

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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Holidays Time, Wine Time

We have just left December and, with it, also the year 2019, however we are still in the holiday period and which will accompany us for a while in these first days of the year 2020. It is, in any case, a period during which, as usual, bottles of wine are joyfully uncorked, both to cheer the frequent banquets that are organized on holidays, and to celebrate the arrival of the new year. As is well known, the wine that becomes the absolute protagonist of toasts and celebrations is notoriously the sparkling wine – of any type and origin – which occupies a place of honor in the glasses of every table. The cause of this is, in fact, the role the majority of us recognizes to this particular style of wine: there is no party or celebration in which we do not uncork at least one bottle of sparkling wine. From Charmat method – or Martinotti – to classic and *champanoise* methods, during the holidays, particularly in those of this period, the sales of sparkling wines always records a significant and important increase.

In this period – in fact – millions of corks of sparkling wine bottles have “flown to the sky”, a *collective rite* which sees its most intense and significant moment on the night of December 31st and which welcomes the new year. A success in consumption which seems to be continuously increasing and for which – not only in Italy – a wide selection of choices, styles and prices is available. To predict this increase, the Ovse-Ceves (*Osservatorio Vini Spumanti Effervescenti*, Observatory for Effervescent and Sparkling Wines) which estimates an increase of +3.3% in the consumption of sparkling wines, in particular the *brut* style. Interesting, regarding the preference in terms of “style”, the constant increase in consumption of the driest sparkling wines – such as brut, extra brut and pas dosé – a sign, not least, of a cultural change in Italy in the preference of bubbles. Furthermore, the increase of +3.3% is a decidedly interesting and positive fact, also confirming the good state of health of the production of sparkling wines.

According to these figures, in addition to the +3.3% increase

in sparkling wine consumption compared to the same holiday period of the last year, there are also other interesting data emerging from this research. To celebrate the arrival of the new year, it is estimated – in fact – that at midnight of the New Year 2020, 44 to 48 millions bottles of sparkling wine will be uncorked. During the entire holiday period, therefore from Christmas to Epiphany, is expected a daily consumption of more than 2.5 million bottles of sparkling wine. These forecasts are the result of the data collected by the economic operators of the sparkling wine market and concerning the last 28 years. The study also highlights how the preference of the style of sparkling wines changes according to the holiday or occasion of celebration. On Christmas day, dry and sweet sparkling wines are the most uncorked ones, while for Epiphany, rosé bubbles tend to be preferred, while for the end of the year toast, instead, dry and brut styles are mainly poured into the glasses.

The estimate of sparkling wine consumption in relation to this holiday period and predicted by the Ovse-Ceves and revealed by its president Giampietro Comolli, also highlights further interesting data. Good news, in fact, both in quantitative terms and in volume of profits. It is estimated 77 million bottles of Italian sparkling wine and corresponding to 280 million euros will be uncorked during this holiday period. A decidedly important quantity if we compare this figure with the entire expenditure the Italians destined to celebrate these holidays and which is estimated for a total of 630 million euros. However, not only Italian sparkling wines will be uncorked, as many of our compatriots will prefer to uncork about 3.9 million bottles produced abroad, in particular in restaurants and holiday resorts. The expenditure about the consumption of foreign sparkling wines is predicted to be 240 million euros, most of which is destined for Champagne.

Moreover, the president of Ovse-Ceves, Giampietro Comolli, points out the expenditure for sparkling wines in the 2019-2020 holiday period will be over 870 million euros, marking an in-

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crease of +3.3% compared to the corresponding previous period and with an increase of 2.4 million bottles. Definitely encouraging data, considering the consumption trend of the past years and which, for the second year in a row, marks a significant increase, a sign of a promising recovery of the entire wine industry. The signs of the good performance of the wine market had already been anticipated in October, at the beginning of autumn. In that period, in fact, a significant increase in sales – and therefore in consumption – was detected in two wines in particular: reds and Prosecco. The same, however, has not been recorded for sweet sparkling wines which, apparently, have been suffering for some time from a negative trend in consumption and therefore in the market.

