is among the most northern quality wine areas of the world and it is located around 50° latitude north, just a little above than French Champagne.

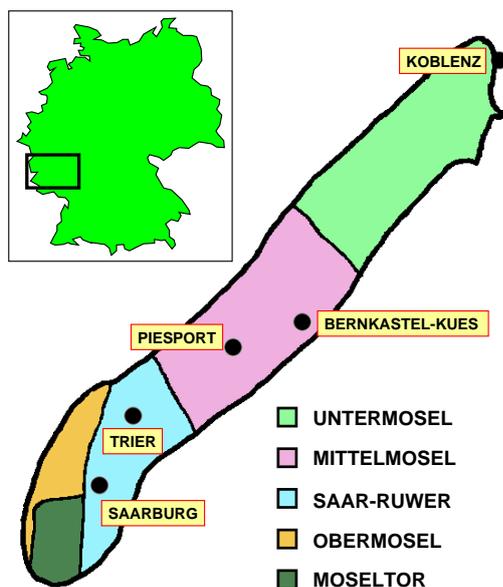


Fig. 1: The Mosel-Saar-Ruwer wine region

The Mosel-Saar-Ruwer region presents absolutely unique characteristics, not only for the elegance and the finesse of its wines, but also for the view that can be enjoyed from these places, where the cultivation of vine is both difficult and suggestive because of the geological conformation. Vineyards in Mosel-Saar-Ruwer are among the steepest of Germany as well as of the world. Vineyards are planted in the steep slopes that go down to the Mosel river, a condition which makes difficult - as well as heroic - harvesting. The characteristic inclination of the soil also makes difficult taking advantage of sun rays, a resource that in these lands is both precious and indispensable in order to ensure vine good conditions of survival. Climate is pretty cold and it is indispensable that every sun ray is to be exploited by vines, moreover - a factor that should be considered - the amount of sun shining in this region certainly is lesser than the one shining, for example, in Italy.

For this reason the cultivation of the vine is done in places that can ensure the best and higher exposition to the sun, by taking the best advantage from environmental and climate conditions. Vineyards in Mosel-Saar-Ruwer are therefore planted only in slopes facing towards south. However this represents only one of the fundamental factors that allow good results to be obtained in the cellar. The best vineyards, besides being planted in slopes towards south, are also found near the course of the Mosel river, a condition which contributes to the increasing of the quantity of sun in vineyards thanks to the sun rays reflected by water. The environmental and climate condition of Mosel-Saar-Ruwer - according to what was described so far - it should make think about great difficulties in order to obtain perfectly ripe grape with the result of highly acid wines with little alcohol. This is what exactly happens and the full ripeness of grapes is seen in this area as an exception which happens only in some years.

The secret of success in Mosel-Saar-Ruwer is also ensured by other essential factors: grape and composition of soil. In conditions like these it is pretty hard to think about cultivating varieties of grapes which need full ripeness in order to give their best, here it is necessary that grapes can give excellent results when they are not ripe. The answer is Riesling. This grape is capable of making wines of extraordinary elegance and class, and luckily, these results can be obtained when the grape has not reached full ripeness. Even the composition of soil in this region plays a fundamental and essential role. Slate, of which the soil of Mosel-Saar-Ruwer is particularly rich, is highly porous and it is an excellent heat accumulator, in fact it is capable of absorbing the heat of the sun - as well as to reflect it - and then to pass it to vineyards therefore favoring the process of ripeness in grapes.

The presence of slate in vineyards is extremely precious to ensure the best condition for cultivation as well as to give wines of this region a pretty mineral taste. Because of the strong inclination of vineyards, during rains the slate rocks slip down to the bottom of the slopes therefore depriving the soil of this precious support. In order to ensure the best condition in vineyards, at the end of rains the slate rocks are gathered from the bottom of slopes and are took back to the vineyards. In other words, the cultivation of vine in this region cannot certainly be defined as easy and comfortable, but the surprising aspect of Mosel is the result they get from this lands, not only they are successful in making wines, that make excellent wines, appre-

ciated and looked for everywhere in the world and considered - rightly - extraordinary examples of elegance, class and finesse. Wines of Mosel-Saar-Ruwer are among the most longeval of all Germany: thanks to their high acidity, white wines can also be aged in bottle for tens of years.

Wines produced in Mosel-Saar-Ruwer are typically sold in tall and thin green colored bottles, the characteristic *flute*, also known as *Rhein* or *Alsace* bottle. In Mosel are not only produced dry wines, here are also produced excellent *eiswein*, certainly among the best ones of Germany, the renowned sweet wines produced with grapes harvested when the juice is frozen and from which is obtained a genuine and incredible *grape syrup*, thick and concentrated, rich of intense flavors and enchanting aromas. The main grape cultivated in Mosel-Saar-Ruwer is Riesling which represents the higher percentage of the whole production in this region. Other grapes cultivated in the region are Müller Thurgau - used for the production of wines of lesser value - and Elbling, mainly used for the production of *Sekt* - the famous German sparkling wine - pretty ordinary and of lesser value. Other grapes cultivated in the region are Auxerrois, Bacchus, Kerner, Optima and Ortega, and they all are white berried varieties.

The Classification of Wines of Mosel

Mosel-Saar-Ruwer is one of the thirteen quality wine regions of Germany (*Anbaugebiete*). Wines produced in Mosel are classified according to the system used in the country. The system is made of two main categories and precisely table wines and quality wines. The "table wine" category includes the denominations *tafelwein* (table wine) and *landwein* (regional wines). The "quality wines" category - besides representing the best qualitative level of the German production - also represents about 95% of all wines produced in Germany. Quality wines are classified in two categories and precisely: *Qualitätswein bestimmter Anbaugebiet* (quality wines produced in determined region) - abbreviated as QbA - and *Qualitätswein mit Prädikat* (quality wines with predicate) - abbreviated as QmP - representing the highest level in the German system.

Wines belonging to the denomination QbA (*Qualitätswein bestimmter Anbaugebiet*) are all produced in one of the thirteen quality wine regions - including Mosel-Saar-Ruwer - produced with grapes having a pretty low level of ripeness and the must can be chaptalized, that is sugar can be added in order to increase the alcohol percentage. One of the main criteria on which is based the German quality system is the level of ripeness of grapes, a concept on which is strongly based the highest level of the system: *QmP* (*Qualitätswein mit Prädikat*). In fact this class includes six distinct categories and each defining a specific level of ripeness for grapes. In *QmP* wines chaptalization is not allowed. The categories for *QmP* wines - from the lowest level of ripeness to the highest - are:

- **Kabinett** - wines produced with grapes harvested during the normal harvesting time. These wines are usually light, with little alcohol and dry
- **Spätlese** - (literally *late harvest*) wines produced with late harvested grapes, generally more intense and structured than *kabinett*. These wines can be both dry and demi-sec and have a pretty high quantity of acid, therefore any

possible sweetness is usually covered

- **Auslese** - (literally *selected harvest*) wines produced with very ripe grapes whose bunches have been manually selected in the vineyard before harvesting. *Aauslesen* wines are usually produced in the best years only which had particularly good and warm climate condition
- **Beerenauslese** - (literally *harvest of selected berries*) wines produced with grapes whose bunches have been scrupulously and manually selected. Grapes used for the production of wines belonging to this category, abbreviated as *BA*, are usually affected by noble rot (*Botrytis Cinerea*), a characteristic that gives them aromatic richness and structure
- **Eiswein** - (literally *ice wine*) particular wines produced with frozen grapes. Grapes are left to ripe in the vine and harvested in wintertime, when the grapes are frozen because of the low temperature which cannot be, at the moment of harvesting, higher than -7° C (about 19° F). Grapes are being pressed soon after harvesting with the result of obtaining a very concentrated must, rich in acid and sugar, by separating them from the ice - and therefore water - contained in the berries. The result is a wine having a high quantity of sugar and very balanced acidity
- **Trockenbeerenauslese** - (literally *harvest of dry selected berries*) wines belonging to this category certainly are the richest, sweetest and expensive of all German wines. These wines, abbreviated as *TBA*, are produced in the best years only and by using grapes affected by noble rot (*Botrytis Cinerea*). The must produced from these grapes is extremely rich in sugar which sometimes makes difficult the fermentation process to start and the alcohol percentage in these wines is usually of 6%

German wines are also classified according to the quantity of sugar:

- **Trocken** - dry wine with a quantity of residual sugar lesser than 9 grams per liter
- **Halbtrocken** - demi-sec wine with a quantity of residual sugar lesser than 18 grams per liter. It should be observed that because of the high acidity of German wines, *halbtrocken* practically have a dry taste

