

# DiWINEtaste

Cultura e Informazione Enologica

 Edizione Italiana

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## Non Indigenous Grapes? Yes, Please!

Time goes on and changes things. A quite obvious statement as time, since ever, does its job: goes on, proceeds, moves on and in its endless journey, changes things. However, it is not time to change things, indeed men do that by adapting and changing their condition, culture, taste and behaviors according to the evolution of time. As well as according to fads, ideas, to “I heard someone saying”, “they are the best because I have been told so” and even “you have to do that because it is like so”. Wine, of course, is no exception to this and is affected by the tantrums of men in the course of time, not necessarily because of the *evolution of taste* but also, and in particular, to the fads of the moment. In fact, it really takes a little in order to turn a “voice” into a fad. It takes an expert - most of the times a supposed one, possibly having some personal interests, a lot of arrogance and disputable competence - someone who is listening and then become a servile yet persuasive megaphone.

Time brings obtuse “crusades”, fought with the only goal of proving a supposed superiority or the interest of something or someone - of course by keeping the eyes well closed - while forgetting, unfortunately, the best does not exist. This is also true for grapes and wine, not only for men and their ideas. Including the grape varieties considered *international* or *allochthonous*, most of them having a French origin, once considered the emblem of quality wine making, now frequently seen as negative in certain cases. A crusade fought in favor of the so called *autochthonous* or *indigenous* varieties, by also supporting a supposed superiority for the simple fact they are *our grapes therefore they are the best*. I want to say and make this clear: the grapes of Italy are absolutely extraordinary and magnificent but I am also aware of the fact they are not the only ones to be like that. The richness of the vineyards of Italy have no equal in the world, however I am aware of the fact there is a world and I like to look at it, listen to it, understand and appreciate it.

In a not so distant time, mentioning Merlot and Chardonnay meant, in an almost implicit way, talking about wines of a high value. Maybe they exaggerated with the use of those grapes, as they are still today found in many wines, including Italy, frequently blended to local varieties. This is however a singular fact because, if it is true the so called international varieties - in particular Merlot and Chardonnay - are today seen as, like to say, grapes to be avoided, it is funny if we think about France. In this country, in fact, not only Merlot and Chardonnay are widely used and appreciated everywhere, but it is also hard to consider them *international* varieties because, in this country, they indisputably are *autochthonous* grapes. It can also be because of the fact the number of grapes existing in France is far lower than Italy, however the French do not complain about their *autochthonous-international* grapes at all.

Of all the grapes today considered as “international”, the most ferocious criticism is about Chardonnay and Merlot, in particular for their recognizability and the *round and soft* character they give their wines. It would be like blaming Barbera and Nebbiolo, for the opposite aspect, because of the lively acidity they give their wines. If we consider the fact both Nebbiolo and Barbera are sometimes blended to Merlot, in this case it is funny to understand whether the criticism is about the roundness of the French grape or the crispness of the Piedmontese grapes. Maybe these two international grapes - Merlot and Chardonnay - have lost part of their prestige because they have been used for a long time, even abused, in wines with the explicit goal of enhancing roundness and softness. Every wine maker, or however whoever knows, even a little, about wine making, knows these two organoleptic qualities can be obtained from every grape and by simply doing *magic tricks*.

These tricks are not only about the use of the cask or barrique, the latter today seen with suspect, just like Merlot and Chardonnay. It is a well known fact, if wanted, even a wine produced

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with Barbera - famous for its strong and pleasing acidity - can be easily transformed into a very round and soft wine. It is not only about additives capable of drastically changing the character of a grape or wine, but also about climate, technological and viticultural conditions. The crisp Barbera, if wanted, can become round and soft just like the detestable Merlot. Of course, I do like Barbera very much and I am not trying to deny the quality of its wines or the commitment of its producers. I am taking this variety as an example because this noble Piedmontese grape is just the opposite of Merlot and, if wanted, it can taste like it quite a lot. Prejudices are always deplorable, in particular for the fact they influence our ideas and our chances to understand things for what they really are. I personally had the chance to taste and to be amazed by the greatness of certain Merlot or Chardonnay wines, and not only French ones.

Of course, I was not disturbed by the idea those wines were giving a dominant sensation of roundness and softness, indeed I was absolutely amazed for the wine making magnificence of what I was having in my glass. After all, we cannot expect a lion to look like or behave like a mouse and vice versa. Likewise, we cannot blame Merlot and Chardonnay to be what they are, in particular for the fact they proved, with real facts, they can make great wines. The same is true, of course, for every grape, including autochthonous varieties. I never let myself tasting a wine with prejudices, in particular for the fact this would be a deplorable mistake in order to really understand it. Merlot, Chardonnay, Sangiovese or Trebbiano Toscano, I do treat them all the same: I am mainly interested by the fact they are good wines and well made. Because I do tolerate less the faults presented like qualities than prejudices about grapes. Including those about international varieties.