In October 2019 the Italian wine market in fact recorded an increase of 5.74% in terms of value equal to 1.43% in volume. The wines that have recorded the best results – as already mentioned – are reds and Prosecco, the latter also thanks to the fears in the United Kingdom about the effects of *brexit*. With the implementation of this measure, in fact, it is feared the introduction of duties, a prospect that has pushed British wine distributors to stock up on Prosecco, particularly appreciated across the Channel. The merit of this result is also due to internal consumption, in particular to that of catering and bars, both recording increases of more than 3.50% in terms of value. 2019, therefore, can be considered as a favorable year for Italian wine and which has produced positive results both in terms of volumes and economic value. A result giving good premises in this 2020 which has just begun. Given these results, which have certainly not been positive in recent years, it is evidently good news and giving high hopes for a healthy future for Italian wine, at least in the nearest one.

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WINE TASTING

Contrasts of Curtefranca Rosso and Chianti Classico

Two red wines, among the most representative ones in their respective regions, Lombardy and Tuscany, are compared in the glasses of the tasting by contrast of this month

When it comes to Tuscan wines, Chianti Classico is, undeniably, one of the first everyone thinks of, a wine that has marked the enological history of this region and, in many respects, also that of Italy. Lombardy stands out for its different styles of wine and, among them, reds play an important role. When it comes to Lombardy, of course, the most recognizable denomination is Franciacorta, undeniably among the most celebrated sparkling wines of Italy. Franciacorta, however, is not only made of bubbles as in this area white and red wines belonging to the Curtefranca denomination are also produced. The history of Franciacorta's *still* wines is certainly more recent than those of Chianti, however in this part of Lombardy there are mentions about *mordaci* wines – an ancient term to refer to *effervescent* and *sparkling* styles – as early as the sixteenth century.

The wines of the tasting by contrast of this month are evidently different and distant, not only in geographical terms. In Chianti Classico, in fact, it is the Sangiovese grape to dominate the scene, while in Curtefranca Rosso it is the international grapes responsible to the character making up the wines of this territory. Of course, they are wines belonging to different enological histories, strongly linked to their respective territories and according to the viticultural and enological developments which have occurred over time. In both cases, it must be said, there have been adaptations and modifications such as to make these wines very different today when compared to the past. This is occurred, in particular, for Chianti Classico which has recently seen the introduction in its composition of international varieties, as a matter of fact, grapes allowed for cultivation in Tuscany.

Curtefranca Rosso

The territory of the *Denominazione d'Origine Controllata* Curtefranca (Denomination of Controlled Origin) provides for the production of white and red wines and it exactly corresponds to that of Franciacorta, the famous area in which sparkling wines are produced with the homonymous method. At the beginning of its definition – in fact – the denomination Franciacorta provided, in addition to the production of sparkling wines, also that of still table wines. The birth of this important denomination dates back to 1967 and it was then divided into two distinct denominations in 1995: one exclusively reserved for sparkling wine production – and which retains the name “Franciacorta” – the other one for still table wines and which will take the name “Terre di Franciacorta”. In order to avoid confusion with the name reserved for

sparkling wines, the latter denomination changed again its name in 2008 to the current “Curtefranca”. The denomination provides, as in its initial definition, the production of both white and red wines and corresponds to the same territory of Franciacorta.

Curtefranca Rosso is mainly produced – according to its production disciplinary – with the so called “international” varieties, to which can also be added “Italian” grapes and historically found in this territory. The red is made up of Cabernet Franc and Carmenère – alone or together – for a minimum of 20%, Merlot for a minimum of 25% and Cabernet Sauvignon for a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 35%. Non-aromatic varieties can also be used in the production of Curtefranca Rosso, in such a case they must be allowed for the cultivation in Lombardy, for a maximum of 15%. This remaining part is generally represented – when used – by Barbera and Nebbiolo. The denomination Curtefranca Rosso also provides for the mention of the vineyard of origin of the grapes and, in this specific case, it is required a minimum aging of 8 months in wood. In this regard, it should be noted that aging in wood – cask or barrique – is also frequent for Curtefranca Rosso without the mention of the vineyard, however, in some cases, are also used inert containers, such as stainless steel tanks.