Mosel

The area of Mosel is the part of the region which goes along the course of the homonym river up to the neighboring of the city of Koblenz. The area is pretty wide and in the northern part - the one near Koblenz and defined as Lower Mosel, *Zell-Untermosel* in German - because of its latitude and the cold climate, ripeness of grapes is pretty difficult - even for Müller Thurgau - however also in this area it is possible to find interesting wines. The most interesting part of this area certainly is the middle one - called Middle Mosel *Mittelmosel* in German - where are located the places from which come the best wines. No matter there is no formal definition of Mosel, the middle part is usually defined in the area going from the city of Klüsserath to the one of Enkirch which is located about 50

kilometers (about 30 miles) from Koblenz and which defines the *bereich* - the first geographical division of *anbaugebiete* - of Bernkastel. In this area are found the most celebrated and renowned *grosslagen* - groups of vineyards, called *einzellagen*, whose quality should be both high and homogeneous - including the ones of St. Michael, Michelsberg, Kurfürstlay, Münzlay, Badstube, Schwarzlay and Nacktarsch. The area continues to the south with the so called Upper Mosel, *Obermosel* in German - in the border of Luxembourg and, finally, with the *Moseltor*, in the borders of Luxembourg and France.

Saar

Whether the environmental and climatic conditions are usually considered difficult in the Mosel, in the Saar area are even more difficult and not every year it is possible to have grapes with the right level of ripeness. This area goes along the final course of Saar river - a tributary of Mosel - and from which takes its name. Grapes cultivated in this area generally reach the right level of ripeness three or four years out of ten, and in the less favorable years, when sugar in grapes is low, wines are characterized by high acidity and therefore their most typical destination is for the production of Sekt sparkling wines. However when grapes reach a good level of ripeness - in particular thanks to a higher quantity of sun rays - wines produced in Saar are extraordinarily elegant and enchanting, moreover the production of *eiswein* in Saar is among the best ones of the whole region. The main grape of this area is Riesling and the composition of the soil is made of slate. The best wines of Saar - that is the ones produced with grapes having a good ripeness - have fresh fruit aromas, a pleasing touch of honey and a pretty crisp and mineral character.

Ruwer

The wine area of Ruwer takes its name from the homonym tributary river of Mosel. Ruwer is a pretty small area and generally suffer from the same problems found in Saar, that is ripeness of grapes is a condition which is not ensured every year because of the low quantity of sun rays. When this happens, wines are pretty acid and their typical destination is the production of Sekt. However, when grapes have reached an optimal level of ripeness suitable the production of wine - therefore containing a good quantity of sugar - wines produced in this area are characterized by an amazing elegance and finesse, certainly among the best examples of the region as well as of Germany.

WINE TASTING

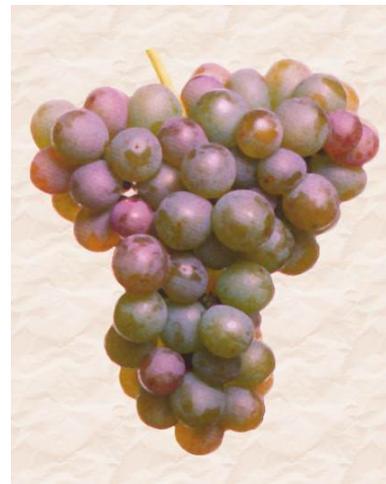
Gewürztraminer

One of the main representatives of aromatic grapes, Gewürztraminer is among the first grapes every wine taster should be capable of recognizing

The practice of sensorial and organoleptic tasting of wine is an exercise requiring attention and, in particular, practice and experience. For neophyte tasters it is often difficult - and disappointing - the initial approach to this charming activity and the higher difficulty - as well as the most frequent one - is found during the olfactory analysis, a price that every taster had to pay. One of the main satisfactions for neophyte tasters is the capacity of being able to recognize, not only aromas, but also the characteristics of a specific variety of grape, a goal which is achieved, most of the times, during the tasting of the so called aromatic grapes. The family of this kind of grapes is not vast and its members are easily recognizable thanks to their strong and dominant aroma of fresh grape, more precisely of grape juice.

Among aromatic grapes the one which certainly is easier to recognize is Gewürztraminer, thanks to its rich, concentrated, charming, enchanting and strong aromas, it is easily recognizable even in case it is being used together with other grapes in the composition of wines. Gewürztraminer is frequently used in introductory tasting courses because of its specific and typical characteristics, so strong that make this grape easily recognizable by the ones having little experience. Despite the characteristics of this grape are easy to recognize, this does not certainly mean Gewürztraminer is a simple and humble grape: it is appropriate to remember its aromatic richness is vast and complex. The easiness of Gewürztraminer recognizability is because of its strong aromatic personality, however behind this strong aroma - as well as pleasing - there are tens of aromas and elegant nuances.

Gewürztraminer probably originated from Alto Adige, Italy, precisely from the village of Termeno (*Tramin*), and the first written evidences suggest this grape was known in this



A bunch of Gewürztraminer

area since the year 1,000 AD. It is believed this grape is a genetic mutation of Traminer, which is a white berried grape from Tramin, and the difference from Gewürztraminer and its progenitor are the gray-pink color of the skin and the strong aromaticity. The present popularity of Gewürztraminer is such that sometimes it is simply called *Traminer*, just like its progenitor, today scarcely cultivated and by many believed to be similar to Savagnin, the renowned grape of French Jura and from which are produced *vin jaune*. The first part of the name - *gewürz* - means "spicy" in German, however in this specific case, it is preferred the meaning of "aromatic", even though - according to the organoleptic qualities of this grape - it can certainly be considered as the union of both terms. In Italy this grape is often called *Traminer Aromatico* (Aromatic Traminer), and in other parts of the world is also frequent to find its name written as *Gewurztraminer* instead of *Gewürztraminer*.

For many years the indisputable homeland of Gewürztraminer has been Alsace, where the grape was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century from Germany, precisely from Pfalz where it was widely cultivated and this encouraged its spreading. Alsace is still today considered the most characteristic and interesting region for wines produced with Gewürztraminer - in particular *vendange tardive* (late harvests) and *sélection de grains nobles* (selections from noble berries) - however other wine areas of the world - in particular Alto Adige, Italy - are producing since many years high quality wines with this grape. Despite Gewürztraminer is now considered an international grape, its spreading is lower than other varieties belonging to this category, and the wine areas of the world in which this grape can make truly quality wines are pretty few.

The reason of its lesser spreading in the world is mainly because of the difficult cultivation of this grape and of the typical uncertainty and low yields and, in particular, to climate. Gewürztraminer is a grape capable of giving excellent results in cool climate areas, its content in acid is pretty low whereas it is rich in sugar, therefore its wines are usually pretty alcoholic. For this reason it is not a grape suitable in areas having a warm climate because the optimal level of sugar and acid is reached far in advance and before enough quantity of aromatic and gustatory components are developed. In case the ripeness of Gewürztraminer is reached too fast - a condition highly probable in warm climate areas - wines produced with this grape can also appear as *unctuous* and develop bitter tastes.

In places where it is being successfully cultivated, Gewürztraminer is however capable of making wines of extraordinary elegance and aromatic complexity, with low acidity and pretty high alcohol percentages, in which styles can range from dry to sweet. No matter Gewürztraminer has a low acidity, its wines usually have a good longevity that can also reach an average of 3-5 years, according to the style. The bunch of Gewürztraminer is pretty small, berries are pretty small as well, with a thick skin and with a color ranging from pale pink-gray to reddish-brown. The harvesting time for this grape is pretty crucial because its best typical aromatic and gustatory personality can be obtained in slow ripening conditions and with a balanced quantity of acid and sugar. Gewürztraminer is however a grape whose cultivation is difficult and a perfectly balanced wine produced with this grape is not easy to make, however when the area and climate offer the right conditions

and the mastery of the wine maker is joined to these factors, Gewürztraminer is capable of giving authentic and enchanting fairy tale wines.

