

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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We Are All Experts and Nobody Dares to Deny It!

Italy, when it comes to wine, is a very and evidently rich country. Richness in grape varieties like no other place in the world, a wealth allowing a wine making diversity having no equals. I have written about this many times, I will do this in future and with pride, of course. The many faces of Italian wine are expressed in many contexts, telling about countless identities and *point of views*, certainly distinct and frequently in evident contrast. Part of this phenomenon is clearly also the *fad* going on since a long time and having wine as the protagonist of endless debates, a subject for which everyone believes to have something to say, as well as expecting to be even authoritative. It was once said, as it is commonly known, Italy is a country of football coaches, everyone is an unexceptionable expert with visions and strategies originating from their living rooms and bars. Nowadays, besides still having this *title*, Italians have also become very experts in many others subjects and disciplines, in particular wine and cooking.

Italy, besides being a country of excellent football coaches, has also become a country of wine makers, vintners, wine experts and, last but not the least, amazing chefs and cooking masters. All this is happening - magic of our times - by comfortably staying at home, sitting in the sofas of our living rooms and with a TV remote controller at hand, a tablet or a mouse. Every TV station is broadcasting at least one show about cooking, showing how good they are in using pans while giving the illusion that, after all, cooking is a simple and funny game everyone can play. Everyone can be an expert chef by simply staying at home while sitting on the sofa. Not to mention, of course, the ending part of the show is always about the majestic pairing of what has been cooked in few minutes in front of cameras with the best wine. We are Italians: we are very serious about cooking, not to mention wine. We are all incredible chefs and wine experts. And football coaches, of course.

Every phenomenon that, anyway, becomes an expression of the masses, simply definable as a *fad*, unavoidably undergoes changes, frequently cause of confusion and ending up being negative elements. The more the phenomenon catches the at-

tention of masses, the more the chances of speculations, favoring the many schools of thought, not only for the evident hope of making money, but also for creating small *market niches*. Wine is no exception, not to mention cooking. After all, if we consider the growth of the number of wineries and restaurants in the last recent years, the trend is very clear. Everyone is, of course, the ultimate defender of his or her own wine or cooking vision, paladins of traditions and absolute truths, showed off with powerful shields and no one can criticize or deny them. Everyone believes that, in his or her own winery or kitchen, is being celebrated the only and real expression of the majestic identity of wine or cooking. Italians, after all, are all wine and cooking experts: wineries and restaurants are no exception.

Not to mention what it is happening on the Internet, a virtual place which changed our lives, where everyone - in theory - can say everything, most of the times telling disputable tales while expecting of not being criticized. In few minutes, with the help of the so called *social networks* and a simple web site, everyone can experience the excitement of becoming an authoritative, revered and feared *wine influencer* and also being convinced about it. On this regard, Internet is the ideal place for all those supposed experts about any subject, including wine and cooking, of course. Shielded by the reassuring light of a display, safe from any direct debate, everyone can write his or her own thought by believing to be indispensable and unquestionable. They frequently forget the fact that, for the simple act of expressing a thought in a public place, everyone is subject of criticism from others and this is evidently obvious. Things easily get for the worse and becomes what can be sadly seen in some TV shows: lots of insults, most of the times supported by the authoritative *you don't know who I am*. With a hurt pride for having suffered from the crime of *non-existent lèse-majesté*, they get angry for the fact someone dared to criticize or deny the prophetic words of such messiahs. After all, when someone has a tablet or a keyboard and writes something, it is because he or she is an authoritative expert and his or her thought is clearly an indisputable verdict, the only revealed and absolute truth.

They are shielded by their arrogance like *I've seen things*

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you people wouldn't believe, imagining being a haughty emulator of the replicant Roy Batty in the famous Ridley Scott's movie Blade Runner with the majestic soundtrack by Vangelis. They cannot believe there are some more competent than them - really competent - capable of denying certain suppositions with concrete and tangible facts. In this case, of course, the one who dared to criticize the words of these *wine prophets*, is usually referred to be at the *service* of who knows what obscure organization conspiring against the truth. That truth known by them only and that, most of the times, they do not even have any concrete fact to support them, just their supposition that, as such, cannot be denied. It seems like watching the typical debates of any football team supporters, everyone fiercely and strenuously defending their own sides. After all, we all are football coaches. And wine and cooking experts, of course.