Chianti Classico

Chianti Classico is, undoubtedly, one of the Italian wines having a long history and solid prestige, in addition to international fame. Valuable ambassador of Tuscan and Italian enology in the world, Chianti is also one of the first wines of our country for which both the viticultural practices and the production area have been defined. The definition of the production areas of Chianti, Carmignano, Pomino and Valdarno di Sopra was in fact owed to Grand Duke Cosimo III de 'Medici with the issue of a special edict. It was September 24th, 1716 and the provision of Grand Duke Cosimo III can be considered – as a matter of fact – the first wine production disciplinary issued in Italy. This episode also gives us a clear idea of the cultural and commercial importance of the wines to which this edict refers – including Chianti – and for which was needed the regulation of their production with the aim of protecting their identity and preventing fraud.

The territory of Chianti Classico is notoriously found between today's provinces of Florence and Siena, in an area of 70,000 hectares and includes the municipalities of Castellina in Chianti, Gaiole in Chianti, Greve in Chianti, Radda in Chianti and partly those of Barberino Tavarnelle, Castelnuovo Berardenga, Poggibonsi and San Casciano in Val di Pesa. Throughout its history, Chianti Classico has undergone several changes in production, up to reaching 1874 when Baron Bettino Ricasoli defines the grape varieties and his *famous recipe*: Sangiovese in large part, Canaiolo Nero, Malvasia Bianca and Trebbiano Toscano. This famous formula will remain unchanged until 1984, when the production disciplinary is revised, up to the last modification which provides for a minimum quantity of Sangiovese of 80% and the remaining part consisting of red berried varieties permitted for cultivation in Tuscany. Chianti Classico is recognized by the Ital-

ian quality system as a *Denominazione d'Origine Controllata e Garantita* territory (DOCG, Controlled and Guaranteed Denomination of Origin).

The Tasting

Let's start the tasting by contrast of this month and choose the wines we will pour into our glasses. The production of the two wines we are going to examine this month involves – in both cases and according to the respective disciplinary – the use of different grapes. For this reason, we need to pay attention to their composition, making sure they are produced with the grapes listed below. As for Curtefranca Rosso, we will choose a wine produced with Cabernet Franc, Carmenère, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, possibly with the first two grapes in a dominant quantity. In choosing Chianti Classico we will make sure the wine is mainly produced with Sangiovese – and this is required by its disciplinary – with the addition of Canaiolo Nero. As far as the aging technique is concerned, in both cases we will choose wines aged in cask for at least 8 months. The two wines are poured into their respective tasting glasses at a temperature of 18 °C. (65 °F)

The first sensorial quality we will examine in the wines of our tasting is, as usual, the appearance, that is, the evaluation of color and transparency. The first wine of which we will evaluate this sensorial quality is Curtefranca Rosso, by placing the glass tilted over a white surface, such as a napkin or a sheet of paper. Let's observe the base of the glass: we notice an intense ruby red color and moderate transparency which makes quite difficult seeing the object put in contrast. The nuance of Curtefranca Rosso, observed at the edge of the wine, towards the opening of the glass, confirms the ruby red color. Let's now pass to the observation of Chianti Classico and, as for the previous wine, we tilt the glass over the white surface. The Tuscan wine presents itself to our eyes with a bright and intense ruby red color, moderate transparency, generally superior to Curtefranca Rosso. The nuance of Chianti Classico confirms the brilliant ruby red color.

The differences between Curtefranca Rosso and Chianti Clas-



The color of Chianti Classico

sico become evident – undoubtedly – in the evaluation of the respective olfactory profiles. These two wines, in fact, are produced with different grapes and, as such, characterized by distant sensorial qualities. Curtefranca Rosso is generally produced with Cabernet Franc, Carmenère, Merlot, Caberbet Sauvignon, often Nebbiolo and Barbera; Chianti Classico is mainly composed of Sangiovese, a variety representing at least 80% of the total. In both wines the expression of black pulp fruits is dominant, although with different qualities. In Curtefranca Rosso, black currant, black cherry, plum and blueberry dominate, while in Chianti Classico the nose is characterized by black cherry, plum, blueberry and blackberry. In the Tuscan wine can also be perceived sensations of red pulp fruits, in particular raspberry. In both wines the world of flowers is dominated by violet, while in the Chianti Classico the scent of the rose is sometimes perceived.