The Colors of Gewürztraminer

The typical colors of wines produced with Gewürztraminer usually have more intense hues than all the other white wines. Whether in most of white wines the greenish and straw yellow colors are the most frequent ones, in wines produced with Gewürztraminer the intense and brilliant golden yellow hues represent the norm. The main reason of the color of these wines is because of the color of Gewürztraminer's skin: its basically pink color gives wines a deeper and intense yellow hue. With time the color of Gewürztraminer tends to have more and more intense golden yellow colors and it is however rare that dry wines show amber yellow hues, a condition that signals the oxidization of wine. It should be remembered, thanks to the higher alcohol percentage, that quality wines produced with Gewürztraminer can also reach 5 years of aging in bottle. In wines produced with late harvested grapes or affected by *Botrytis Cinerea* - therefore with a more or less accentuated sweetness - the color usually is intense with deep golden yellow hues and with the aging in bottle can also get to evident amber yellow hues.

Aromas

Gewürztraminer is a grape capable of producing wines with exuberant and intense aromas, so characteristics and strong which is practically impossible not to recognize it in wines where it is present. Probably this strong aromaticity is also the main subject for talking among wine lovers: whereas for some the aromas of this grape are extremely pleasing, elegant and charming, for others are considered exaggerated and even sickly. Gewürztraminer is considered an aromatic grape - probably the most famous aromatic grape - where the typical aroma of fresh grape and grape juice represents a truly predominant characteristic. It should be remembered that grapes considered as aromatic are the ones whose wines directly and strongly reminds the aroma of fresh grape and fresh grape juice. Wines produced with Gewürztraminer are generally aged in inert containers - such as stainless steel - and this practice is adopted for almost the majority of wines made of this grape. The use of casks and barrels is pretty rare, therefore it is uncommon to perceive aromas of vanilla or other aromas typical of the aging in wood containers.

Besides the strong aromatic character, Gewürztraminer - in its wide olfactory style - is also recognizable for the strong aromas of tropical fruit and flowers, in particular white rose and yellow rose. Even aromatic herbs and spices are widely present in this grape: a characteristic which explains the reason of the first part of its name - *gewürz* - meaning spicy in German. Among tropical fruit aromas, the one which strongly characterizes this grape is litchi. Other fruit aromas typical for Gewürztraminer are - besides the aroma of grape - peach, pineapple, apricot, pear, citrus fruits, banana and apple. Among the typical aromatic herbs for this grape there is sage, however it is also possible to perceive aromas of mint, thyme and oregano. Among spices - excluding vanilla found in Gewürztraminer

aged in cask - it can be perceived cinnamon, nutmeg, anise and licorice. Gewürztraminer produced in cool climate areas or however not perfectly ripe, produce wines with light aromas in which it is the floral character to be emphasized, in particular the aroma of lavender. Wines produced in warm climate areas or with perfectly ripe grapes, develop the full character of Gewürztraminer, with its typical aromas of rose, peach and litchi. In case the wine is being produced with grapes affected by *Botrytis Cinerea* - the noble rot - Gewürztraminer also develops elegant aromas of honey, raisin, musk as well as light herbaceous aromas.

Taste

Gewürztraminer is a grape with a pretty low quantity of acid and sugar in good quantity. The result is therefore represented by wines with low acidity and pretty high alcohol, agreeable roundness and, thanks to its strong and dominant aromaticity, intense flavors and good correspondence to the nose. There can basically be identified four styles of Gewürztraminer: dry with light body, dry and full bodied, demi-sec and sweet. The structure of dry and full bodied wines can sometimes deceive the taster because of the high roundness - almost velvety - which could be confused with sweetness. The perception of sweetness is instead clear - and correct - in late harvest wine and in *Sélection de Grains Nobles* from Alsace. Sweetness is also typical in wines produced with grapes affected by *Botrytis Cinerea*. Because of the low acidity and the high content in sugar, balance in Gewürztraminer represents a crucial productive factor, it is pretty hard to obtain and it requires lots of experience and skill for the wine maker. The high content in sugar allows the production of high quantity of alcohol, that in Gewürztraminer wines is often higher than 13%, therefore requiring a proper quantity of acid in order to be balanced.

A Grape Difficult to Cultivate

Gewürztraminer is a grape producing the best results in cool climate areas allowing a slow and proper ripeness. When it is being cultivated in warm climate areas, ripeness occurs too quickly, the content in sugar is too high and the acidity too low. The most famous area for the cultivation of this grape - as well as having the highest concentration of vineyards cultivated with Gewürztraminer - is Alsace, France, which is considered the reference area for all styles of this wine. Alsace Gewürztraminer are generally rich and structured, almost unctuous, and also in this area the production of wine with this grape with a perfect balance is not an easy task. However in perfectly balanced Alsace Gewürztraminer, the charming and enchanting aromas are magically fused to a velvety structure and roundness well sustained by a proper acidity. The most famous Alsace wines produced with Gewürztraminer certainly are *Vendanges Tardive* (late harvests) and *Sélection de Grains Nobles* (selections of noble berries), sweet and extraordinary wines produced with grapes often affected by *Botrytis Cinerea*, the so called noble rot.

In Europe Gewürztraminer is also cultivated in Germany, in particular in the Baden and Pfalz regions, in Switzerland, Spain and Hungary where the grape is known as *Tramini*. Other European countries in which Gewürztraminer is be-

ing cultivated are Slovenia, where it is known as *Traminac*, whereas *Drumín*, *Pinat Cervena* or *Liwora* are the names with which are known in Czech Republic and Slovakia, *Rusa* in Romania and *Mala Dinka* in Bulgaria. The Alto Adige region, Italy, is producing since many years excellent wines from Gewürztraminer, to be certainly considered among the best ones of Europe. In the United States of America Gewürztraminer is present in the states of California - in particular in the Russian River Valley at Sonoma and in the Anderson Valley at Mendocino - Washington and Oregon. In Australia is cultivated in Tasmania and in Victoria, moreover Gewürztraminer is also present in New Zealand and in Chile - in particular at Bío-Bío - where in the coolest areas are being produced good examples although in limited quantities.

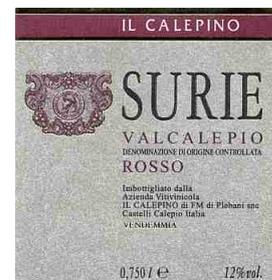


Wines of the Month

Score legend

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

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



Valcalepio Rosso Surie 2000 Il Calepino (Italy)

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

Price: € 10,60

Score: ◆◆◆★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of black cherry and plum followed by aromas of blueberry, licorice, violet, tobacco, vanilla and hints of cocoa. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, black cherry and blueberry. This wine ages for 7 months in barrique.

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



Il Calepino Riserva di Fra Ambrogio 1997
Il Calepino (Italy)

Grapes: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir

Price: € 17,50

Score: ◇◇◇◇

This wine shows an intense straw yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, fine and persistent perlage, good effervescence. The nose denotes intense, clean and pleasing aromas which start with hints of apple and banana followed by aromas of hawthorn, yeast, bread crust, brioche, litchi, toasted bread and hints of butter and grapefruit. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, an effervescent and crisp attack however balanced, good body, intense flavors, pleasing. The finish is persistent with flavors of apple and banana. This sparkling wine is produced with the classic method and ages on yeasts for 60 months.

Food match: Crustaceans, Roasted fish, Pasta and risotto with fish and crustaceans



Barolo Rocche 1999
Vietti (Italy)

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 55,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇ ★

This wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and elegant aromas that start with hints of plum and cherry followed by aromas of blueberry, violet, rose, licorice, cinnamon, vanilla and hints of cocoa. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable crispness. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, cherry and blueberry. A well made wine. This Barolo ages for 24 months in cask.

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



Barolo Ravera 1999
Vietti (Italy)

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 55,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇ ★

This Barolo shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with good hints of black cherry, plum and rose followed by aromas of violet, cyclamen, blueberry, licorice, tobacco, vanilla, cinnamon and hints of chocolate and menthol. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, blueberry and black cherry. A well made wine. This Barolo ages for 15 months in cask.

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



Sagrantino di Montefalco 2000
Tenuta San Lorenzo (Italy)

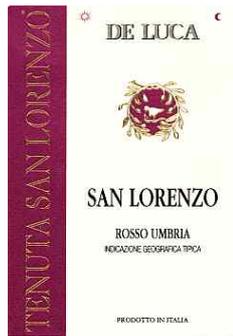
Grapes: Sagrantino

Price: € 25,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇ ★

This wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean and pleasing aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and violet followed by aromas of blueberry, licorice, vanilla and hints of cinnamon. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum and black cherry. This Sagrantino ages for 12 months in barrique.

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



**San Lorenzo Rosso 2001
Tenuta San Lorenzo (Italy)**

Grapes: Sagrantino (33%), Merlot (33%), Cabernet Sauvignon (33%)

Price: € 10,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of blackberry, black cherry and plum followed by aromas of blueberry, violet, licorice, tobacco, vanilla and hints of cocoa, menthol and nutmeg. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of blackberry, black cherry and plum. A well made wine. San Lorenzo Rosso ages in barrique for 10 months.