Antonello Biancalana



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GUSTO DIVINO

## Contrasts of Nero d'Avola and Syrah

The most important red grape of Sicily compared to the glory of red wines of Rhône, two distant grapes which are frequently found in the same glass

Sicily in Italy and Rhône in France. Two distant lands, mothers of great wines, both white and red, in two territories where are also produced sweet wines, although, it should be said, in this sense Sicily has a more significant production. Nero d'Avola and Syrah are grapes very different one from each other, of course distant and not only for geographical reasons. Nevertheless these two grapes have been blended together in many wines, a meeting happened in Sicily many years ago. The famous red from Sicily, besides being used alone for the wines of the island, it is frequently blended to other varieties, both autochthonous and international. One of them is Syrah that, added in variable quantities, is found in many red wines of Sicily. In the Rhône wine area we see something different, here Syrah is frequently vinified alone and it is one of the fundamental grapes of the viticulture in this land.

Two different varieties which are however interesting for our tasting by contrast, in which we will see the analogies in these grapes are really few. For certain aspects, Nero d'Avola and Syrah can be considered two complementary varieties, this can also be explained - besides the historical and opportunity reasons - by the fact in Sicily these two grapes are blended together in many wines of the island. In Sicily Nero d'Avola is blended to many *allochthonous* varieties, in particular Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, as well as other local red berried grapes. As for multi varietal wines, in its homeland - Rhône - Syrah is part of one of the most famous wines of this territory: Châteauneuf-du-Pape red. Syrah however plays a *marginal* role in this wine, as - it should be said - the main varieties making it are Grenache Noir and Mourvèdre.

The origins of Nero d'Avola have been for a long time subject of confusion, mainly because of the many names used to call this grape. The main confusion is caused by the italianization of its most famous name, *calaulisi* in Sicilian dialect, italianized as *calabrese*, therefore supposing the origin of the grape from the neighboring Calabria region. Indeed, the name *calaulisi* comes from the Sicilian dialectal terms *cala* and *aulisi*. *Cal* comes from *calea*, a synonym for *rracina* meaning "grape" in Sicilian dialect. *Aulisi* means something or someone from *Aula*, the Sicilian dialectal name for Avola, a town in the province of Syracuse and also famous for its renowned almonds. The theory Nero d'Avola originated from the neighboring Calabria seems therefore unfounded as the meaning of *calaulisi* would be translated into Italian as "grape from Avola".

Nero d'Avola, besides being vinified alone in the entire territory of Sicily, is also part of the only *Denominazione di Origine*



The color and transparency of Syrah

*Controllata e Garantita* of the island: Cerasuolo di Vittoria. In this wine, in fact, Nero d'Avola makes the dominant part and it is blended to Frappato, another interesting red berried grape of Sicily. Nero d'Avola has a pretty wide wine making versatility, capable of giving *relatively simple* wines as well as of interesting complexity. Before its wine making reevaluation, Nero d'Avola was mainly used as a variety capable of giving body and color to other wines. Nero d'Avola can be used both for the vinification in inert containers and in cask or barrique. Thanks to its good acidity, wines produced with Nero d'Avola, in particular when they are aged in wood, can evolve in bottle for many years, while developing an organoleptic profile of interesting complexity.

The origin of Syrah shares, for certain aspects, the same confusion existing for Nero d'Avola and derived from its name. For a long time it was believed the red from Rhône originated from the city of Shiraz, in Iran, or from Syracuse, in Sicily. For a long time it was believed Syrah originated from Shiraz and, still today, in certain parts of the world this grape is called like the Iranian city, in particular in Australia. Recent research done on Syrah's DNA, has finally unfolded the origin of this grape, unequivocally placing its origin in the Rhône area in France. Today we can assert Syrah originated from two French varieties: Dureza and Mondeuse Blanche. Specifically, Syrah has been generated from a vine of Mondeuse Blanche pollinated by Dureza, however this research could not understand when this event happened in the past.