Let's proceed with the tasting and examine the olfactory profile of Curtefranca Rosso. By keeping the glass in vertical position and, without swirling, we do the first smell in order to appreciate the opening of the wine, that is, the primary sensations that are perceived to the nose. Curtefranca Rosso gives the nose intense and clean aromas of black currant, plum and black cherry to which is added the pleasant scent of violet. After having swirled the glass, an operation notoriously favoring the development of the other aromas, we do a new smell. The profile of Lombard wine is completed with blueberry and, sometimes, vegetable sensations reminiscent of green bell pepper, as well as typical qualities of the aging in wood, such as vanilla and chocolate, often a balsamic hint reminiscent of menthol. The opening of Chianti Classico is very different, evaluated by keeping the glass in vertical and without swirling, it is characterized by black cherry, plum and raspberry, also in this case combined with the elegant scent of violet. After having swirled the glass, the olfactory profile of Chianti Classico is completed with blueberry, blackberry, rose and cyclamen, in addition to the typical tertiary sensations given by the aging in wood.

After the evaluation of the olfactory sensations of the two wines, we proceed with the examination of the gustatory profiles, starting, just like the previous phases, from Curtefranca Rosso. The first quality we will evaluate, as usual, is the attack of the wine, that is the primary sensations perceived in the mouth. Let's take a sip of the Lombard wine: the attack is characterized by a good sensation of astringency produced by tannins to which is opposed – and contributing to balance – the effect of alcohol and roundness. In the mouth are perceived flavors of black currant, plum and black cherry with a good correspondence to the nose, that is with the sensations perceived in the opening of the olfactory analysis. Let's move on to the evaluation of the attack of Chianti Classico and take a sip of the Tuscan wine. In the mouth is perceived the good astringency of tannins – however lower than that of Curtefranca Rosso – in addition to the pleasing crispness given by acidity, a characteristic frequently perceptible in wines produced with Sangiovese. The correspondence to the nose is also very good in this wine: the flavors of black cherry, plum and raspberry are clearly perceptible in the mouth.

Our tasting by contrast ends with the evaluation of the final sensations the wines leave in the mouth after swallowing, in par-

ticular, the taste-olfactory persistence, among the most important factors determining quality. The finish of Curtefranca Rosso is characterized by a good persistence, in which both the sensation of structure and astringency are still perceived besides the flavors of black currant, plum and black cherry. The sensations of crispness and roundness are moderate, mainly due to the grapes used for the production. The finish of Chianti Classico is characterized by a good persistence and in the mouth is still well perceptible the sensation of crispness given by the typical acidity of Sangiovese, while being balanced by the pleasing roundness and the effect of alcohol. Moreover, in the mouth can be still perceived, clean and intense, the flavors of black cherry, plum and raspberry. Before concluding our tasting, let's focus again on the comparison of the olfactory and gustatory qualities of the two wines: the sensorial differences are evident and *distant*.

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




Maremma Toscana Rosso Barbaspinosa 2015 Moris Farms (Tuscany, Italy)


🍷 Sangiovese (90%), Cabernet Sauvignon (10%)

Price: € 12.90

Score ◇◇◇◇

- 👁 Intense ruby red and nuances of ruby red, little transparency.
- 👂 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of black cherry, plum and black currant followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, carnation, blackberry, chocolate, tobacco, vanilla and menthol.
- 👄 Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable.
- 👅 Persistent finish with flavors of black cherry, plum and black currant.

 12 months in barrique.

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





Morellino di Scansano Riserva 2016
Moris Farms (Tuscany, Italy)


 Sangiovese (90%), Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot (10%)


Price: € 18.60


Score 


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

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

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


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

 12 months in barrique, 6 months in bottle.

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





Etna Bianco 2018
Giovi (Sicily, Italy)


 Carricante (85%), Grecanico (15%)

Price: € 14.00

Score 


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

 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of plum, apple and hawthorn followed by aromas of grapefruit, citrus fruit peel, medlar, hazelnut, almond, honey and hints of vanilla.

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

 Persistent finish with flavors of apple, plum and grapefruit.

 3 months in cask.

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





Etna Rosso Piraò 2011
Giovi (Sicily, Italy)

 Nerello Mascalese

Price: € 30.00

Score 

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

 Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of cherry, raspberry and dried violet followed by aromas of blueberry, dried rose, strawberry, licorice, cocoa, tobacco, carob, tar, mace, vanilla and menthol.

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

☞ Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, raspberry and strawberry.

📅 12 months in cask.