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

Food match: Pasta and risotto with fish, Sauteed white meat, Broiled fish



**Franciacorta Satèn Brut 2000
Villa (Italy)**

Grapes: Chardonnay

Price: € 16,40

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine shows an intense straw yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent, good effervescence, good perlage. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of apple, banana and bread crust followed by aromas of yeast, brioche, hazelnut, plum and hawthorn. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, an effervescent and crisp attack, pleasing roundness, however balanced, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of apple, pineapple and plum. The base wine of this Franciacorta is partially aged in cask and after fermentation it ages on its lees for at least 30 months.

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



**Franciacorta Cuvette Extra Dry 1999
Villa (Italy)**

Grapes: Chardonnay (80%), Pinot Noir (15%), Pinot Blanc (5%)

Price: € 17,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This Franciacorta shows a brilliant straw yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent, good effervescence, good perlage. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of bread crust, yeast and hazelnut followed by aromas of pineapple, hawthorn, banana, broom, hazelnut, grapefruit and hints of butter. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp and effervescent attack, however balanced, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness with hints of sweetness, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of grapefruit, pineapple and apple. The base wine for this Franciacorta is partially aged in barrique and after the refermentation it ages on its lees for at least 36 months.



CASTELLO DI MELETO

fiore

1999

**Fiore 1999
Castello di Meleto (Italy)**

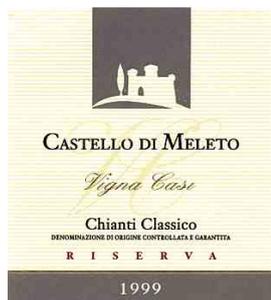
Grapes: Sangiovese (90%), Merlot (10%)

Price: € 21,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

This wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of black cherry and violet followed by good aromas of plum, blueberry, cinnamon, chocolate, licorice, tobacco, vanilla and hints of eucalyptus and nutmeg. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry. A well made wine. Fiore ages in cask for 12 months followed by 6 months of aging in bottle.

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



Chianti Classico Riserva Vigna Casi 1999
Castello di Meleto (Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 16,50

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

This Chianti Classico shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of black cherry and violet followed by aromas of plum, blueberry, licorice, tobacco, vanilla, cinnamon and hints of menthol and cocoa. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack with pleasing crispness, however well balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum and black cherry. A well made wine. This Chianti Classico reserve is aged for 24 months in cask followed by more than 6 months of aging in bottle.

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



Confini 2002
Lis Neris (Italy)

Grapes: Pinot Gris (50%), Traminer (30%), Riesling (20%)

Price: € 17,40

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

This wine shows a brilliant straw yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with good hints of white rose and grape followed by aromas of pineapple, jasmine, broom, apricot, litchi, apple, peach, grapefruit, plum and hints of sage and rosemary. In the mouth has very good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and pleasing roundness, however well balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is very persistent with good flavors of peach, litchi and plum. A well made wine. Confini ferments in cask and ages for 10 months.

Food match: Pasta with mushrooms, Spiced roasted fish, Roasted white meat



Tal Luc
LIS NERIS
2002

Tal Luc 2002
Lis Neris (Italy)

Grapes: Verduzzo Friulano (95%), Riesling (5%)

Price: € 48,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

This wine shows a brilliant amber yellow color and nuances of amber yellow very transparent. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of dried apricot and peach jam followed by aromas of quince jam, litchi, almond, melon, honey and vanilla. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a soft and sweet attack with pleasing crispness, however well balanced, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is very persistent with long flavors of melon, dried apricot, honey and peach jam. A well made wine. Tal Luc ferments in barrique.

Food match: Hard and piquant cheese, Fruit tarts, Dried fruits cakes



Monica di Sardegna Superiore Torremora 2000
Josto Puddu (Italy)

Grapes: Monica

Price: € 8,12

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of black cherry and blackberry followed by aromas of raspberry, blueberry, licorice, plum, vanilla and hints of cinnamon. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, blackberry and plum. This wine ages in cask for 12 months followed by 3 months of aging in bottle.

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



**Vernaccia di Oristano Riserva 1980
Josto Puddu (Italy)**

Grapes: Vernaccia di Oristano

Price: € 27,70

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

The wine shows a brilliant amber yellow color and nuances of amber yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with good hints of almond, dried fig and honey followed by aromas of date, licorice, hazelnut, vanilla and hints of enamel and leather. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly crisp attack and pleasing roundness, however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of dried fig, almond, hazelnut and date. A well made wine. This Vernaccia di Oristano ages with the traditional method in partially filled casks and by the effects of typical yeasts (flor).

Food match: Almond cakes, Roasted meat, Roasted fish



**Contessa Entellina Tancredi 2001
Donnafugata (Italy)**

Grapes: Nero d'Avola (70%), Cabernet Sauvignon (30%)

Price: € 17,40

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

This wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of purple red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and blueberry followed by aromas of blackberry, violet, tobacco, licorice, vanilla and hints of black pepper. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, blueberry and plum. This wine ages for 14 months in barrique followed by at least 6 months of aging in bottle.

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



**Dolcetto di Dogliani Vigna Maestra 2002
Gillardi (Italy)**

Grapes: Dolcetto

Price: € 9,50

Score: ♦♦♦♦

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

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



**Dolcetto di Dogliani Cursalet 2002
Gillardi (Italy)**

Grapes: Dolcetto

Price: € 11,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

This Dolcetto shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of purple red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of black cherry, blueberry and violet followed by aromas of raspberry, strawberry, blackberry, plum and hints of licorice. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, blackberry and plum.

Food match: Roasted meat, Stewed meat, Hard cheese



Trentino Pinot Grigio 2003
Casata Monfort (Italy)

Grapes: Pinot Gris

Price: € 7,20

Score: ◇◇◇

This wine shows an intense greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean and pleasing aromas which start with hints of pear and apple followed by aromas of acacia, banana, lemon, peach and hints of almond. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, delicate, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of peach, pear and apple. This Pinot Grigio ages for 3 months in steel tanks.

Food match: Dairy products, Fish appetizers, Pasta and risotto with vegetables and crustaceans



Trentino Chardonnay 2003
Casata Monfort (Italy)

Grapes: Chardonnay

Price: € 6,75

Score: ◇◇◇◇

This wine shows an intense greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of banana, acacia and peach followed by aromas of hawthorn, broom, litchi, apple and pear. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of banana, pear and litchi. This Chardonnay ages for 4 months in steel tanks.

Food match: Vegetables soups, Pasta and risotto with fish and vegetables, Sauteed white meat



COF Pinot Grigio 2003
Girolamo Dorigo (Italy)

Grapes: Pinot Gris

Price: € 14,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of peach, pear and apple followed by aromas of pineapple, acacia, broom and hawthorn. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of apple, pear and pineapple. This Pinot Grigio ferments in steel tanks.

Food match: Fried fish, Pasta and risotto with crustaceans and vegetables, Sauteed fish, Dairy products



COF Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso 2000
Girolamo Dorigo (Italy)

Grapes: Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso

Price: € 37,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇★

This wine shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of plum and black cherry followed by aromas of licorice, blueberry, blackberry, tobacco, vanilla, violet, cyclamen, chocolate and hints of cinnamon. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, black cherry and blueberry. A well made wine. This Refosco ages for 30 months in barrique followed by 6 months of aging in bottle.

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

WINE PRODUCERS



**Barbaresco Bric Turot 2000
Prunotto (Italy)**

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 26,50

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas that start with hints of plum, violet and black cherry followed by good aromas of blackberry, cyclamen, licorice, vanilla, blueberry, cinnamon and hints of chocolate and pink pepper. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry. A well made wine. This Barbaresco ages for 12 months in cask followed by 10 months of aging in bottle.

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



**Barolo Bussia 1999
Prunotto (Italy)**

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 29,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

This Barolo shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with good hints of black cherry and blueberry followed by good aromas of violet, blackberry, licorice, tobacco, vanilla, cinnamon and hints of chocolate and menthol. In the mouth has very good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable crispness. The finish is very persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry. A well made wine. This Barolo ages in cask for 24 months followed by 12 months of aging in bottle.