Just like every expression of the masses, there are factions and sides, everyone proudly believes to be on the right side, supporters of an ideology which cannot be and must not be debated. Indeed - and this is my very personal opinion - wine, just like every cultural expression of men - and wine certainly is one of them - has no absolute rules and cannot have any. Strongly influenced by preferences, tastes, vision, culture and interpretations everyone of us unavoidably has, wine gets many identities and expressions. None of them is true and unarguable, none of them is false and questionable. Each of them is simply an expression of the same thing seen from different sides, interpreted, felt and considered in a different way. I admit many of these expressions do not meet my personal vision of wine, however there would not be any good reason for not considering or understanding them. It would be a mistake and a silly, unforgivable arrogance. Then there are those who make me smile, those who make wine a personal matter of vanity and presumption, of poor self celebration as well as obtuse and pitiful arrogance. I don't understand them and maybe there is nothing to understand. After all Italy is the country of wine and cooking experts. And we all are very good football coaches, of course. No one dares to deny it!

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WINE TASTING

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Contrasts of Trebbiano Toscano and Albana

Two white grapes compared in the glasses of this month. The former usually blended to other grapes, the latter mainly vinified alone.

This month we are going to cover the subject of white grapes by examining two important varieties of the Italian wine scene. They are grapes very common in their respective regions - Tuscany and Emilia Romagna, specifically, the eastern part of this region - and are used for the production of many wines. Trebbiano Toscano and Albana - these are the grapes of our tasting by contrast of this month - are in fact widely used for the production of wines and, as for the Tuscan grape, it was once used in some red wines as well, in particular Chianti according to the famous formula of Baron Ricasoli. Albana is mainly used alone for the production of wines belonging to the *Denominazione d'Origine Controllata e Garantita* Romagna Albana DOCG. These two grapes are easily recognized when they are in our glasses, capable of giving their character to the wines in which are used.

It should be said the two grapes does not have, like to say, a *strong* personality, a consideration mainly true for Trebbiano Toscano. Also in terms of versatility both grapes express different qualities. Of the two, Albana certainly is the one having a better versatility, used for the production of many wine styles, from sparkling to sweet wines. Trebbiano Toscano is mainly used for the production of table wines and, in certain cases, it is also used in sweet wines from dried grapes, in particular the so called *Vin Santo* typical in Central Italy. Moreover, it should be noticed Trebbiano Toscano is the fundamental grape for the production of the famous wine distillates Cognac and Armagnac, glories of France where this variety is known as *Ugni Blanc*. From a sensorial and organoleptic point of view, Albana and Trebbiano Toscano are very different one from each other, from appearance to taste, they are evidently different for their respective characters.

Trebbiano Toscano

Trebbiano Toscano is one of the many varieties belonging to the numerous family of the so called *trebbiani*, grapes whose origin is most of the times unknown. There are in fact many grapes identified with this name and, besides "Toscano", are mentioned Trebbiano d'Abruzzo, Romagnolo, Giallo, Modenese, Spoletino as well as Trebbiano di Soave and Lugana. It would be noticed that, despite they are all identified by the same name, all these varieties have no genetic connection and - as a matter of fact - they are distinct grapes. Everyone agrees on the origin of the name from Latin *trebullanum* and mentioned in the monumental *Naturalis Historia* by Pliny the Elder. The famous naturalist of ancient Rome mentioned, in fact, that in the *agro trebullanis* - that is in the country of *Trebula* near the modern Capua - was produced a *vinum trebullanum* (wine of *Trebula*). It should also be noticed that, in past times, the term *Trebula* was used for the identification of many villages, in particular in Central Italy. Therefore the term *trebullanum* - Italianized in "trebbiano" - will later get the meaning of something or someone, in our case grape, typical of a certain

place.

According to Andrea Bacci, as mentioned in his book *De Naturali Vinorum Historia*, Trebbiano Toscano is named after a *trebula* village of ancient Etruria and located near the modern town Luni. This variety is today one of the most cultivated grapes in Italy and it is virtually found all over Central Italy and in other regions as well. In its historical journey, Trebbiano Toscano unavoidably got names and expressions according to the viticultural adaptation of the places in which was introduced. On this regard, it should be noticed Procanico grape of Umbria, used for the production of Orvieto DOC is indeed Trebbiano Toscano. Moreover, some believe Biancame, the grape used for the production of Bianchetto del Metauro, is indeed a Trebbiano Toscano resulted from the adaptation it underwent with time in that territory. Finally, it should be noticed this variety is also found in France, where it is known as *Ugni Blanc* and with which are produced the famous distillates Cognac and Armagnac. Wines produced with Trebbiano Toscano are characterized by the appreciable acidity, with a moderate body and usually poor in relevant olfactory and gustatory quality.