🍴 *Roasted meat, Stewed meat with mushrooms, Broiled meat and barbecue, Cheese*



Barbera d'Alba Superiore 2015
Casavecchia (Piedmont, Italy)

🍇 Barbera

Price: € 8.50

Score ◆◆◆◆ 🌟

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

👃 Intense, clean, pleasing and refines, starts with hints of cherry, plum and blueberry followed by aromas of violet, raspberry, blackberry, chocolate, tobacco, mace, vanilla and menthol.

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

☞ Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, plum and blueberry.

📅 12 months in cask, at least 6 months in bottle.

🍴 *Broiled meat and barbecue, Roasted meat, Stewed meat with mushrooms*



Langhe Nebbiolo Pian del Lupo 2013
Casavecchia (Piedmont, Italy)

🍇 Nebbiolo (85%), Merlot (15%)

Price: € 13.00

Score ◆◆◆◆ ☆

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

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

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

☞ Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, plum and blueberry.

📅 18 months in barrique, 12 months in bottle.

🍴 *Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed and braised meat with mushrooms, Hard cheese*



Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore
Tralivio 2017
Sartarelli (Marches, Italy)

🍇 Verdicchio

Price: € 17.00

Score ◆◆◆◆ ☆

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

👃 Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of apple, plum and citrus fruits followed by aromas of pear, almond, medlar, hawthorn, broom, linden, rosemary and mineral.

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

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

📅 Aged in steel tanks.

🍴 *Broiled fish, Roasted white meat, Fish soups and mushrooms, Stuffed pasta*



**Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore
Balciana 2016
Sartarelli (Marches, Italy)**

Verdicchio

Price: € 38.00

Score

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

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of quince, medlar and apricot followed by aromas of honey, saffron, plum, pear, noble rot, pineapple, chamomile, beeswax, mango, hawthorn, almond, linden and mineral.

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

Very persistent finish with long flavors of quince, apricot and honey.

Aged in steel tanks.

Stuffed pasta with mushrooms, Roasted fish, Roasted white meat, Cheese



**Montefalco Sagrantino Valdimaggio 2015
Arnaldo Caprai (Umbria, Italy)**

Sagrantino

Price: € 32.00

Score

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

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

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

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

24 months in barrique, at least 8 months in bottle.

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



**Montefalco Sagrantino 25 Anni 2015
Arnaldo Caprai (Umbria, Italy)**

Sagrantino

Price: € 50.00

Score

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

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

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

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

24 months in barrique, at least 8 months in bottle.

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

EVENTS

News

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

NOT JUST WINE

Aquavitae

Review of Grappa, Distillates and Brandy




Calvados Morin Sélection
Calvados Morin (France)


 Apple Cider Distilate


Price: € 14.90 - 70cl


Score 

 Brilliant amber yellow, limpid and crystalline.

 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined with aromas of apple, cinnamon, honey, vanilla, caramel, citrus fruit peel, date, candied fruits with almost imperceptible alcohol pungency.

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

 Persistent finish with flavors of apple, honey, cinnamon and candied fruits.

 At least 2 years in oak casks.

Wine Guide Parade

October 2019

The best 15 wines reviewed in our Guide and voted by DiWineTaste readers

Rank	Wine, Producer	Votes
1	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Riserva Capitel Monte Olmi 2013, Tedeschi	11563
2	Brunello di Montalcino Pelagrilli 2014, Siro Pacenti	11101
3	Masetto Due 2017, Endrizzi	9983
4	Trento Dosaggio Zero Riserva Masetto Privé 2009, Endrizzi	8575
5	Dalis Bianco 2018, Endrizzi	8533
6	Montefalco Rosso 2016, Mevante	8473
7	Montefalco Sagrantino 2015, Mevante	8402
8	Birbanteo 2018, Mevante	8360
9	Valpolicella Superiore Maternigo 2016, Tedeschi	8313
10	Dalis Rosso 2018, Endrizzi	8279
11	Masetto Doré 2017, Endrizzi	8211
12	Masetto Nero 2016, Endrizzi	7723
13	Valpolicella Classico Superiore La Fabriseria 2016, Tedeschi	7594
14	Colli Martani Grechetto 2018, Mevante	7393
15	Brunello di Montalcino Vecchie Vigne 2014, Siro Pacenti	7332