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

Altesino

In one of the most famous wine territories of Tuscany - Montalcino - Altesino has always been distinguished for its Brunello, however the production is completed with other and interesting wines

Among the many wines from Tuscany, the ones who made particularly renowned this region of central Italy are the ones produced in the central part of the region, the one going from Florence to the whole province of Siena. In these areas it is the Sangiovese grape to dominate the scene in vineyards: the excellent red berried grape - in its many clonal varieties - is practically present in every red wine. No matter in Tuscany Sangiovese grape is blended with other grapes - local and international - therefore producing different wine styles, this grape is capable of giving its very best - and probably above all - when it is being vinified alone. One of the renowned areas in Tuscany, where the Sangiovese is practically the only grape found in vineyards, is Montalcino, the picturesque town in the province of Siena and famous all over the world for its most illustrious son: Brunello di Montalcino.

Brunello - the name with which it is known in Montalcino the Sangiovese Grosso and from which it is named the famous wine - is produced only with this grape and its notoriety is today so high that only telling this name can evoke in every wine lover's mind the image of a great wine. This superb wine has been capable of resisting to the many "invasions" of other and renowned grapes: Brunello di Montalcino has always been exclusively produced, and it is still produced, with Sangiovese Grosso - or Brunello, the name with which this grape is known in its homeland - and frankly speaking it would be pretty disappointing to think about other grapes used for the production of this wine, not only for a purely traditional point of view, but also - and above all - for a reason of typicality and identifiability.

One of the wineries of Tuscany which have always been distinguished for the production of Brunello di Montalcino is Altesino. The winery is located north-east from Montalcino and the estate is of about 64 hectares (about 158 acres). Altesino is owned since 2002 by Mrs. Elisabetta Gnudi Angelini and the technical and productive management is supervised by wine maker Pietro Rivella. The winery has always



The entrance of Altesino winery



The aging cellar

been involved in the production of high quality wines, in particular Brunello di Montalcino, whose production and aging processes are done, according to strict wine making standards, in the cellars of the winery. Altesino acquired its fame as a quality wine producer thanks to its Brunellos, in particular Brunello di Montalcino Riserva and Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli.

The vineyards of the winery are spread over an area of about 27 hectares (about 66 acres) and are divided in three sub zones and precisely: Altesino, La Velona and Montosoli. Among these three sub zones, Montosoli has always been distinguished for its capacity of producing extremely elegant wines and, it is not by chance, one of the most celebrated Altesino's Brunello di Montalcino is produced with grapes from this area. The fermentation room and the cellar are situated in the structures of the Altesino Palace - a historical building of the fourteenth century, as it is witnessed by the emblem and the plate found just above the entrance door - whereas barriques used for the aging of Palazzo Altesino and Alte d'Altesino wines are located in specific temperature controlled rooms which are also property of the winery.

Besides Sangiovese Grosso, which represents the main grape cultivated in the estates of the winery and used for the production of Brunello di Montalcino, Rosso di Montalcino and Palazzo Altesino, in Altesino's vineyards are also cultivated the red berried grapes Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot - both used together with Sangiovese Grosso for the production of Alte d'Altesino - and white berried grapes Chardonnay, Trebbiano Toscano e Malvasia, used for the production of Bianco Altesino and the superb Vin Santo. At the head of every row of vines has been planted a bush of roses as a symbol of respect and care for the work done in vineyards. Despite the winery is strongly convinced of the respect of the strict traditions for the production of Brunello, Altesino's technical manager and wine maker, Claudio Basla, has dedicated many years in the experimentation in cellar by making use of French oak and blending the many varieties of grapes. This process of research has led to the production of innovative wines such as Alte d'Altesino and Palazzo Altesino - the two Altesino's *Super Tuscan*s - as well as Rosso di Altesino.

The most representative wines of Altesino certainly are the Brunellos, in particular Brunello di Montalcino Riserva - exclusively produced in the best years - and Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli. The former wine is produced with grapes

cultivated in the Altesino and Montosoli vineyards whereas the latter with grapes exclusively cultivated in the vineyard from which it takes its name. The style of Altesino's Brunello is characterized by typical and pleasing aromas of violet, black berried fruits and elegant aromas passed by the aging in wood, full bodied as well as elegant. Also very interesting it is Alte d'Altesino - a blend of Sangiovese Grosso, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon in equal parts - full bodied and elegant. Also Palazzo Altesino - the other Altesino's *Super Tuscan* is exclusively produced with Sangiovese Grosso - it can be appreciated for its good and complex aromas and for its full body. A special mention should certainly be awarded to Vin Santo d'Altesino, a wonderful and superb sweet wine produced with Trebbiano Toscano and Malvasia Toscana, enchanting for its never ending and charming aromas which are perfectly confirmed by taste - sweet and velvety - a poetry which almost seems to be heavenly.



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



**Palazzo Altesino 2000
Altesino (Italy)**

Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 15,00

Score: ❖❖❖❖

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of dried violet and dried plum followed by aromas of black cherry, blueberry, blackberry, licorice, tobacco, vanilla and hints of chocolate. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, black cherry and blackberry. A well made wine. Palazzo Altesino ages for about 12 months in barrique and for 3 months in bottle.

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



Brunello di Montalcino 1999
Altesimo (Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 19,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of black cherry, plum and blackberry followed by aromas of blueberry, dried violet, tobacco, licorice, chocolate, vanilla and hints of earthy. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blueberry. A well made wine. This Brunello di Montalcino ages for 4 years in cask followed by 4 months of aging in bottle.

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



Alte d'Altesi 2001
Altesimo (Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

Price: € 15,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

This wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas that start with hints of black cherry, plum and blackberry followed by aromas of black currant, tobacco, licorice, violet, bell pepper, vanilla and hints of menthol and clove. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however well balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and black currant. A well made wine. Alte d'Altesi ages for 12-14 months in barrique followed by 3 months of aging in bottle.

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



Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli 1999
Altesimo (Italy)

Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 35,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

This wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean and pleasing aromas that start with hints of plum jam and black cherry jam followed by aromas of blackberry, tobacco, licorice, dried violet, vanilla, chocolate and hints of pink pepper and underbrush. In the mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannic attack and however balanced, full body, intense flavors, good tannins. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum jam and black cherry jam. This Brunello di Montalcino ages for 4 years in cask followed by 4 months of aging in bottle.

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



Colli dell'Etruria Centrale Vin Santo d'Altesi 1996
Altesimo (Italy)

Grapes: Trebbiano Toscano, Malvasia Toscana

Price: € 30,00 - 375ml

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

This wine shows a deep amber yellow color and nuances of amber yellow, transparent. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas that start with good hints of fig jam and caramel followed by aromas of candied fruit, leather, almond, dried apricot, hazelnut, walnut, dried plum, honey, vanilla and hints of enamel. In the mouth has very good correspondence to the nose, a round

attack with pleasing crispness, well balanced, full bodied, intense flavors, caressing and velvety. The finish is persistent with flavors of fig jam, dried plum, walnut and caramel. A well made wine. This Vin Santo ages for 5-7 years in small casks followed by 4 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Piquant cheese, Confectionery, Dried fruits tarts and desserts

Altesino - Loc. Altesino, 54 - 39018 Torrenieri di Montalcino, Siena (Italy) - Tel. +39 577 806208 Fax +39 577 806131 - **Winemaker:** Pietro Rivella - **Established:** 1970 - **Production:** 200.000 bottles - **E-Mail:** info@altesino.it - **WEB:** www.altesino.it

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 information and promotions about their products and activity. Send news to be published at the e-mail address CellarJournal@DiWineTaste.com.

EVENTS

Aquavitae: the Column Dedicated to Distillates

From this month a new DiWineTaste's column dedicated to brandy, grappa and distillates made of fruit

This month arrives another news in DiWineTaste, a new column dedicated to distillates made of wine and wine byproducts, such as grappa and brandies, and distillates made of fruits, as well as distillates made from other raw matters. The name of this new column is Aquavitae, a name borrowed by the noble Latin language and father of the Italian language,



Grappa: one of the distillates to which is dedicated the new Aquavitae column

typically used since centuries to refer to this kind of beverages. Every month you will find in Aquavitae a review of brandies and distillates tasted and evaluated by our committee. Distillates are being evaluated according to the system already in use for wines - diamonds and star - and already known by our readers.