Wines produced with Syrah are particularly famous for two characteristics: the good body and the evident aromas of black pepper which can be perceived in certain wines. A fascinating and appreciated organoleptic characteristic, research done on this grape found out the black pepper aroma in Syrah is caused by the presence of *rotundone*. This sesquiterpene is in fact found in black pepper and, besides being found in other plants as well, it is also present in wines made with Syrah. The red grape from the Rhône has been very successful in many countries of the world and today it is considered as an international variety. Syrah is in fact virtually cultivated in every wine country of the world, in particular Australia where it is very successful. Widely spread in

the Rhône area, Syrah is the variety used for the production of two of the most famous wines of this territory: Hermitage and Côte-Rôtie.

Our tasting by contrast will examine Nero d'Avola produced in the territory of Syracuse - in Sicily, Italy - and a Syrah produced in the Rhône area, in France. We will choose two wines aged in cask for a short time in order to ensure the characteristics of wood to not excessively influence the organoleptic profile of the two wines. In choosing our wines, we will pay particular attention on their composition. It should in fact be noticed that, despite in the label we may read the name of just one variety, it can happen the wine is instead a multi varietal one and in which the grape stated in the label is just the main one. We will choose wines belonging to the same vintage and however having not more than three years from harvesting, in order to keep the right balance between secondary and tertiary aromas. Wines will be tasted in two tasting glasses and served at a temperature of 18 °C (65 °F).

As usual, we will start our tasting by contrast from the appearance analysis, the one in which will be evaluated the color and transparency of wine. Let's pour the two wines in their respective glasses and tilt them over a white surface. We will start the evaluation of color and transparency from Nero d'Avola. At the base of the glass we will observe an intense and brilliant ruby red color, as well as a moderate transparency: in case we put a written text behind the glass, we can easily read it. Nuances of Nero d'Avola - observed at the edge towards the opening of the glass - confirms a ruby red color. Let's now observe the aspect of Syrah. At the base of the glass will be observed an intense ruby red, almost deep, and transparency is lower than Nero d'Avola, evidently more concentrated. Nuances of Syrah show a ruby red hue and, pretty frequently, tending to purple red.

The olfactory profiles of Nero d'Avola and Syrah give the nose of the taster different aromas. Both varieties make of the sensations recalling black and red fruits their main aromatic characteristics, although they develop in different ways and with different aromas. In general terms, Syrah is mainly characterized by aromas which can be associated to black fruits - in particular black currant, black cherry and plum - whereas Nero d'Avola expresses both black and red fruits. Syrah is mainly characterized by dominant aromas of plum and black currant, whereas in Nero d'Avola will be black cherry and blackberry to mainly characterize the opening. In both varieties will be recognized the pleasing flower aroma of violet. Nero d'Avola and Syrah are both suited for the vinification in cask or barrique, a technique enriching - of course - the tertiary sensations of wines.

Let's now place the glasses in front of us and keep them in vertical position without swirling. Let's now proceed with the evaluation of opening aromas of the two wines, starting from Nero d'Avola. From the glass will be perceived aromas of black cherry, plum and blackberry, as well as a pleasing aroma of violet. Let's now pass to the other glass and, without swirling, let's evaluate the opening aromas of Syrah. To the nose will be perceived a quite different profile from Nero d'Avola, in this wine it is the black currant to play the dominant role, to which follow plum and black cherry. Also in Syrah will be perceived the

pleasing aroma of violet. After having swirled the glass, let's smell Nero d'Avola in which will be perceived blueberry, raspberry and carob. Moreover, depending on the type of cask used, we will perceive aromas of tobacco and vanilla. In the profile of Syrah we can appreciate the characteristic aroma of black pepper, as well as blueberry, blackberry and, thanks to the aging in wood, vanilla, tobacco and chocolate. It should be noticed both wines have a refreshing and balsamic hint recalling menthol.

Differences between the two grapes are still evident, and in a clear way, in the mouth. Let's take a sip of Nero d'Avola and appreciate the attack. In the mouth we will perceive a sensation of moderate astringency followed by a pleasing roundness and perceptible crispness. The correspondence to the nose is good and it will be perceived flavors of black cherry, plum and blackberry. Let's now pass to the tasting of Syrah. The attack of this wine is characterized by a stronger sensation of astringency and a lower crispness, also roundness is lower than Nero d'Avola. In the mouth will be perceived the flavors of black currant, black cherry and plum. It should also be noticed the difference in structure of both wines: Syrah has an evidently fuller body than Nero d'Avola. The impact of alcohol seems to be higher in Nero d'Avola, also contributing to the sensation of roundness, giving to the mouth a pleasing and soft taste.