Albana

White grape among the most representative ones of Romagna, Albana is a variety characterized by a remarkable versatility and having with this territory a very long story. Albana is the variety with which are produced the wines of the first *Denominazione d'Origine Controllata e Garantita* appellation of Emilia Romagna, established in 1987 with the name *Albana di Romagna*, since 2011 known as *Romagna Albana*. The origin of this variety are not clear. The most recurring hypothesis wants this grape to be introduced in these lands by ancient Romans, however there are no evident proofs supporting this origin. The first historical evidence about Albana has been provided at the beginning of the 1300 by Pier de' Crescenzi, the first one who wrote about this variety and talking about its presence and wine making use. From that moment on, there will be many other information and mentions about Albana. Among the most famous historical facts we have is the one about Galla Placidia - daughter of emperor Theodosius I - who had the chance to drink a wine made from this grape: she liked so much as to consider it worth to be drunk in golden cups only.

Albana is mainly found in the provinces of Ravenna and Forlì, it is also found in other areas of Emilia Romagna, with a marginal presence outside this region. The most common clone is Albana Gentile di Bertinoro, characterized by a large cluster. Other clones include Albana della Bagarona, Albana della Compadrona, Albana della Gaiana and Albana della Serra or della Forcella, all having distinct morphological characteristics. Like already said, Albana is a variety having an interesting wine making versatility, as to be used for the creation of many styles, including sparkling and sweet wines made from dried grapes. Albana wines are characterized by pretty intense colors, in which are frequently seen golden yellow hues. Grape having a good content in sugar, wines produced with Albana are also characterized by a pretty high alcohol by volume and an appreciable body. Albana's versatility is also expressed by the use of diverse vinification tanks, giving good results also

with the fermentation and aging in cask or barrique.

The Tasting

Our tasting by contrast will examine two wines respectively produced with the grapes subject of our study. We will make sure, in particular for Trebbiano Toscano, the wines are exclusively produced with 100% of these grapes. As for the choice of the wine produced with Trebbiano Toscano, we may have some difficulty because this variety is hardly vinified alone, frequently blended to other grapes. The choice of the wine produced with Albana is certainly simpler. In this case we will choose a wine belonging to Romagna Albana DOCG, which provides for a minimum of 95% of this grape, although it frequently is the only variety used in these wines. We will therefore make sure of the exclusive use of both grapes and, moreover, we will choose wines fermented and aged in steel tanks in order to have a clean organoleptic profile. Both wines, belonging to the last produced vintage, will be served in tasting glasses at the temperature of 10 °C.

Let's pour Trebbiano Toscano and Albana in their respective glasses and start our tasting by contrast. The first wine we will examine is Trebbiano Toscano, by starting the evaluation of its appearance. After having tilted the glass over a white surface, let's observe the color of the wine at the base. We will see a brilliant greenish yellow color with a very high transparency and nuances, observed at the edge of the glass, towards the opening, confirm the same hue. Let's now pass to the evaluation of Romagna Albana, also in this case, by tilting the glass over a white surface. The color of this wine is evidently more intense and darker than Trebbiano Toscano, showing an intense straw yellow color, sometimes showing a golden yellow hue as well. Nuances of Albana, observed at the edge of the glass, where the wine is thinner, is characterized by the same color. Let's now put the glasses side by side: differences in color are very evident.

Trebbiano Toscano and Albana make wines with very different organoleptic qualities, differences which are clearly perceivable also during the analysis of their respective olfactory profiles. Wines produced with Trebbiano Toscano are not particularly interesting for their organoleptic qualities, with pretty



The color of Romagna Albana

neutral aromas and having a small character. In Trebbiano Toscano is frequently perceived apple, pear, plum as well as hawthorn, sometimes broom. A non particularly intense olfactory profile, frequently defined as “neutral”. Albana is evidently more expressive giving the nose aromas of higher interest and intensity. The grape from Romagna can develop, in certain cases, a profile of good richness, in which are perceived apple, pear, peach, apricot and citrus fruits, hawthorn and broom as for floral characters. It frequently develops more complex and rounder aromas, in which are perceived honey as well as sensations recalling almond.