The new column was created also because of the feedback received from our readers who have always shown a particular interest and attention to this kind of distillates. We are also convinced that distillates - just like wine - represent a specific and precious culture and tradition of the people in which they are being produced. We wish our modest contribution will help the spreading and knowledge of this kind of products and that will also contribute to the spreading of the right and correct culture about the consumption of distillates. Just like for wines, even in distillates the pleasure is expressed by moderation, while meditating in small sips the aromas and tastes that expert masters of the distillation were capable of creating with their job. We wish this new column will meet the interest of our readers and that will let them to know new products. As always, comments and suggestions from our readers - as well as criticisms - are always welcome. We invite all distillates producers which are interested in the reviewing of their products in our Aquavitae column, to contact us by writing to our e-mail address or to fill in the module available at our site.

News

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

CORKSCREW

Production of White Wine

From white berried grapes, as well as from red berried ones, can be produced pleasing and aromatic golden rivers of Bacchus nectar, where aromas of fruit and flowers join a pleasing crispness

Whoever is really interested in the sensorial tasting of wine - including every lover of the beverage of Bacchus - should know the many procedures needed for the production of wine. Of course, in order to taste or appreciate wine it is not required to be a wine maker - noble representatives of the wine making science - however it is indisputable that knowing how wine is produced, even though superficially, represents a huge advantage in order to better understand and know what was poured in a glass. A wine taster - if we consider this job in its typical form - is not a wine maker and does not have the same level of knowledge of a wine maker about the techniques used for the production of wine. A wine maker - on the other hand and considering this job in general terms - has a knowledge and capacity about the practices of the wine making higher than a wine taster. It should however be observed that every good



Inside view of a cellar

wine maker should also be a good wine taster. The wine taster dedicates its profession - or its passion - to the organoleptic and sensorial evaluation of a wine - in other words, he or she evaluates the work of wine makers - and in order to do this in a reliable and objective way, it is necessary that he or she knows the fundamental principles of wine making.

A Simple but Complex Process

Making wine is relatively simple, making good wine is pretty difficult, making good quality wine is very difficult. The production of wine is basically the result of a series of natural events which begin with fermentation, a chemical process in which sugar contained in grape juice - the must - is transformed by yeasts into alcohol and carbon dioxide. In case environmental and climatic conditions are sufficiently favorable, also supported by a good contribution of human work, the process *naturally* leads to the production of wine. Whether it is true that nature plays a fundamental role by providing the raw matter - the grape - indeed it is the intervention of other fundamental and side factors - including the intervention of man - that will lead to the production of wines having different levels of quality. No matter the overall quality of wine currently commercialized has increased in the last twenty years, consumers, also thanks to a higher and conscious wine culture, have become more exacting. This condition forces, like to say, producers to pay a higher attention and a higher strictness in the wine making practices in which the human intervention may play a role in the improvement of the quality of the finished product.

The role of a wine maker in a winery is both fundamental and strategic, because it is this important professional figure that will make the main decisions about the style of wine to be made, to the processing of raw matters and the development of the many productive processes. These decisions are usually made according to the environment in which he or she works in, the geographic area and the type of grapes cultivated in vineyards, both traditional and introduced with the specific goal of making a wine having specific qualities. The experience of the wine maker is fundamental and its work, besides controlling the quality of all the production process, is basically based on decisions made at the right moment and in the right way. The first decision to be made is about the time of the harvesting of grapes, a crucial factor that mainly depends

on the right level of ripeness of grapes and according to the style of wine to be made. This is just the first decision a wine maker has to make and this also sets the beginning of the productive processes that will lead to the creation of a new wine.

The Production of White Wine

The process of the production of wine begins with harvesting, when grapes reach the right level of ripeness suitable for the style of wine to be made. The kind of grapes which are more frequently used for the production of this type of wine are white berried varieties, however, despite the fact this could sound pretty strange, white wines can also be produced with red berried grapes. The color of grape juice - of any variety and including the red berried ones - always shows a color having yellow-gray hues with nuances of green. The color in red wines is obtained thanks to the maceration of skins in the must - a factor which also depends by the coloring capacity of the grape and by the time of maceration - therefore from a must of red berried grapes, rapidly separated from skins after having being pressed, it is possible to make white wines. Most of the white sparkling wines - such as Champagne or Franciacorta - are produced with must obtained by Pinot Noir which was not macerated with its skins.

Talking in general terms, it could seem like the production of quality white wines is easier than reds, indeed this style of wine requires special care and attention, a condition that must be ensured since the beginning of harvesting. In white wines it is fundamental and essential that grapes, as soon as they are harvested, arrive in the winery in perfect conditions with unbroken and not crushed berries. Any accidental breaking of the skin can in fact allow the releasing of polyphenols in the juice and the loss of part of the most delicate aromas. Moreover it is essential, in order to obtain a quality product, that soon after the harvesting the grape must be processed as soon as possible, a time which is of about 15 minutes in the majority of cases. The first procedure to which grape is being processed is the elimination of the stem - rich in polyphenols and astringent substances that would compromise the taste of white wine - by using a special machine called *destemmer*.

In many cases this type of machine is also called *crusher-stemmer* because, besides separating the bunch from the stem, it also press the berries and therefore breaking the skin and provoking the leaking of the precious juice that will be gathered in specific tanks. Grape's aromas that characterize wine are found in the skin, however in this part are also contained polyphenols, having an astringent taste, and that in white wines is always considered as a negative factor. The extraction of aromas is favored by the maceration of the must - the grape juice - in skins while avoiding any extraction of polyphenols. For this reason the must is cooled down and allowed to macerate in the skins for few hours in order to get enriched with precious aromas. The must and the skins are then pressed by using a press therefore completing the extraction of the juice from the berries. The modern trend is to lightly press berries in order to extract only the most delicate and precious juice therefore leaving the most "ordinary" juice in the pulp of the berry. Of course, the lesser the pressing force and the lesser the produced must and the greater the quality.



Concrete tanks for the fermentation of wines

From Must to Wine

After the operations of crushing and pressing, the must is almost ready to be transformed into wine. Before proceeding with the fermentation, the must is usually decanted or filtered in order to remove any solid substance - such as pips - and in order to obtain a limpid liquid. The must is usually made limpid in a relatively short period of time by using specific filters or by centrifugation. The next stage is fermentation, a process which is generally spontaneously activated by yeasts found in the environment as well as in the skins to which the juice has been in contact with even for a short time. It should however be observed that some wine makers prefer to add selected yeast cultures to the must in order to have a better and more accurate control over the fermentation process. Moreover it should be remembered that fermentation, besides transforming sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide, develops most of the wine aromas - generally defined as *secondary aromas* - whose finesse is also dependent by the quality of yeasts.

Of course, the main goal of fermentation in white wines is to transform sugar into alcohol, however it is also essential the keeping of freshness and elegance of aromas, therefore this process is usually done at a temperature of about 10°-18° C (50°-65° F). This temperature - lower than the one used for red wines - also allows a slow fermentation, essential for the keeping of the best aromas. The fermentation of white wines is usually done in special steel tanks in which the temperature is constantly controlled in order to avoid excessive and dangerous raising of temperature above the desired one. In particular styles of wines, usually the ones produced with Chardonnay, the fermentation can also be done in casks in order to increase body as well as to enrich the wine with aromas passed from wood. In this case the cask is partially filled, in order to avoid the spilling of the must because of fermentation, and temperature, in this case higher, will favor the extraction of the aromatic components of wood while covering the fresh aromas of grapes which will be replaced by more complex ones.

At the end of the fermentation process, yeasts, after having transformed sugar into alcohol and having no more food available, deteriorate and deposit to the bottom of the fermentation container while forming a thick mush. At this point the wine

can be transferred in other containers, or it can be left in contact with its yeasts for some months, sometimes one year, in order to increase the aromatic and gustatory complexity. One of the typical and main characteristics of white wine is represented by the strong and agreeable acidity, therefore this gustatory factor is kept in most of the cases. For this reason - except for particular white wines with a higher structure - the activation of malolactic fermentation is scrupulously avoided, that is the chemical and spontaneous process that occurs in spring-time and with the raising of temperature in which malic acid - harsh and sour - is transformed into lactic acid, sweeter and less harsh. Malolactic fermentation in white wines - a process which is useful for red wines - besides lowering the acidity of wine is also responsible for other organoleptic alterations, in particular the development of banana and butter aromas, typical, for example, in wines produced with Chardonnay that underwent this process.

Malolactic fermentation is usually avoided in white wines by means of proper filtering in order to completely remove any yeast and bacteria that can activate this process. Other methods used for avoiding malolactic fermentation are chilling the wine to a pretty low temperature or by adding sulfur dioxide. The next stage is about stabilization of wine, an operation which is usually done by chilling the wine to pretty low temperatures and by keeping it to this condition for some days. The goal of this stabilization is to promote the precipitation of tartrates - crystalline formations and byproducts of tartaric acid - in order to avoid their formation during the practices of keeping and aging. The presence of tartrates - it should be remembered - does not influence the organoleptic qualities of wine and it does not represent a negative factor, however it affects wine's appearance and for this reason they are being removed by means of stabilization.