The final part of the tasting is about the ending sensations which can be perceived in the mouth after having swallowed the wine. In Nero d'Avola can be appreciated a good persistence, leaving in the mouth flavors recalling blackberry, black cherry and plum, as well as a pleasing sensation of roundness and a perceptible crispness. The finish of Syrah is evidently of good persistence in which can be appreciated flavors of black currant, plum, black cherry and, in regard to Nero d'Avola, a fuller sensation of structure and astringency. Differences are perceived also in this phase, as the two wines leaves in the mouth extremely different sensations, although pleasing in both cases. Two distinct grapes, even opposite, protagonists of the red wines in their respective lands and can however go along very well, something widely proved by the many wines produced in Sicily by blending these two varieties.

❖ ❖ ❖

## I Vini del Mese

### Legenda dei punteggi

- ❖ Sufficiente – ❖❖ Abbastanza Buono – ❖❖❖ Buono
- ❖❖❖❖ Ottimo – ❖❖❖❖❖ Eccellente
- ★ Vino eccellente nella sua categoria
- 🌟 Vino con ottimo rapporto qualità/prezzo

I prezzi sono da considerarsi indicativi in quanto possono subire variazioni a seconda del paese e del luogo in cui i vini vengono acquistati



### Adarmando 2013 Tabarrini (Umbria, Italy)

🍇 Trebbiano Spoletino

Prezzo: € 20.00

Punteggio ❖❖❖❖❖

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

👂 Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of apple, medlar and citrus fruits followed by aromas of pear, peach, pineapple, hawthorn, plum, lychee, broom, hazelnut, melon, honey and mineral.

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

🍷 Very persistent finish with long flavors of apple, medlar and lychee.

📅 9 months in steel tanks, 9 months in bottle.

🍴 *Pasta and risotto with mushrooms and crustaceans, Sauteed white meat, Stewed fish*



**Montefalco Sagrantino Colle alle Macchie 2011**  
**Tabarrini (Umbria, Italy)**

Sagrantino

Prezzo: € 50.00

Punteggio

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

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

36 months in cask, 12 months in bottle.

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



**Contemaso Rosato 2014**  
**Alessandro Tognozzi Moreni (Tuscany, Italy)**

Sangiovese

Prezzo: € 14.00

Punteggio

Brilliant cherry pink and nuances of cherry pink, moderate transparency.

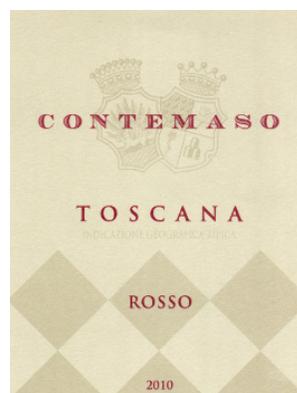
Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of cherry, raspberry and cyclamen followed by aromas of strawberry, blueberry, plum and peach.

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

Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, raspberry and strawberry.

6 months in steel tanks.

*Stuffed pasta, Risotto with meat, Roasted white meat, Roasted fish, Dairy products*



**Contemaso 2010**  
**Alessandro Tognozzi Moreni (Tuscany, Italy)**

Sangiovese (60%), Petit Verdot (27%), Cabernet Sauvignon (13%)

Prezzo: € 22.00

Punteggio

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

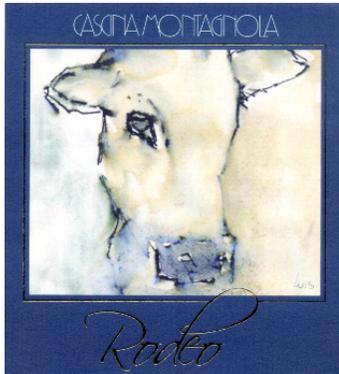
Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of black cherry, plum and black currant followed by aromas of violet, blackberry, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate, raspberry, iris and eucalyptus.

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

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

15 months in barrique.

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



**Colli Tortonesi Barbera Rodeo 2010**  
Cascina Montagnola (Piedmont, Italy)

Barbera

Prezzo: € 13.50

Punteggio

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

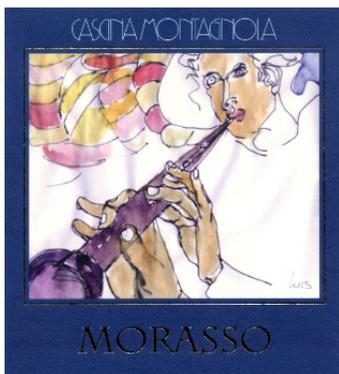
Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of black cherry, plum and blueberry followed by aromas of violet, blackberry, vanilla, cocoa, tobacco, licorice and menthol.