Let's now proceed with our tasting by contrast by evaluating the aromas of both wines, starting from Trebbiano Toscano. By holding the glass in vertical position and without swirling, let's do the first smelling in order to evaluate the opening of wine. The intensity of aromas is pretty modest, with a character not particularly distinguished for its complexity and from the glass are perceived aromas of apple, plum and hawthorn. After having swirled the glass, the profile of the wine does not seem to develop other aromas than those above, however it could be we can perceive pear and broom. Let's now pass to the glass of Romagna Albana and evaluate the opening of the wine. From the glass is perceived a stronger intensity in which are recognized apple, pear and peach, frequently apricot as well. After having swirled the glass, in order to favor the development of other aromas, the profile of the wine is completed by hawthorn, plum and citrus fruits as well as honey and almond. Let's now smell the glass of Trebbiano Toscano again, then Albana: differences are remarkable and evident in every regard, from intensity to quality.

Let's now pass to the evaluation of gustatory profiles in both wines, also in this case by starting from Trebbiano Toscano. Take a sip of this wine and evaluate the attack, that is the initial sensation perceived in the mouth. Trebbiano Toscano is characterized by an evident acidity and a good body, as well as a perceptible *warm* sensation given by alcohol. We have the confirmation of what was substantially perceived to the nose: a pretty neutral wine even in its flavors, in which are mainly perceived apple and plum. Let's now evaluate the attack of Romagna Albana and take a sip of this wine. We will perceive, also in this case, a good sensation of crispness given by acidity, however lower than Trebbiano Toscano, with a good structure and the perceptible sensation of alcohol. In the mouth are perceived, apple, plum and pear, as well as apricot and a touch of honey.

Our tasting by contrast ends with the evaluation of the final sensations wines leave in the mouth after having been swallowed. The finish of Trebbiano Toscano does not generally have an appreciable persistence, evidently moderate, leaving in the mouth flavors of plum and apple, frequently followed by a slightly bitter sensation. Acidity is one of the characteristics in Trebbiano Toscano to be mostly appreciated after having swallowed it. The finish of Romagna Albana has an evidently longer persistence, in the mouth are perceived the sensation of the alcohol and a good structure, as well as flavors of apple, plum and pear, sometimes apricot as well. Albana is also characterized by its finish recalling almond which is added to a pleasing sensation of roundness. Let's finally compare both wines, by evaluating the overall sensations of their tastes, Trebbiano Toscano first, then Albana: differences are

evident in particular in terms of acidity and structure.



Wines of the Month



Romagna Sangiovese Superiore Maestri di Vigna del Molino 2016 Fattoria Paradiso (Emilia Romagna, Italy)



Price: € 12.00

Score ◆◆◆◆

- Intense ruby red and nuances of ruby red, little transparency.
- Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of black cherry, plum and violet followed by aromas of blueberry, blackberry, raspberry, vanilla, face powder, mace and menthol.
- Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing crispness.
- Persistent finish with flavors of black cherry, plum and blackberry.
- 3 months in barrique, 6 months in bottle.
- Stuffed pasta with mushrooms, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed meat, Cheese*



Barbarossa Il Dosso 2011
Fattoria Paradiso (Emilia Romagna, Italy)

Barbarossa

Price: € 20.00

Score ☆

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

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of black cherry, raspberry and plum followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, rose, strawberry, tobacco, vanilla, chocolate, hay and menthol.

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

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

12 months in cement tanks and barrique, 12 months in bottle.

Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, stewed meat with mushrooms



Chardonnay 2014
Monteverro (Tuscany, Italy)

Chardonnay

Price: € 90.00

Score ☆

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

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of banana, citron and apple followed by aromas of aca-

cia, croissant, pear, vanilla, mango, butter, ripe peach, white chocolate, honey, praline and mineral.

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

Persistent finish with flavors of banana, cedar and praline.

14 months in barrique and cement tanks.

Stuffed pasta, Roasted white meat, Roasted fish



Monteverro 2013
Monteverro (Tuscany, Italy)

Cabernet Franc (40%), Cabernet Sauvignon (35%), Merlot (20%), Petit Verdot (5%)

Price: € 140.00

Score ☆

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

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of black currant, black cherry and violet followed by aromas of plum, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate, iris, face powder, mace, licorice and eucalyptus.

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

Very persistent finish with very long flavors of black cherry, black currant and blueberry.

24 months in barrique.

Game, Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed and braised meat, Hard cheese



Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva Don Bosco 2012
Bosco Nestore (Abruzzo, Italy)

Montepulciano

Price: € 18.30

Score

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

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

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

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

24 months in cask, 24 months in bottle.

Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed meat with mushrooms, Hard cheese



Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva Pan 2012
Bosco Nestore (Abruzzo, Italy)

Montepulciano

Price: € 22.00

Score

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

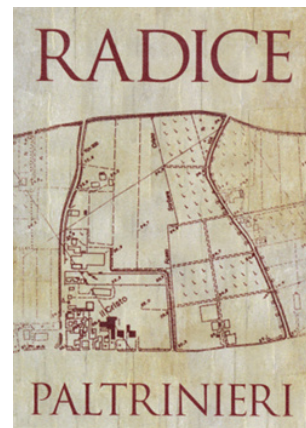
Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of plum, dried violet and black cherry followed by aromas of blackberry, vanilla, tobacco, licorice, mace, chocolate, leather and menthol.

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

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

18 months in barrique, 24 months in bottle.

Game, Roasted meat, Braised and stewed meat, Hard cheese



Lambrusco di Sorbara Radice 2016
Paltrinieri (Emilia Romagna, Italy)

Lambrusco di Sorbara

Price: € 8.50

Score

Brilliant pale pink and nuances of pale pink, transparent, fine and persistent perlage.

Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of cherry, raspberry and strawberry followed by aromas of cyclamen, peach, rose, apple, pink grapefruit and plum.

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

Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, raspberry and strawberry.

Refermented in bottle.

Aperitifs, Risotto with vegetables and fish, Fried fish, Cold cuts, Dairy products





**Lambrusco di Sorbara Spumante Brut Lariserva
2015
Paltrinieri (Emilia Romagna, Italy)**


 Lambrusco di Sorbara


Price: € 15.00


Score 


 Brilliant onion skin pink and nuances of pale pink, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage.

 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of cherry, raspberry and bread crust followed by aromas of strawberry, pink grapefruit, plum, blueberry, rose and cyclamen.

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

 Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, raspberry and strawberry.

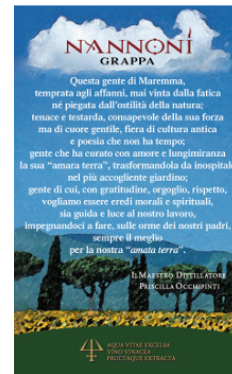
 Produced with Martinotti method, 12 months of aging on its lees.

 *Aperitifs, Cold cuts, Fish appetizers, Sauteed fish, Pasta with crustaceans*


NOT JUST WINE

Aquavitae

Review of Grappa, Distillates and Brandy




**Grappa Gente di Maremma
Nannoni (Tuscany)**


 Pomace of Grapes

Price: € 24.00 - 500ml


Score 

 Limpid, colorless and crystalline.

 Intense, clean and pleasing with aromas of pear, apple, hazelnut, hay and plum, with almost imperceptible alcohol pungency.

 Intense flavors with perceptible alcohol pungency which tends to dissolve rapidly, pleasing roundness.

 Persistent finish with flavors of apple, hazelnut and plum.

 Distilled in a batch steam operated alembic still.

EVENTS

News

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

Wine Guide Parade

Summer 2017

The best 15 wines reviewed in our Guide and voted by Di-WineTaste readers

Rank	Wine, Producer	Votes
1	Valpolicella Superiore Ripasso Capitel San Rocco 2015, Tedeschi	8211
2	Valpolicella Classico Lucchine 2016, Tedeschi	5899
3	Alto Adige Pinot Bianco Vial 2016, Kellerei Kaltern - Caldaro	5778
4	Amarone della Valpolicella 2013, Tedeschi	4560
5	Valpolicella Superiore Maternigo 2014, Tedeschi	4536
6	Lago di Caldaro Classico Superiore Leuchtenberg 2016, Kellerei Kaltern - Caldaro	4412
7	Valpolicella Col de la Bastia 2016, Fattori	4328
8	Soave Danieli 2016, Fattori	4109
9	Lessini Durello Metodo Classico Brut Roncà 36 mesi 2012, Fattori	3610
10	Pinot Grigio Valparadiso 2016, Fattori	3544
11	Lessini Durello Spumante Brut Roncà di Roncà, Fattori	3424
12	Lessini Durello Metodo Classico Brut Roncà 60 mesi 2010, Fattori	3370
13	Soave Classico Runcaris 2016, Fattori	3158
14	Amarone della Valpolicella Col de la Bastia 2013, Fattori	3136
15	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico 2016, Sartarelli	3115