At the end of stabilization, the process of the production of white wine is about to enter the last phase consisting in the aging and refinement. The aging is done in specific containers in which the material used for their construction will influence the development and the evolution of the wine's organoleptic character. The containers typically used for the aging of wine are made of steel or concrete, therefore inert materials, or wood, that is casks having different volumes. The choice of the usage of casks will cause a pretty strong transformation of wine's qualities, by adding aromas, structure and typical characters of wood while covering the freshness and finesse of fruit and floral aromas. The strength of the "woody" characters depends by many factors, including the level of the toasting of the wood as well as the period of time the wine spent in the cask. White wine aged in inert containers will keep its fresh aromas of fruit and flower and this is the practice used for the majority of wines produced with delicate and aromatic grapes.

At the end of the aging, the wine is ready to be bottled. Before proceeding with this operation, white wine is further filtered and clarified in order to remove any possible impurity produced during the aging and therefore obtaining a more refined product with no faults. After bottling, the wine is usually left in cellar to age for some months - usually from three to six months - and finally it is ready for being commercialized and to gladden the glasses of wine lovers.

NOT JUST WINE

Soya

The famous Asiatic legume is now considered among the most important sources of vegetal proteins for human nutrition and it is widely used also thanks to its many derivatives

Soya is a legume cultivated all over the world - it is extremely adaptable and resistant - and it is a very important food because its seeds contain proteins, lipids and minerals in greater quantity than other legumes, moreover it has the capacity of lowering the level of cholesterol in blood.

Botanical Characteristics

According to a botanical point of view soya belongs to the leguminosae family and originated in Central Asia, flowers can have colors from red to white as well as violet, it grows, just like most of legumes, in small pods of 3-5 centimeters long (1-2 inches) containing some small seeds similar to beans. Pods grow in the plant concentrated in clusters. Every pod normally contains 2 or 3 seeds although this may vary from plant to plant, both for the shape and for the color, even though, at the time of harvesting, they usually get a brown color because the external part of the pod dries before full ripeness. Just like other plants belonging to the family, soya can absorb azote directly from the air and to store it, thanks to the actions of some bacteria, in its roots. For this reason in China it was cultivated in order to increase the quantity of azote in the soil and the plant was used as a food for animals whereas only sprouts were used for human nutrition. In the western world this function was ensured by lucern, clover and pea.

Among the main varieties of soya are mentioned:

- **Yellow soya** - it is the most common soya and from which are produced all the derivatives
- **Black soya** - mainly consumed in the production places
- **Red Soya** - also known as "azuki beans", it has a red color
- **Green soya** - also known as "mung beans" or "green gram". It is mainly used for the production of sprouts and the renowned soybean noodles

The soya varieties are divided in two main groups: determinative and non determinative. Determinative varieties blossom in a specific period of the year, that is when daytime gets shorter. On the other hand, non determinative varieties continue to blossom and to bear fruits.

History

The first information about soya are from China where it was cultivated for the first time about 5,000 years ago. The emperor of that time included soya in the five sacred plants (the others were rice, millet, barley and wheat) and he called it "Ta Teou" (big bean). In ancient times soya was used to enrich the soil of azote. The first usage of soya as a food was done with the discovery of fermentation, in fact, the first foods



Yellow soya and soya sprouts

based on soybean were fermented, such as *tempeh*, *natto*, *miso* and *soy sauce*. It seems that Chinese learnt from Japanese the technique for the production of tofu, the renowned bean curd.

It was during the Heian dynasty (794-1185) Dutch knew the Japanese soy sauce. The first information of soya outside China is dated back to around 1804 when it was used as a ballast for an American sailing-ship. The first commercial plantations of soya were started around 1929 and the main destination was the production of soy sauce. The spreading and notoriety of soya began soon after this period therefore getting more and more importance as well as becoming a source of proteins for humans and animals, besides, of course, its usage in many industrial products. Today it is being mainly cultivated in the United States, Brazil, China, India, Argentina and Italy. Soya represents the main transgenic cultivation and its commercialization is currently forbidden in Europe, whereas in the United States represents about 50% of total production and in Brazil it is even as high as 64%.

Soya Derivatives

From soya are being produced many foods and of which are mentioned:

- **Soy sauce** - produced by boiling soybeans, wheat and barley in water and salt and subsequently fermented
- **Sprouts** - can be produced with sprouts of yellow, green and red soya and are used as vegetables
- **Soybean milk** - it is obtained by the maceration of soybeans in water and it is now pretty common. It is used as a substitute of cow milk even though it lacks of vitamin D and calcium, for this reason are being commercialized products based on soybean milk and enriched with vitamins and minerals. Soybean milk does not contain any lactose and therefore can also be consumed by subjects intolerant to this element. Because of the nickel contained in this food, soybean milk can be cause, in sensitive subjects, of allergic reactions. Just like every derivative of soya, it does not contain cholesterol
- **Tofu** - also known as "bean curd", it is produced by the coagulation of soybean milk. Just like the other derivatives of soya, it does not contain cholesterol and it is rich

in vitamins, however it contains small quantities of calcium and mineral salts. From many it is being used as a substitute of eggs and meat

- **Tempeh** - it is boiled and fermented soybeans and mashed into a creamy compound with a characteristic taste. It is being used as a condiment for pasta, rice, sandwiches and salads. It is very common in Indonesia
- **Tao you** - it is a sauce produced with black soya
- **Natto** - it is fermented soybeans, just like tempeh, however the fermentation is done by using a different type of yeast
- **Miso** - it is a derivative of soybean milk. It is very common in Japan where it is being used as a condiment for soups
- **Soybean ice cream** - it is produced with soybean milk. As opposed to regular ice cream, it does not contain any cholesterol or lactose, it is a completely vegetal product and generally provides 50% of the calories provided by regular ice cream
- **Tamari** - it is a condiment produced with salted yellow soybeans and fermented in wood barrels for three years
- **Shoyu** - it is just like tamari with wheat added
- **Soya lecithin** - it is a phospholipid extracted from soybean, used in the industry as an aromatic substance, as antioxidant as well as a natural emulsifying agent. It is usually found in integrative foods and in products for lowering the quantity of cholesterol in blood. Soya lecithin keeps in suspension the cholesterol found in blood while avoiding its deposit in the arteries. Soya lecithin also provide vitamin A and phosphor, two important antioxidant elements
- **Soybean flour** - soybean flour is obtained by milling the seeds, and in case lipids are being removed, it is obtained a highly proteinic food. Soybean flour can be used for cooking and as a substitute for wheat flour
- **Soybean oil** - it is obtained by pressing heated soybean seeds and therefore chemically processed, it is rich in fat and polyunsaturated acids
- **Soybean meat** - it is soybean flour processed with a particular method in order to give it meat consistency
- **Soybean nuts** - soybeans cooked in oil or toasted, they are used as a condiment in some recipes
- **Soybean yogurt** - it is produced with soybean milk

Among these products soya lecithin deserves a thoroughly consideration. Despite the fact the consumption of soya in the form of beans is not very high, its cultivation is practiced extensively and intensively. The reason of this is soya lecithin and its characteristics. In order to understand this phenomenon it is necessary to know that soya lecithin is widely available and at a low cost, moreover it is capable, thanks to its properties, to mix substances that would not be however mixed, such as water and fats. Lecithin lets water to get mixed with cocoa powder therefore obtaining a thick and fluid chocolate, it avoids butter to separate from water and sugar to recrystallize. It also allows to lighten any fat substance by adding water. Thanks to this characteristic it can be produced margarine, made of 80% of fats and 20% of water. In pastry cooking

soybean flour is added to wheat flour in order to increase the retention of liquids, therefore delaying products dryness. This anti retroactive property of lecithin gives meat a higher quantity of water and it is also used for the production of cold cuts, hamburger and minced meat. The food industry is not the only one which makes use of soya lecithin: the cosmetic industry makes a wide use of its emulsifying properties, it is also used for the production of paints and in the composition of gas oil. Another characteristic of soya lecithin - which also increase its versatility - is represented by the fact of being odorless, therefore it is widely used as an aroma emphasize and used as a substitute of fats.