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

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

15 months in barrique, 12 months in bottle.

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



**Colli Tortonesi Timorasso Morasso 2008**  
Cascina Montagnola (Piedmont, Italy)

Timorasso

Prezzo: € 19.00

Punteggio

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

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of plum, citrus fruits and honey followed by aromas of quince, pear jam, peach jam, hazelnut, hawthorn, broom, hay, flint and mineral.

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

Persistent finish with flavors of quince, plum and honey.

12 months in steel tanks, 12 months in bottle.

*Stuffed pasta, Roasted fish, Roasted white meat, Mushroom soups*



**Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore**  
**Tralivio 2013**  
Sartarelli (Marches, Italy)

Verdicchio

Prezzo: € 12.00

Punteggio

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

Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of apple, hawthorn, citrus fruits followed by aromas of almond, plum, peach, pear, pineapple, broom and medlar.

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

Persistent finish with flavors of apple, plum and almond.

6 months in steel tanks, 4 months in bottle.

*Broiled fish, Roasted white meat, Fish soups, Fried fish*



**Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore  
Balciana 2013  
Sartarelli (Marches, Italy)**

Verdicchio

Prezzo: € 27.00

Punteggio

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

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of quince, apricot and honey followed by aromas of almond, citrus fruits, hawthorn, pear, plum, pineapple, chamomile, candied fruits, broom, hazelnut 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.

8 months in steel tanks, 6 months in bottle.

*Stuffed pasta with mushrooms, Roasted fish, Roasted white meat, Hard cheese*



**Barbera d'Alba Superiore Marun 2012  
Matteo Correggia (Piedmont, Italy)**

Barbera

Prezzo: € 24.00

Punteggio

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

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

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



**Roero Riserva Roche d'Ampsej 2011  
Matteo Correggia (Piedmont, Italy)**

Nebbiolo

Prezzo: € 35.00

Punteggio

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, rose, vanilla, strawberry, blueberry, chocolate, tobacco, leather, cinnamon, mace and menthol.

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

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

18 months in barrique, 24 months in bottle.

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

EVENTI

## Notiziario

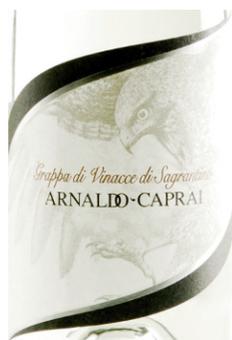
In this column are published news and information about events concerning the world of wine and food. Whoever is interested in publishing this kind of information can send us a mail to the address [Events@DiWineTaste.com](mailto:Events@DiWineTaste.com).



NON SOLO VINO

## Aquavitae

Review of Grappa, Distillates and Brandy



### Grappa di Sagrantino di Montefalco

Arnaldo Caprai (Umbria, Italy)

(Distillatore: Distillerie Bonollo)

 Pomace of Sagrantino

Prezzo: € 18.00 - 70cl

Punteggio ❖❖❖

-  Limpid, colorless and crystalline.
-  Intense, clean and pleasing with aromas of plum, blackberry, hazelnut, geranium and raisin, with imperceptible alcohol pungency.
-  Intense flavors with perceptible alcohol pungency which tends to dissolve rapidly, pleasing roundness.
-  Persistent finish with flavors of plum, blackberry and hazelnut.
-  Distilled in a steam batch distiller.



## Wine Guide Parade

November 2015

I migliori 15 vini recensiti nella nostra Guida e votati dai lettori di DiWineTaste

Posiz.	Vino, Produttore	Voti
1	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Podium 2013, Garofoli	5612
2	Franciacorta Pas Dosé Riserva Baiana 2007, La Montina	3513
3	Collina d'Oro 2014, Roccafiore	2648
4	Conero Riserva Grosso Agontano 2011, Garofoli	2596
5	Prova d'Autore 2012, Roccafiore	2465
6	Sangiovese di Romagna Superiore Riserva Nero 2009, Tenuta Fulcera	2453
7	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Spumante Metodo Classico Delis 2011, Garofoli	2431
8	Montefalco Sagrantino 2010, Roccafiore	2006
9	Curtefranca Rosso dei Dossi 2012, La Montina	1968
10	Franciacorta Rosé Extra Brut Millesimato 2009, La Montina	1893
11	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Passito Brumato 2007, Garofoli	1813
12	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Riserva Serra Fiorese 2010, Garofoli	1710
13	Fiorfiore 2013, Roccafiore	1549
14	Franciacorta Brut, La Montina	1502
15	Franciacorta Brut Millesimato 2008, La Montina	1463