Nutritional Qualities

Soybean is one of the richest legumes in proteins - it contains an average of 33-44% - as well as fats (18%) and carbohydrates (23%). Proteins contained in soybean do not ensure a complete contribution of aminoacids, for this reason it is defined as a product of "average biological value". Thanks to the presence of phytosterols capable of lowering the quantity of cholesterol in blood, as well as isoflavones, substances which naturally regulate the production of hormones, it is considered as a particularly healthy plant.

A particular consideration is to be done for soybean's fats, because they contain substances difficult to obtain from the foods of our diet, that is the famous omega 3 and omega 6. In fact, our organism can synthesize all fat acids except alpha-linolenic acid (belonging to the family of omega 6) and linoleic acid (belonging to the family of omega 3). From these two fat acids the human organism can synthesize all the other polyunsaturated fat acids. These two substances are very important because play a role in the growing process, the production of energy, the synthesis of hemoglobin, the reduction of total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. Soybean oil is a good product for the ones who need to integrate these substances in their diet. Among Japanese women, as well as Asiatic women, it is found a low incidence of diseases connected to the production of estrogens, such as endometriosis, fibrocystic mastoiditis, carcinoma and menopause related pathologies. This seems to be because in those people they are widely used soybean products, in particular tofu. Isoflavones contained in soybean can balance both the excess of estrogens - such as in case of premenstrual syndrome - and the lacks of them - such as in menopause - therefore restoring correct values. For men the consumption of soybean can prevent prostate cancer.

Isoflavones contained in soybean are capable of inhibiting the growth of cancerous cells in breast and in lungs. A regular consumption of soybean, or of its derivatives, it is therefore a natural way of preventing cancerous diseases. According to a report published by the journal of the "National Cancer Institute" it is said that a laboratory study has individuated in "genistein" the possible anticancer agent of soybean. Genistein seems to affect the metabolism of cancerous cells by weakening their defenses, while allowing medical treatment, such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy, to have a better efficacy. This can be seen as a good reason to add soybean in our diet, however it should be remembered genistein is found in the proteinic parts of the seed and therefore it can be found, for example, in tofu but not in soybean oil. All these character-

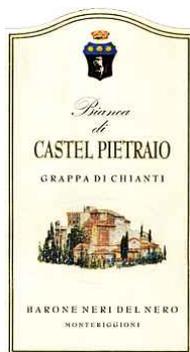
istics could suggest a huge consumption of soybean, however this is not the case: it should be remembered that Chinese, since the most ancient times, have consumed only fermented soybean because the legume contains some toxins. One hundred grams of soybean contains: 36.9 grams of proteins, 18.1 grams of lipids, 23.3 grams of carbohydrates, 0 grams of cholesterol and 398 Kcal. When properly processed soybean can perfectly substitute in taste, appearance and consistency, animal proteins.

In cooking soybean can be consumed in many ways: soy sauce, soybean milk, tofu, soybean steaks and more. It should be remembered soya is one of the main plants which are subjected to genetic manipulation. Many food producers do not ensure the use of non genetically manipulated soya, therefore it is advisable to carefully read the labels in which it should be clearly written the origin of the food.

Aquavitae

Review of Grappa, Distillates and Brandy

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



Grappa Bianca di Castel Pietraio
Fattoria di Castel Pietraio (Italy)
 (Distiller: Nannoni)

Raw matter: Pomace of Chianti Colli Senesi

Price: € 13,50 - 50cl

Score: ◇◇◇

This grappa is colorless, limpid and crystalline. The nose reveals intense, pleasing and clean aromas of raspberry, hazelnut, pear, banana with the pungency of alcohol almost imperceptible. The taste is agreeable with clearly perceivable sweetness which contributes to the good harmony of this grappa, alcohol in good presence without prevailing too much, good roundness and intense flavors. The finish is persistent and intense with a sweet hint and a slightly bitter aftertaste and with flavors of hazelnut and pear. Alcohol: 42%



Grappa di Shiraz
Casale del Giglio (Italy)
 (Distiller: Distilleria Pilzer)

Raw matter: Pomace of Syrah

Price: € 14,40 - 50cl

Score: ◇◇◇★

This grappa is colorless, limpid and crystalline. The nose reveals intense, clean and pleasing aromas of blackberry, raspberry, pear, hazelnut and black cherry, alcohol pungency almost imperceptible. The taste is agreeable with pretty strong alcohol and pleasing hints of sweetness, however balances, good roundness although basically dry, intense flavors, pleasing. The finish is intense and persistent with a pleasing hint of sweetness and a slightly bitter aftertaste with flavors of raspberry and black cherry. Alcohol: 43%



Grappa del Chianti Classico
Castello di Meleto (Italy)
 (Distiller: Nannoni)

Raw matter: Pomace of Chianti Classico

Price: € 12,50 - 50cl

Score: ◇◇◇★

The grappa is colorless, limpid and crystalline. The nose denotes intense, clean and pleasing aromas of violet, raspberry, apple, pear and hints of hay and underbrush, alcohol pungency almost imperceptible. The taste is pleasing with clearly perceivable sweetness however balanced by alcohol which is not excessively strong, good roundness and intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent and intense with a pleasing sweet aftertaste and flavors of raspberry and pear. Alcohol: 42%



**Grappa del Chianti Classico Riserva
Castello di Meleto (Italy)**
(Distiller: Nannoni)

Raw matter: Pomace of Chianti Classico

Price: € 15,00 - 50cl

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This grappa shows a golden yellow color, limpid and crystalline. The nose reveals intense, clean and pleasing aromas of hazelnut, honey, licorice, vanilla, banana, raspberry, pear, balanced alcohol pungency. The taste is agreeable, good roundness, very agreeable sweet flavor and alcohol clearly perceivable but not aggressive, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent and intense with good balance of sweet and bitter tastes and flavors of vanilla, pear and honey. Pleasing. Alcohol: 42%



**Grappa di San Leonardo
Tenuta San Leonardo (Italy)**

Raw matter: Pomace of San Leonardo

Price: € 18.50 - 70cl

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This grappa is colorless, limpid and crystalline. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean and pleasing aromas of raspberry, apple, pear, hazelnut and black cherry and pleasing hints of herbaceous such as hay and bell pepper, alcohol pungency almost imperceptible. The taste is agreeable, round and soft, a pleasing sweet taste and good balance of alcohol, not particularly aggressive, intense flavors, pleasing. The finish is persistent and intense with good balance of sweet and bitter tastes and flavors of black cherry, pear and hazelnut. Very pleasing. Alcohol: 43%



**Grappa di San Leonardo Stravecchia
Tenuta San Leonardo (Italy)**

Raw matter: Pomace of San Leonardo

Price: € 90,00 - 2l

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

This grappa shows a brilliant amber yellow color, limpid and crystalline. The nose reveals good personality with intense, clean, refined and elegant aromas of vanilla, honey, dried fig, licorice, chocolate, tobacco, hazelnut, ripe apple, ripe banana, well balanced alcohol pungency. The taste is agreeable and reveals its toasted character, pleasing sweet taste and pretty perceivable alcohol although not aggressive, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent and intense with good balance of sweet and bitter tastes and good flavors of licorice, honey and ripe banana. Very agreeable. This grappa ages for about 5 years in barrique. Alcohol: 45%

Wine Parade

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

Rank		Wine, Producer
1	↔	Turriga 1998, Argiolas (Italy)
2	➤	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi 1999, Tedeschi (Italy)
3	➤	Alto Adige Gewürztraminer Kolbenhof 2002, Hofstätter (Italy)
4	➤	Anjou 2001, Domaine de Montgilet (France)
5	➤	Margaux 2000, Ségla (France)
6	➤	Franciacorta Cuvée Annamaria Clementi 1996, Ca' del Bosco (Italy)
7	➤	Rioja Reserva Era Costana 1999, Bodegas Ondarre (Spain)
8	➤	Barolo Cicala 1999, Poderi Aldo Conterno (Italy)
9	➤	Syrah Winemaker's Lot Vic 3, Concha y Toro (Chile)
10	➤	Riesling Cuvée Frédéric Emile 1999, Maison Trimbach (France)
11	➤	Brunello di Montalcino Prime Donne 1998, Donatella Cinelli Colombini (Italy)
12	➤	Aglianico del Vulture La Firma 2000, Cantine del Notaio (Italy)
13	➤	Harmonium 2001, Firriato (Italy)
14	☆	Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Villa Gemma 1999, Masciarelli (Italy)
15	☆	Cabernet Shiraz Bin 389 2001, Penfolds (Australia)

Legend: ➤ up ➤ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry