

DiWINEtaste

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Bubbles War

The amount of products available in the wine market is often a matter of dispute and, just like everything where human subjectivity plays a role, things usually end up by opposing real and proper sides with the purpose of supporting their own opinions opposed to the ones who think differently. One of the wines that has practically always divided its consumers is certainly sparkling wine, not just among the ones who just define it as “sweet” or “dry”, but also among the ones who love the most common type, that is dry sparkling wine, and therefore moving the “battle” on subjects such as areas and production methodologies.

The undisputed “king”, that usually wins any “war” related to sparkling wine, is certainly Champagne, great, or better, magnificent sparkling wine, emblem of the excellency in the world of bubbles. However in this vast world there is not only Champagne. What makes Champagne “special”, and this wine is surely special in its kind, is all those traditional facts and legends that make everyone think, every time a Champagne bottle is being opened, no matter its producer or real quality, they are about to have a very special moment, elegant and of class, something that must be remembered forever.

We would like to point out that what we just said is not a war against Champagne, once again, Champagne is a magnificent sparkling wine and of great class, provided it is well made, and certainly not all the Champagne out there can be defined this way. There also are other sparkling wines and virtually every country that makes wine also offers sparkling wines. Italy, Spain, United States of America, Germany, Australia and South Africa are just some of the many that can be mentioned as an example, they are not the only ones for sure. Italian sparkling wine, for example, offers a vast selection of wines and areas, certainly not all of them can be defined as extraordinary, indeed, most of them are just ordinary, however there are certain areas in Italy capable of offering sparkling wines of great class. The same is also true for other countries that produce sparkling wine.

However, every time a sparkling wine is being tasted, no matter of its area of origin or its type, the comparison with Champagne is most of the times inevitable. The Champagne production area has unique and extraordinary characteristics, from soil to grapes, from climate to the seriousness of certain producers, and what can be found in Champagne is, and will always be, impossible to find in other sparkling wines produced in other areas. In order to make things clearer, Italian Franciacortas, to be considered among the excellent sparkling wines of the world and not all the Franciacortas are good, have their own characteristics that

cannot be found in Champagne and vice versa, no matter they are made with the same sparkling wine production methodology.

We believe that, at the end, there will be lots of victims in this war, many losers and no winner. In case we also consider the fact that sparkling wines, as opposed to the majority of other wines, also suffer of a “seasonality” of consumption, in certain countries sparkling wines are traditionally sold during specific holidays, in particular Christmas, New Year’s day and Easter, as well as being uncorked in rare happenings and during celebration moments, this actually is another drawback that every sparkling wine producer is forced to face. We believe the real bubbles war should not be about the competition among the many sparkling wines, the real challenge is the one of improving the culture of consumption about these wines and to have them to get rid of the role that was imposed on them because of traditions, prejudices and commercial opportunities. We believe that, instead of being a war, it should be a challenge that should mainly involve producers, enogastronomers and, last but not the least, consumers.

Therefore, why not thinking about uncorking a good bottle of sparkling wine and to match it to a delicious meal? Does this sound like a bizarre idea? Indeed sparkling wine offers new and excellent enogastronomical possibilities. There are so many sparkling wines out there available in the market, made with different grapes, different areas and different methodologies, from the light and delicate ones to the most robust and complex ones, such as vintage sparkling wines produced with classic method,

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from dry ones to sweet ones, therefore capable of meeting a huge possibility of food matching. From aperitif to sweet, it is possible to find excellent solutions in sparkling wines produced in any country of the world.

We believe this is the real challenge to be taken seriously and to face in a practical and serious way: producers, that should begin investing more in promoting and in improving the culture of their sparkling wines and not just focusing on certain periods of the year in order to get out the most from commercial possibilities, enogastronomers who should learn to “dare” more and, lastly, consumers themselves that should learn to be more curious and daring and to be open in order to try something new and, we are certain of this, the experience will not be disappointing. Next time something important or a holiday is about to be celebrated, let’s uncork a good bottle of sparkling wine, however let’s also remember to have these wines more present in our tables, together with all the other ones, just because, at the end, it is wine anyway, indeed, it is a good wine with bubbles.

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.

I am a Chianti lover and I noticed in some labels is cited “Chianti Classico” whereas others simply have “Chianti”. What is the difference? Are there two distinct production methods?

Seymour Cutler – Tacoma, Washington (USA)

The appellation “Chianti” and “Chianti Classico” are used to identify the areas of origin of this famous wine from Tuscany. “Chianti Classico” comes from an area which is considered historically traditional and goes north from Siena to south from Florence. Bottles of “Chianti Classico” can be easily recognized because of the presence of the special label “black rooster”, which is usually found in the bottle’s neck. “Chianti” is produced in a wider area and actually consists of seven production areas: Colli Fiorentini, Rufina, Montalbano, Montespertoli, Colli Sen-

esi, Colli Aretini and Colline Pisane. Grapes used to make both wines are usually the same, traditionally Sangiovese, Canaiolo Nero, Trebbiano Toscano and Malvasia Bianca, however most of the production is mainly based on Sangiovese grape, alone or sometimes other grapes are added as well, even non traditional ones of the Chianti area, such as Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot.



I read somewhere that by using red berried grapes it is possible to make white wine. How that can be as the wine produced with these type of grapes usually is red as well as rather deep?

Sylvie Feuillerat – Saint-Jean de Duras (France)

Producing white wines by using red berried grapes is perfectly possible. This technique, that can be applied to any type of wine, is mainly used for the production of sparkling wines, like Champagne, for example. The color in red wines is mainly determined by colorant substances that are found in grapes’ skins and are passed to must during the maceration or fermentation. In case the must obtained by red berried grapes is separated from skins soon after pressing, the resulting wine will be white, just like it were produced by using white berried grapes. Wines produced in this way are usually referred as “blanc de noirs”.

ABC WINE

Chile

Getting the benefits of a climate that is practically Mediterranean, the country is mainly oriented to the production of varietal wines produced with international grapes

Chile, besides being considered the most important wine producing country of South America, is also historically considered among the countries of the south hemisphere where the cultivation of grapes was started first. After a long period of decaying, Chile has oriented its wine production towards the so called *international* grapes and producing wines made of these grapes which denote particular characteristics as to be considered typical. A curious fact of Chile is the absolute absence of some vine diseases, that in other part of the world were responsible for huge damages, such as the feared phylloxera and downy mildew. The reason of this “immunity” seems to be because of the excellent and natural barrier offered by the Andes mountains as well as by the Pacific Ocean, conditions that did not allow these “flagella” to enter the country.

Cultivation of vine and the production of wine in Chile were introduced by Spaniard missionaries around 1550. It is believed that plants or seeds of vine came from Peru or Mexico, however it was a species of grape previously introduced by Spaniards in those countries. The reason why vine and wine were introduced in the countries of Latin America is practically the same that allowed vine to spread all over Europe. Wine was an essential

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element for celebrating Christian liturgies and therefore missionaries usually brought vines with them in order to make wine. It seems to be likely that the grape introduced by Spaniard missionaries in Chile was *Pais*, a red berried grape still common in the country which is used to make pretty ordinary red wines, and this grape is probably related to *Mission*, the grape introduced by missionaries in California as well as in other countries of South America.

The cultivation of vine in Chile was not easy, in the beginning vineyards were completely destroyed by local people, however it was possible to start a solid viticultural activity in the Santiago area and for more than four centuries up to nowadays, this area is still considered as the most important one of Chile. In the seventeenth century Spaniards, in order to safeguard the commercial interests about wine export in Latin America, forbade the planting of new vineyards, however this action did not have any significant effect for the development of the local enology. Indeed, this prohibition encouraged the local authorities to promote the cultivation of vine, and therefore the production of wine, and by doing so they got the result of starting many activities having the explicit goal of producing wine. Despite the presence of many *estancias*, that is farms, the fame of Chilean wine was mainly known for quantity and for the cheap price instead of quality.

The impulse towards quality production was started by the French Claudio Gay who convinced the Chilean government to build *Quinta Normal*, an experimental greenhouse to be used for the cultivation of exotic plants and of *Vitis Vinifera*, the European vine used to make wine. It was 1830. This event represented an exceptional fact of historical importance, because proves in Chile were introduced European species before powdery mildew and phylloxera appeared in Europe and, as it is commonly known, they made huge and terrible damages all over the “old world”. This fact is exceptional because Chile is the only country of the world where both powdery mildew and phylloxera never appeared, therefore the Chilean exemplars, which do not need any American rootstock immune to phylloxera, as opposed to Europe as this is an essential practice, are to be considered as rare and genuine exemplars of the original European vines.



Fig. 1: Chile

The real impulse towards the change of Chilean enology took place after the independence from Spain, when in Chile were introduced wines from Europe, which were drastically different from the ones produced in the country, and they aroused a vivid interest among producers and they tried to make similar wines. In particular it was Ochagavía Echazarreta who in 1851 personally imported in Chile many exemplars of French vines and he also convinced a French wine maker to follow him in his country in order to help him to make wine produced with those grapes. It was a fundamental event because represented the beginning of modern enology in Chile which is still and strongly based on “international” grapes. The florid and lucky period of Chilean enology started with the decay and the disgrace of wine producers in Europe, devastated by phylloxera and therefore incapable of making any wine, Chile practically was the only country of the world that could make wine also thanks to the total absence of this parasite. The “lucky” period ended when in Europe they finally adopted preemptive measures against phylloxera and therefore quality wine production was resumed. A period of decay which lasted up to the eighties of the last century also because of the political regime in the country.

The return of democracy in Chile finally allowed the strategic economic and commercial importance of wine to develop and in the years following 1987 the country had a real and proper impulse for its enology; new vineyards were started with the explicit goal of making quality wines, a goal that seems to be more and more concretely pursued by Chile and brilliantly witnessed by its wines which are now exported everywhere in the world.

The Chilean Quality System

Talking about Chilean quality system, to be truth, there are not many things to say, in the sense that, just like United States of America, Chile does not have a strict system of laws that determine, for example, what grape varieties can be cultivated in specific areas or harvesting and wine making practices. However in 1995 were introduced new laws that mainly were about the definition of viticultural areas and their sub areas, as well as norms to be followed in the labeling of bottles. The “system” was developed by the Agricultural Ministry in collaboration with wine producers.

The system particularly defines the following:

- In case a wine has the area of origin cited in the label, at least 75% of grapes must come from the cited region
- In case a wine has the name of the grape cited in the label, the wine must be produced with at least 75% of the mentioned grape
- In case a wine mentions the vintage in its label, at least 75% of the wine must come from the mentioned vintage

Production Areas

Wine production in Chile is essentially based on the so called “international” grapes and the cultivation is mainly done in the

valleys that go from Valparaiso to Bío-Bío. Thanks to the effects of Pacific Ocean and of Andes mountains, the Chilean climate is rather mild and temperatures rarely raise over 32° C (90° F) and summer nights are cool. The most cultivated white berried grapes in the country are Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Vert, also known here as Sauvignonasse, whereas red berried grapes include Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère, Merlot and Pais, the first grape to be cultivated in Chile and used for the production of ordinary wines.

The main production areas are located to the northern side of the country, in the valleys of Aconcagua and Casablanca, whereas in the center there are the Maipo, Rapel, Curicó and Maule Valleys which together form the so called "Central Valley". To the south there are two valleys, Bío-Bío and Itata, of lesser importance in regard to the previous ones, where ordinary wines destined for mass market are being produced. The most famous and important area of Chile is certainly Maipo, near the city of Santiago, one of the most ancient wine regions of the country. An area which is recently showing good quality is the Casablanca Valley, in the vicinity of the Pacific Ocean, this area seems to have excellent qualities as to be considered as one of the areas that will become in future the reference area of Chile, particularly for its white wines made of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

North from Casablanca Valley there is the Aconcagua Valley, characterized by a hot climate, which is getting more and more interesting for the production of wines made of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. One of the positive aspects of Chilean viticulture is the huge amount and availability of water, in practice it is melting snow from the peaks of Andes mountains flowing down until reaching the Pacific Ocean, and represents a precious resource for the irrigation of vineyards. However this huge amount of water, which surely allow to obtain rich and huge harvests, and therefore grapes of mediocre quality, needs of a systematic and concrete channelization in order to avoid excessive irrigations that would promote an over production of vines. For this reason many producers of quality wines have installed in their vineyards drip irrigation systems in order to avoid risks of getting harvests of considerable quantity but of scarce quality.

The best wines produced in Chile are probably the ones based on Cabernet Sauvignon, available in many prices, from cheapest to very expensive, from the most ordinary ones to the most refined and elegant ones and having higher prices. Among white wines Chardonnay surely excels, mainly because it is produced in higher quantities as opposed to the other white wines, and however there are good wines made with this grape. Recently are emerging good white wines made of Sauvignon Blanc, even though, to tell the truth, not all the Sauvignon Blancs produced in Chile are made with this grape. Often they are Sauvignon Vert, or Sauvignonasse, and this fact is, unfortunately, rarely or never mentioned in the label. Even wines produced with Merlot grape, getting more and more better in their quality, hide the same "trick" because sometimes it is Carmenère grape and, just like Sauvignon Blanc, this is not mentioned in the label. However it should be noticed that many producers are trying to make things clearer about this aspect and they are investigating on their

own grape's DNA in order to properly identifying the exact species and to clearly mention it in the label.

WINE TASTING

Wine Faults

Quality of wine is also determined by the absence of faults, an essential condition for every great wine

Even though wine making technology allows the production of quality wines, sometimes it can be possible to find some faults that can compromise in a relevant way both the evaluation and quality. Talking about faults in wines, even serious ones, can be seen nowadays as a rather unusual subject as it seems to happen less and less frequently, however a wine taster should be able to recognize the many faults, at least the most common ones, and subsequently determining the quality of wine. Quality of wine, as it is clearly and obviously known, is also defined by means of the absence of faults and, in particular, with the presence of all those factors that promote quality.

Appearance Faults

Finding a wine which has faults in its aspect is nowadays rather rare. Thanks to the modern and proper wine making practices, wines produced are limpid and crystalline, with a total absence of "substances" or conditions that would compromise its aspect. It can be said that certain faults and certain wine diseases that could seriously compromise wine's aspect and its aesthetical pleasantness have practically disappeared, their presence in wine, besides being a rather exceptional fact, are also the sign of an approximate and coarse wine making.

A wine, that can be considered of quality at least in its aspect, must always be limpid and the presence of suspended particles is always and however a negative factor that compromise its quality. However it must be remembered that sometimes the presence of suspended particles in the bottle, never in the wine glass, is to be considered as normal and do not compromise wine's quality in anyway. Sometimes can happen that a layer of sediment can develop in the bottom of the bottle and this usually is to be considered as a natural consequence or reaction related to specific events.

In red wines, particularly the ones which are destined to a long aging and rich in tannins and extracts, it is absolutely normal that in the bottom of the bottle can be found some sediment and they are formed by polymerized tannins and, by getting more and more heavier and less soluble, they finally deposit to the bottom. This cannot be considered as a fault because, besides being absolutely a natural consequence of the aging of such wines, a proper decanting will give a perfectly limpid wine.

Another factor that can be cause of sediment is related to the precipitation of the so called "tartrates", which can be mainly found in white and rose wines, and is caused by a thermal shock

as a consequence of a sudden and prolonged cooling of wine. The deposit of tartrates can be recognized by the presence of transparent crystals on the bottom of the bottle, pretty heavy, and they will hardly be in suspension in wine. No matter this is a “forgivable” fault, the precipitation of tartrates is however a factor that compromise the aesthetical pleasantness of wine and therefore must be avoided.

Causes that really compromise the aspect of wine, particularly wine’s limpidity, are all related as a consequence of a scarce stabilization of wine or because of refermentations occurred in the bottle. This phenomenon is rather rare to find, however there are cases where it can be still found. This condition is mainly originated by two distinct causes: alcoholic refermentation and malolactic refermentation, both occurred in the bottle. Alcoholic refermentation in bottle takes place when the wine is bottled when it is not perfectly stabilized and it still contains some non fermented sugar. Malolactic refermentation is instead caused by the presence of microorganisms which transform malic acid into lactic acid. Both phenomena can make wine turbid because, in case of alcoholic refermentation, *saccharomyces* transform sugar into alcohol, and as a byproduct, carbon dioxide, whereas in case of malolactic refermentation, lactic bacteria transform malic acid into lactic acid and, as a byproduct, carbon dioxide. In both cases, at the end of the refermentation, microorganisms die and deposit to the bottom of the bottle and they can be recognized as a grainy and sandy layer making wine turbid. In both cases the wine, besides being cloudy or turbid, according to the origin of the phenomenon, also has some slight effervescence.

There also are other causes which compromise wine’s appearance, such as the so called “casse” (breaking) and other diseases which are now very rare and therefore very, if not impossible, hard to find. Another fault that can be detected in wine’s appearance is the wrong correspondence of its color, showing brownish colors both for white wines and red wines, which is the sign of a strong oxidation or a condition of wine’s life that passed its best state and it is not pleasing to drink anymore, in other words, a wine which is very old and died. The cause for this fault is to be found in the bad keeping of bottles or because wine was aged for too long in bottle. In this specific case it is more likely that wine, besides not being pleasing at sight, is also disgusting both at mouth and nose. Moreover it should be noticed that oxidation, when it is found in young wines, is a grave fault that can be originated by producer’s negligence in keeping.

Olfactory Faults

As opposed to wine’s appearance faults, olfactory faults are more frequent and, in case they are present, they seriously compromise wine’s quality. Among the main and most feared ones which affect wine’s aromas, there is the so called “corky smell”, a fault that affects about 5-7% of the total quantity of wine sold and is exclusively found in bottles sealed with corks. This fault develops because of 2,4,6-trichloroanisole, or simply trichloroanisole, abbreviated as 246-TCA or TCA, which can be found in some corks as a consequence of causes hardly foreseeable. Describing corky smell is rather hard, however once this smell is

detected for the first time it is rather hard to forget. The smell of this fault can be described as a set of odors that can resemble mold, wet cardboard or newspaper and putrefying organic substances.

Corky smell is certainly the most common and recognizable olfactory fault, however there also are other faults, to be honest not very common because of the modern wine making techniques, and it is however important being able to recognize them when present in wine. The origin of these faults is related to organic chemistry and therefore the explanation of such chemical phenomena responsible for these smell is not covered by this article. It must be however noticed that some bad smells, and therefore olfactory faults, when are present in small quantities can be considered as pleasing to some individuals and, in this specific case, it seems to be true the renowned Latin saying “*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum*”, there is no dispute about tastes. Moreover it should be remembered that perception of any smell, and therefore of any fault, is subjective and also depends by the minimum threshold of perception of every individual.

The following list mentions the most common olfactory faults, as well as the cause which originate them and the characteristics that allow their recognition.

- **Banana** - No matter this aroma is considered as pleasing in certain white wines, it can be considered as a fault when it is excessively present and, even worse, when it is detected in red wines. The cause of this defect, also remembering that the aroma of banana is a typical characteristic of many grape varieties, such as Chardonnay, is usually a byproduct of malolactic fermentation.
- **Band-Aid, Manure, Horse blanket** - It is a sign of the presence of *brettanomyces*, a family of yeasts which usually have the effect of spoiling wine. It must be noticed this smell, in tolerable quantity, can be a wanted characteristic by the producer, in particular in Californian Syrah or in some red wines from Burgundy.
- **Burning match, Sulfur** - It is the sign of an excessive presence of sulfur dioxide. It should be however noticed that this component is always present in wine, both because it is a byproduct of fermentation and because it is used in the wine making in order to stabilize wine. When present in little quantity its smell is imperceptible and does not disturb other aromas.
- **Canned asparagus** - This fault can be mainly found in wines made of Sauvignon Blanc and it usually is the sign of a bad or approximate cultivation of vine or a grape not perfectly mature.
- **Sweat, Dirty socks** - This fault is usually the sign of a spoilage from bacteria of dirty casks
- **Butter** - This aroma is usually considered as a fault when present in excessive quantities, however it is a pleasing characteristic of certain white wines. The cause of this fault is to be found in the excessive presence of diacetyl that is usually developed during the alcoholic fermentation as well as during malolactic fermentation.

- **Mold** - It is always the sign of a bacterial spoilage, mouldy grapes or dirty casks.
- **Enamel, Acetone** - It is the sign of the presence of ethyl acetate, whose smell is rather pungent, and is the result of the combination between acetic acid, usually present in wine, and ethanol, that is the main wine's alcohol.
- **Rotten eggs** - It is the sign of the presence of hydrogen sulfide, a gas that can develop at the end of the fermentation and resembles the smell of rotten eggs. The development of this gas can also be cause of sulfur applied late to grapes, or in case the grape juice is poor in nitrogen, such as the one of Chardonnay, Riesling and Syrah.
- **Alcohol** - Alcohol is naturally present in wine, however when its smell is clearly perceivable and in a predominant way, it is considered as a fault.
- **Sauerkraut, Boiled cabbage** - It is usually developed as a byproduct of malolactic fermentation.
- **Marsala, Sherry** - The typical and loved aroma of these wines can be sometimes perceived in other wines and when this happens it is always sign of an excessive and sudden oxidation that affects, moreover, the aspect of wine as well.
- **Garlic** - It is the sign of the presence of mercaptans and sulfur compounds. This odor is usually the result of the combination of many sulfur components and they usually develop after the fermentation.
- **Vinegar** - It is the result of an excessive presence of acetic acid and it is caused by acetic bacteria present in wine in case alcoholic fermentation was not done in a proper way or in case alcohol, oxygen and acetic bacteria combine one to each other.
- **Wet cardboard, Dog fur** - It can be clearly perceived in case the cork is faulty and originated the so called "corky smell".

Gustatory Faults

Faults that can be found in wine's taste are usually anticipated by olfactory analysis: a wine having bad smells will certainly and probably have a bad taste as well. This gets more evident with all those bad smells, such as vinegary smell, that can be easily confirmed in mouth. It must be however noticed that a wine which is very tannic or has some bitter flavors will never be anticipated by the nose or by its aspect. It should be remembered that in case of tannins, this can be a wanted characteristic by the producer who especially created that wine with the explicit idea goal it should be aged for sometime before being uncorked. In this specific case it is not right to talk about faults, indeed that bottle of wine was opened in advance and therefore the wine is "unripe". A prolonged aging of the wine in the bottle will certainly make the same wine less aggressive and more balanced. The huge presence of tannins, or of any other gustatory element, such as acidity or alcohol, directly affects the determination of

balance; a wine having a scarce balance can be considered as faulty, that is lacking of a fundamental quality factor.

Even persistence, that is the quantity of time in which the gustatory-olfactory sensations of wine are perceivable after it has been swallowed, can be considered as a fault when it is not sufficiently long and it disappears within few seconds. It must be noticed this characteristic is to be considered as a lacking instead of a real and proper fault, what is certain is that when wine is *short*, that is lacks in persistence, it is disappointing and therefore this can be also considered as a fault even though of lesser gravity. In case a wine is *short*, it does not mean it was made with arguable or approximate wine making techniques, it is also true that persistence is created, as to say, both in the vineyard and in cellar, however it should be remembered that the quantity of time wine's taste lasts in the mouth and it is clearly perceivable after it was swallowed also depends by grapes varieties used to make the wine as well as the meteorological condition of the year, lastly, by the yields per hectare harvested in the vineyard.

Wines of the Month

Score legend

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

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



Colli Piacentini Ortrugo Paolo III Farnese 2002 Testa (Italy)

Grapes: Ortrugo

Price: € 5,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a beautiful pale straw yellow and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent and with evident effervescence. Pleasing nose, mainly of fruit, with intense and pleasing aromas dominated by banana. There can be perceived good aromas of acacia, broom, litchi, green apple, pear and peach. The mouth reveals a pleasing effervescence and good correspondence to the nose. Crisp and intense, this wine is agreeable and balanced. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of banana, pear and green apple.

Food match: Aperitifs, Risotto and pasta with fish or vegetables



**Trebbiano d’Abruzzo Marina Cvetic 2000
Masciarelli (Italy)**

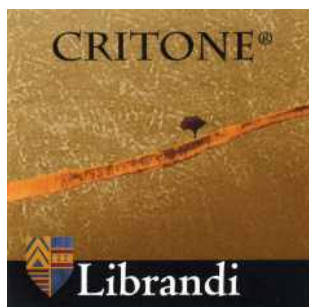
Grapes: Trebbiano d’ Abruzzo

Price: € 25,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

The wine shows a golden yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes an evident aroma of wood which allow anyway the perception of other aromas. There can be perceived good and intense aromas, mainly of fruit, such as banana, hawthorn, apple, hazelnut, pear, toasted and vanilla. The mouth reveals a good correspondence to the nose and an excellent balance. Alcohol, present in good quantity, is well balanced by wine’s acidity. The finish is very persistent with long flavors of wood, pear and banana. A well made wine, fermented in barrique and aged for 22 months in barrique.

Food match: Roasted white meat, Soft Cheese, Stuffed pasta



**Critone 2002
Librandi (Italy)**

Grapes: Chardonnay (90%), Sauvignon Blanc (10%)

Price: € 6,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

The wine shows a straw yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals elegance, finesse and personality with a clean and intense aroma of banana followed by intense and good aromas of acacia, apricot, kiwi, litchi, apple, pear and peach. In the mouth has a good correspondence to the nose, very balanced and alcohol is well balanced by wine’s acidity as well as having intense flavors. The finish is persistent with agreeable flavors of banana, kiwi, pear and peach. A truly well made wine. Critone is produced by fermentation at controlled temperature.

Food match: Crustaceans, Pasta and risotto with fish, Broiled or roasted fish



**Valtellina Superiore Prestigio 1999
Triacca (Italy)**

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 23,00 - 30,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense and clean aromas, mainly of violet followed by aromas of black cherry, strawberry jam, raspberry, licorice, bilberry and hints of black pepper. The mouth reveals a good correspondence to the nose and a slightly alcoholic attack however well balanced by tannins. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of violet, black cherry and strawberry jam. A well made wine produced with Nebbiolo grapes that are left on the vine to dry for 25-30 days and is aged in new barrique for 12 months and 8 months in bottle.

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



**Valtellina Sforzato 1999
Triacca (Italy)**

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 22,00 - 28,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals clean and intense aromas of violet and black cherry, followed by strawberry jam,

raspberry, bilberry and mulberry. In the mouth denotes a slightly alcoholic attack however balanced by tannins, good correspondence to the nose, good body and intense flavors. The finish is persistent with clean flavors of violet, mulberry and bilberry. This wine is produced with dried Nebbiolo grapes and it is aged in cask for 18 months and in bottle for 3 months.

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



Controguerra Rosso Lumen 1999
Dino Illuminati (Italy)

Grapes: Montepulciano (70%),
Cabernet Sauvignon (30%)

Price: n.d.

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine has an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals good personality with intense, elegant and clean aromas of black cherry, cocoa, fennel, strawberry, raspberry, licorice, mulberry, coconut, plum and vanilla with hints of mint. In mouth is very balanced and very correspondent to the nose, good body and clean and intense flavors. The finish is persistent with agreeable and clean flavors of mulberry, plum and black cherry. A well made wine produced with macerating skins for 15 days and aged in barrique for about 18 months followed by an aging in bottle for 12-14 months.

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



Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Zanna 1998
Dino Illuminati (Italy)

Grapes: Montepulciano

Price: n.d.

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a firm ruby red color, moderate transparency. The nose reveals personality with clean and intense aromas such as black cherry, cherry, raspberry, bilberry, plum, vanilla and violet. The mouth is very balanced with a good correspondence to the nose. Good body, tannins are well balanced by alcohol, with intense and good flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, black cherry and bilberry. A well made wine produced with fermentation in steel tanks at controlled temperature followed by an aging for 24-26 months in casks.

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



Aglianico del Vulture Carato Venusio 1999
Cantina di Venosa (Italy)

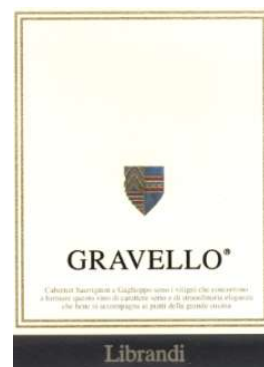
Grapes: Aglianico

Price: € 13,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes clean aromas, mainly of fruit, such as black cherry, bilberry, mulberry, plum and violet. The mouth reveals a good correspondence to the nose, good body and good balance. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, mulberry and plum. Carato Venusio is aged in cask for 12-18 months followed by 6 months in bottle.

Food match: Meat and mushrooms, Hard cheese, Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue



Gravello 1999
Librandi (Italy)

Grapes: Gaglioppo (60%), Cabernet Sauvignon (40%)

Price: € 18,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦★

The wine shows a ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals an elegant personality with intense and clean aromas of black cherry, carob, chocolate, bilberry jam, strawberry, licorice, plum and vanilla followed by pleasing hints of black pepper and menthol. The mouth denotes an agreeable body and pleasing flavors, very correspondent to the nose, excellent balance and good body, with tannins well balanced by alcohol. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of black cherry, plum and strawberry. A well made wine produced by macerating skins for 10-15 days and aged in barrique for 12 months and 6 months in bottle.

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



**Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Marina Cvetic 1999
Masciarelli (Italy)**

Grapes: Montepulciano

Price: € 15,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

This wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals great personality with intense, elegant and clean aromas. There can be perceived aromas of black cherry, chocolate, plum jam, raspberry, licorice, mulberry, black pepper, black currant and vanilla. In the mouth promptly denotes its thickness and full body, with a slightly tannic attack promptly balanced by alcohol, present in good quantity. Very good correspondence to the nose with intense and clean flavors. The finish is very persistent and long with agreeable and clean flavors of plum jam, black currant, black cherry and mulberry. A great and very well made wine. This wine is produced with a maceration of skins for 20-30 days and a fermentation on cask for about 15-20 days.

Food match: (Game, Braised meat, Stewed meat, Hard cheese)



**Rosso La Fabriseria 2000
Tedeschi (Italy)**

Grapes: Corvina (30%), Corvinone (30%), Rondinella (30%), Cabernet Sauvignon (5%) Molinara, Rossignola, Oseleta, Negrara, Dindarella (5%)

Price: € 20,00

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals great personality with clean, elegant and intense aromas. There can be perceived aromas of cocoa, chocolate, black cherry jam, bilberry jam, plum jam, leather, licorice, bilberry, mulberry, vanilla and dried violet. In the mouth denotes an alcoholic and tannic attack however well balanced and a good correspondence to the nose. Full body and very intense flavors. The finish is very persistent with long and pleasing flavors of plum jam, black cherry jam, mulberry jam and cocoa. A great wine. La Fabriseria is aged in barrique for 1 year and for 6 months in bottle.

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



**Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi 1999
Tedeschi (Italy)**

Grapes: Corvina (30%), Corvinone (30%), Rondinella (30%), Molinara, Rossignola, Oseleta, Negrara, Dindarella, Croatina,

Forselina (10%)

Price: € 36,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆◆

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose denotes a great personality with elegant and clean aromas. There can be perceived intense and good aromas of cocoa, carob, black cherry jam, raspberry jam, plum jam, leather, licorice, vanilla and violet. The mouth denotes an alcoholic and tannic attack however well balanced and with an excellent correspondence to the nose. A full bodied wine with very intense flavors. The finish is very persistent and long with clean and pleasing flavors of black cherry jam, plum and cocoa. A magnificent wine. This Amarone is aged in barrique for 2 years and for 6 months in bottle.

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



Franco Argiolas

WINE PRODUCERS

Argiolas

In Sardinia, enchanting island of the Tyrrhenian Sea, in a land rich in history, art and traditions, are being produced great wines, fruit of the land and expression of the territory

Leaving Cagliari, going to the tranquil Mediterranean inland and after about twenty kilometers, there is the territory of Sardiniana, whose ancient name seems to be *Xerdiani*, a place rich of cedars, whose essence perfumed religious ceremonies of Greek monks. The favorable climate conditions, fertility of land and the abundance of water made this place very favorable to the settling of humans since prehistorical times. Three kilometers from the center of this town, encircled by vineyards and secular olive trees, there is the ancient church of Santa Maria of Sibiola, built in the first half of the twelfth century by Vittorini of Marseille, where a flourishing agricultural center was run by the active presence of Benedictine Monks and still nowadays, the 8th of September of every year, people gathers together and celebrate a picturesque rural festival. In this place, in Sardiniana, sixty years ago Antonio Agriolas started his company and now his sons Franco and Giuseppe run it with the very same fatherly passion and with a modern vision about viticulture and enology. Antonio Argiolas turned his passion into reality by following, both in the cultivation of vine and of olive trees, the ancient traditions of the Mediterranean civilizations, narrated by Pliny the Elder, Columella and Horace.

Today Argiolas winery, run and managed with extreme professionalism, is aiming to quality as its main goal. In the winery of Sardiniana, provided of the most modern machineries for wine making, keeping and aging in barrique for its most refined red wines, are sent grapes harvested in the vineyards located in the vicinity and in the lands of *Selegas*, *Siurgus Donigala* and *Guamaggiore*. From Sernobi, center of Trexenta, a very ancient region lived by many people which was characterized by three

hundreds villages, can be reached the *Is Arais* estate, in the territory of Siurgus. In the southern area of this region are located *Turriga*, *Is Argiolas* and *Unghera* estates.

It was in these lands that more than sixty years ago, Antonio Argiolas, today 96, began his adventure in the wine production, continued now by his sons Franco and Giuseppe, and that will conduct his winery to be now the second most important winery of the viticultural and wine business of Sardinia. The real impulse for the winery started in the beginning of the eighties of the last century, in a period when European Community was encouraging the uprooting and conversion of vineyards, Antonio Argiolas involved his sons in his winery and, whereas other wine farms were dedicating to other type of cultures, the Argiolas, with strong determination, decided to continue the work of their father and to strongly aim towards quality. An effort that now completely satisfies them and their wines are the clear and indisputable sign that they were right. They then decided to invest lots of money and focusing of the winery's reorganization, by adopting new production processes, restoring the winery, they adopted the most modern wine technologies and called one of the most influential, great and talented wine maker of Italy, and certainly of the world, to help them: Giacomo Tachis. The way was set and there were all the necessary premises for a real quality production.

In those years the Argiolas also invested on experimental cultivation of international and local grapes, and sooner after, they decided to exclusively dedicate the production on local grapes varieties of Sardinia in order to properly and fully value their excellent quality. They were also successful in recovering Bovale Sardo grape, or Bovaleddu, an ancient red berried grape which was probably destined to disappear forever and that today it is successfully used for the production of the best red wines of the winery: *Turriga* and *Korem*. Today the winery is focusing its attention again on another local grape which already proved to have good quality and to excellently express itself in this territory: *Carignano*, a red berried grape which continues the winery's philosophy in the revaluation of local grapes.

Quality production in Argiolas starts in the vineyard and, subsequently, with harvesting, done with the most scrupulous attentions, grapes are being harvested and promptly sent to the winery, provided with the most modern wine making technologies. Here, thanks to the work of wine maker Mariano Murru and the help of Giacomo Tachis, the great wines of Argiolas are created. The rich Sardinian tradition is fully found in the names chosen by the Argiolas for their wines: Turriga, Korem, Cerdeña, Angialis, S'elegas, are just few examples of names that identify some production areas, or are however connected to certain traditional, cultural and historical aspects of the region.

Talking about Argiolas also means talking, above all, about their most famed wine: Turriga, certainly not the only great wine produced by the winery, which worthy represents the winery. This wine is produced with grapes harvested in the Turriga vineyard, that's the reason for its name, in the Selgias area. In this wine can be found the real essence of Sardinian grapes as no *international* grapes are used for its production, a clear sign that local grapes too, genuine and real richness of every land, are capable of creating exceptional wines of great and indisputable class. Cannonau, Carignano, Bovale Sardo and Malvasia Nera, with a production of about 1 Kg per vine, (about 2.2 lbs.) allow the creation of this important and very interesting red wine. Must is macerated in skins for about 16-18 days and the aging is done in new French barriques (Tronçais e Allier) for about 18 months.

Another wine produced by Argiolas, of sure interest and great personality, is the last wine created by the winery, Cerdeña, a white produced with Vermentino grape to which are added small quantities of other local grapes. The wine, which has the name of the island in the Catalan language, is obtained by a soft pressing of grapes and both alcoholic and malolactic fermentation of the wine are done in barriques, then follows an aging, still in barriques, for 6-8 months as well as an aging in bottle for 6-8 months.

Turriga and Cerdeña are not the only prestigious wines produced by Argiolas. Another great red is Korem, a wine which is getting more and more successful and it was also served last summer during a toast in occasion of the fortieth of Emerald

Coast. Korem is mainly produced with Bovale Sardo and Carignano grapes and a small quantity of Cannonau. Must is macerated in skins for about 10-12 days and it is fermented in concrete containers followed by 10-12 months of aging in barrique. The aging is completed in bottle for about 6 months and then the wine is ready to be released on the market. Another wine that exalts the quality of the local grape Nasco is Angialis. This is an excellent *late harvest* wine produced with Nasco, a white berried grape, and small quantity of Malvasia of Cagliari, both harvested when are overripe. Fermentation of this wine, because of the high density of must, is slow and difficult. The wine is subsequently decanted and aged in barrique for some months.

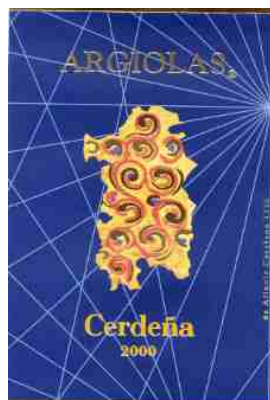
The production of Argiolas winery is completed, as for white wines, with S'elegas, produced with Nuragus grape, Costamolino produced with Vermentino, Argiolas Bianco produced with Vermentino and small quantities of white berried local grapes, whereas as for red wines, there is Costera produced with Cannonau and Perdera produced with Monica grape. Rose wines, produced by Argiolas as well, are represented by SerraLori produced with Cannonau, Monica, Carignano and Bovale Sardo grapes. Lastly, with Turriga's pomace is produced a grappa having the same name.

Argiolas wines are now renowned in every country of the world and are present in every continent. Europe was the first foreign market, particularly Switzerland, and today Argiolas wines can also be found in Germany, Netherlands, Russia and Norway, in America are present in Canada, in the United States of America and Brazil, in Asia are found in Israel, Japan, China and Thailand, in Oceania are found in Australia and New Zealand. About 40% of total production is however destined to the Italian market.



Giuseppe Argiolas

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



**Cerdeña 2001
Argiolas (Italy)**

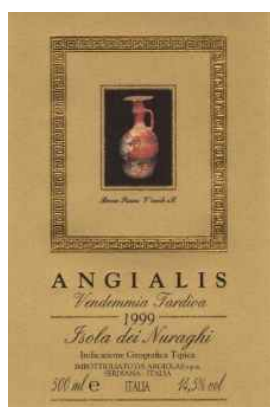
Grapes: Vermentino (95%), Nasco (5%)

Price: € 25,20

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a soft golden yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals personality with clean and elegant aromas. There can be perceived good and intense aromas of acacia, pineapple, banana, hawthorn, broom, kiwi, litchi, apple, hazelnut, toasted bread and vanilla as well as good aromas of toasted wood. In the mouth denotes a round character however balanced, and good correspondence to the nose, intense flavors and body as well as a pleasing elegance. The finish is persistent with pleasing and intense flavors of hazelnut, kiwi, banana and vanilla. A well made wine. Cerdeña is fermented in cask and is aged in barrique for 6-8 months followed by 6-8 months in bottle.

Food match: Sauteed meat, Soft cheese, Stuffed pasta, Roasted fish



**Angialis 1999
Argiolas (Italy)**

Grapes: Nasco (95%), Malvasia di Cagliari (5%)

Price: € 18,50 (500ml - 16.9fl.oz.)

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a beautiful and brilliant amber yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes great personality with clean, elegant, intense and refined aromas of dried apricot, candies, caramel, peach jam, dried fig, litchi, honey, citrus fruit skin and vanilla. In the mouth reveals an excellent correspondence to the nose, a very balanced sweetness and intense flavors. The finish is very persistent with long and pleasing flavors of honey, dried apricot, litchi and peach jam. A great wine. Angialis is aged in barrique for some months.

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



**Korem 2000
Argiolas (Italy)**

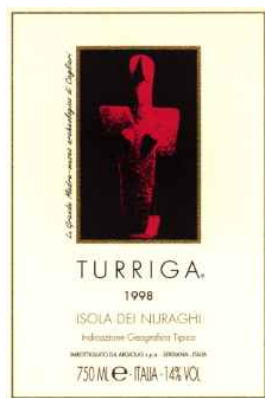
Grapes: Bovale (55%), Carignano (35%), Cannonau (10%)

Price: € 16,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

This wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals great personality with very elegant, clean, intense and persistent aromas. There can be perceived aromas of black cherry, cocoa, cherry macerated in alcohol, black cherry jam, mulberry jam, raspberry, licorice, bilberry, plum, black currant, vanilla and violet. The mouth denotes an excellent correspondence to the nose and an excellent balance. A full bodied wine with intense flavors. The finish is very persistent and long with pleasing and clean flavors of black cherry, mulberry, plum and black currant. A great wine. Korem is aged in barrique for 10-12 months followed by 6 months more in bottle.

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



Turriga 1998 Argiolas (Italy)

Grapes: Cannonau (80%), Carignano (10%), Bovale Sardo e Malvasia Nera (10%)

Price: € 28,85

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a beautiful and intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals great personality with clean and elegant aromas. There can be perceived intense and good aromas of black cherry, chocolate, bilberry jam, mulberry jam, plum jam, licorice, vanilla, dried violet and a pleasing hint of black pepper. The mouth denotes an excellent correspondence to the nose and an impeccable balance, full body and intense flavors. The finish is very persistent and long with pleasing flavors of mulberry, black cherry and plum. A great wine. Turriga is aged in barrique for 18 months.

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

Argiolas - Via Roma, 56/58 - 09040 Serdiana, Cagliari (Italy) Tel. ++39 070 740606 Fax ++39 070 743264 -
Winemaker: Mariano Murru with the consultancy of Giacomo Tachis - **Established:** 1937 - **Production:** 2.400.000 bottles - **E-Mail:** argiolaspa@tin.it - **WEB:** www.cantine-argiolas.com

Cellar Journal

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

EVENTS

News

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

CORKSCREW

Keeping Wine at Home

Personal cellar is the dream of every wine lover, however not everyone can afford it. Here are some simple rules for keeping bottles of wine at home

One of the most frequent worry of every wine lover is the dilemma of how keeping bottles of wine as they are bought and the idea that they could damage because of a bad keeping is something everyone wishes to avoid. The perfect keeping of wine, as it is commonly known, would require a special and proper room, that is a cellar, provided with favorable conditions in order not to compromise the precious content of bottles and to allow them to properly evolve in the course of time. The bad news is that not many can afford a room of this type, the good news is that by following few and simple rules it is possible to have bottles to survive for some years even without having any cellar, and the second good news is that the majority of the wines released on the market are ready to be uncorked and appreciated as they are bought, in particular white wines.

However it should be remembered some wines are intentionally released on the market when they are still "young" and their aging is delegated to the buyer, opening these wines once they are bought or soon after they are bought would simply mean renouncing to a better opportunity that only time would be able to give. Whereas the majority of white wines can be appreciated just after being bought, when they are still crisp, aromatic and fruity, in case of red wines, or better, in case of certain red wines, things certainly improve with a proper and prolonged aging in bottle. It should however be noticed that the common belief about wine getting better with time is not always true, it is true that *certain* wines get better with time, but not really all wines and for this reason often happens that certain wines are drunk when it is late, or even worse, too late, instead of uncorking that bottle during its best time when the wine is still capable of expressing its best qualities.

The majority of white wines, for example, lose their character of crispness and fruitiness, as well as their appealing aromaticity, just after six months from their release in the market. Therefore, how can be recognized the wines that *could* improve with a further aging in bottle? Some producers, unfortunately not

many, write in the back label the life expectancy of their wines, of course, the information is valid only in case the wine is kept in good conditions, instead others completely ignore this important information for the consumer. Moreover, there are other producers that also provide explicit advices on the necessity of waiting some months before opening the bottle. After all, who could know better these kind of information if not its producer and that could, both for courtesy and for honesty, inform their clients?

A “general” rule, very general to be honest, is that more expensive wines, and this is something that happens more frequently for reds than for whites, are the ones more suitable for bottle aging after their purchase and they should not be uncorked once they are bought. Generally speaking, red wines that show sediment in the bottom of the bottle or are full bodied, should be allowed to age for some years before being uncorked. In case it is wished to uncork a bottle of wine once it was bought, it should be better to postpone the uncorking after some days, even better after a week or ten days, in order to allow wine to stabilize and to “recover” from the shock for having been moved. This trick is very useful in particular for red wines because allows sediment to deposit to the bottom of the bottle.

Ideal Conditions for Keeping

One of the main problems about the keeping of wine is the possibility of oxidation, a risk that could happen when wine is in contact, for a prolonged time, with oxygen. Even though the bottle is in good conditions, it should be remembered that cork, a porous and elastic material, can change its physical and mechanical characteristics as a consequence of specific conditions. The most frequent risk, which is also cause of oxidation in wine, is the shrinking of the cork, because of scarce humidity, and this shrinking will favor the entering of oxygen inside the bottle. One of the most practical method in order to avoid this condition is to keep the bottle in horizontal position in order to allow wine to stay in contact with cork and therefore to keep it wet while avoiding its shrinkage.

“Enemy number two” of wine keeping is temperature and this can also influence oxidation and the quantity of air that could enter inside the bottle. Temperature, as it is commonly known, has the property to expand, with heat, or shrinking, with cold, certain substances, such as water and therefore also wine. As the temperature gets higher, the liquid mass expands while pushing the air trapped inside the bottle through cork and, because of pressure, the wine will spill out from the side of the neck and cork. As the liquid cools down the opposite condition takes place, the liquid shrinks and therefore a depression takes place and this will have the effect of sucking air, and therefore oxygen will enter the bottle, through the neck and cork. It should be however remembered that, again because of the effects of temperature, that when the liquid mass expands, some wine could spill out from bottle and not only air, in this case it will leave more space in the bottle and it will be occupied by air when wine will shrink again because of the lowering of the temperature. The repetition of this phenomena, besides diminishing the content of the wine in the bottle, also provokes the oxidation of wine. Re-

cently a new theory on how wine bottles should be kept during aging has been introduced. It seems that keeping the bottle oblique, not horizontal, in order to have the air bubble to “emerge” up to the cork, while allowing wine to be however in contact with cork, would avoid the problem of wine spilling. The expansions would push out only air but not wine, however it should be remembered that every contraction would always suck some air.

Another aspect connected to temperature is about the velocity at which wine ages with time. The aging process of wine is accelerated at high temperatures, whereas at low temperatures, or better to say, at a proper and correct temperature, wine ages slowly while allowing the full development of aromas and of its organoleptic qualities. Another problem connected to temperature is about the sudden cooling down, a condition that, indeed, is truly improbable in modern houses. In case temperature falls down more than 6° C (43° F) and in a violent and prolonged way, this can be cause of the precipitation of tartrates, a condition that is mostly found in white wines, and however it does not damage wine in anyway but only its aspect. The ideal temperature at which wine should be kept ranges from 10° and 16° C (50° to 61° F) and the temperature must be as much stable as possible, preferably between 14° and 15° C. (57° and 59° F). However it should be remembered that temperatures higher than 25° C (77° F) seriously compromise wine’s characteristics, in particular its volatile components that could irremediably deteriorate.

Another factor that can compromise the keeping of wine is light and it can even affect the taste of wine. Wines that mostly suffer from the effect of light are white and sparkling wines, in particular when they are kept in colorless or little colored bottles. A simple remedy for this condition could be to wrap bottles in a sheet of paper or with aluminum foil. Even humidity is crucial for the good keeping of wine: a too much dry room would favor the shrinkage of corks, whereas a too much humid room will inevitably damage bottle’s labels and will favor the development of molds and microorganisms that would be cause of bad smells. The ideal percentage of humidity should be of 70%. Moreover, the development of molds and bad smells can be avoided by a proper ventilation of the room where bottles are kept. Lastly, even vibrations influence the state of wine, not directly its preservability, because shakes could allow sediment to be suspended in the wine and by doing so they would affect, for a more or less long period of time, the aesthetical aspect of wine. What is truly essential, in particular for home keeping, is to keep wine bottles away from substances or rooms having strong smells because these odors would be easily passed to wine.

Keeping Wine at Home

Conditions for keeping wine we discussed so far can be realized in rooms that are especially used for this purpose and are properly built in order to ensure these conditions. Things greatly change in case there is no availability of such a room, that is a real and proper cellar, and we are forced to adapt or to accept what we can find in some rooms of our house. Modern houses suffer, like to say, of high temperatures and often the home heating system goes beyond 20° C (68° F) with the risk of an excessive

cooling down when it is turned off. Moreover, there are some rooms of the house, such as the kitchen, where the temperature, humidity and, lastly, the presence of strong smells would seriously compromise the good keeping of wine. In case the kitchen is chosen as the room where wine is going to be kept, it will be wise to keep it in the most neutral part of the room and not being affected by these inconveniences. In case there is the possibility of having a room in the house expressly destined for keeping foods, such as a store-room, it can be easily adapted in order to allow a good keeping of wine.

First of all it will be essential that this room is not affected by the home heating system, most of cases it will be enough to turn off the room's radiator and the door will be properly isolated with some thermal isolator material and, in case this room is adjacent to external walls or other warm rooms, such as the heating system room, its walls will be isolated as well. Rooms which are just under the roof, such as attics, are to be avoided, because in summer time, as well as in winter time, the variations of the temperature would be truly broad and they will easily and certainly reach temperatures which are not suitable for keeping wine. Humidity can be kept at the right percentage by placing a container with water in the floor of this room and possibly near the bottles. An easy help in order to maintain the right conditions for keeping wine in a room which is properly destined as "cellar", can be represented by the installation of a real and proper air conditioner that will maintain constant both temperature and humidity.

In case there is no room to be destined as "personal cellar", it should be good to choose the most stable room in terms of temperature and humidity, kitchen is always and however to be avoided even because of the presence of appliances that tend to heat up air, and to keep wines in wood cases, such as the ones used by certain producers for the shipping of their wines, or in thick cardboard boxes and that will be kept anyway closed. In case shelves or racks are going to be used, now easily found in any furniture shop, it is best to choose a room that can be adapted to them and, because of the proper characteristics of wine racks or shelves, make sure they are properly sheltered from light.

However, home keeping of wine, even when it is done by obeying to the most scrupulous conditions, does not guarantee a long and profitable life to wine, these remedies are useful only for allowing the aging of wine for some years, two or three, and it is however risky, to tell the truth, there are risks anyway even in the most perfect cellar provided with the best conditions, however it is obvious that keeping wine at home greatly increase these kind of risks. In recent years technology focused on the possibility of keeping wine at home and now are available in the market real and proper "wine fridge" capable of guaranteeing the right and constant conditions for a proper and correct aging of wine. The only drawback of this fridge is that it must be constantly powered by electricity and that they usually offer a pretty limited room for bottles, usually 25-35 and the ones that allow the storage of more bottles tend to occupy a rather considerable quantity of space.

NOT JUST WINE

Pizza

The most renowned and representative food of Italian cooking, always rich, tasty and colored, surprises for its thousands shapes and it is rather hard to find someone who does not like it

History

From Africa to Asia, every civilization knew the many shapes of cakes, doughs made of cereals or legumes flour, water and various seasonings, they were a fundamental source for human nutrition. In the ancient Egypt, in particular occasions, it was consumed, seasoned with aromatic herbs, a flat cake. In India Nan and Chapati are the cakes that are still part of the nutritional tradition of India. Nan, in particular, is cooked in a specific oven called "tanduri" that was introduced and spread in the country by sovereigns Muguls. Herodotus wrote about some Babylonians recipes and there are many Greek writers that cited pizza, at those time called "maza".

During Roman times it was common to cook a cake made of spelt, a type of cereal that was very common and used at those times, it is believed that the Italian word *farina* (flour) comes from *farro* (Italian for spelt). Spelt was milled and the flour was used to cook buns and cakes. In some writings of Virgil Maron can be found some recipes that can be considered as the ancient form of pizza. In these writings can be read that farmers used to mill wheat, to sieve flour, to mix it with water, aromatic herbs and salt, to flatten it in order to have it thin and round, and finally they cooked it with the heat of the ashes of fireplaces.

Until the end of the 1500s there are no news about the evolution of the preparation of pizza. In some documents and cook-books of the 1500, found in northern Italy, can be found some information on how to make pizza. Of course it was not the same pizza that we are used to today, it rather was a thin dough made of butter, eggs, sugar and was cooked in an oven or fried: it was a cake rather than a pizza.

The discover of America introduced in Europe new foods such as tomatoes, corn, potatoes and beans. Whereas in northern Italy corn progressively replaces wheat, in south Italy the tradition resists and continue to base its cooking on wheat, the "wheat bun" continues to be enriched with new and different ingredients and seasonings. With time olive oil replaces animal fats, such as lard, and cheese begins to be used together with aromatic herbs.

Only after the 1700s in Naples they begin to season pizza with tomatoes and buffalo mozzarella. Only after the half of 1800s the common recipes that we know today are invented. One of the characteristics of the preparation of pizza consists in the seasoning that can be made of any ingredient, in fact it is the kind of seasoning that gives the name to pizza: ham pizza, tomatoes pizza, marinara pizza, mushrooms pizza, just to mention few. Pizza, thanks to emigrants, arrives in America. After the end of World War II, pizza leaves the borders of south Italy and

goes towards north. The industrial development of north Italy requires workers and thousands people decide to move from south to north, bringing with them their traditions and pizza: in this time many pizzerias are established everywhere in north Italy. The most known pizza is certainly "pizza Margherita". The story goes that in 1889 Raffaele Esposito, one of the best, if not the very best pizza maker of that time, in occasion of the visit to Naples of the King of Italy Umberto I and of Queen Margherita, he wanted to make for them three classical pizzas: Mastunicola pizza, Marinara pizza and pizza with tomatoes, mozzarella and basil, invented to honor the queen and whose colors intentionally resembled the colors of the Italian flag. The queen appreciated this last pizza very much and she wanted to personally thank and praise in writing this pizza maker. Raffaele Esposito, in order to return the attention and as a sign of appreciation, thought of naming that pizza after the queen and the pizza tomatoes, mozzarella and basil, from that moment on, will be called by anyone "Pizza Margherita".

Base Recipe: the Dough

As already mentioned, pizza is made of a base dough and a seasoning. The dough is made of wheat flour, whole or '00' refined or semi-refined, fresh yeast, water and salt. The dough is obtained by mixing flour, yeast and water until it gets the right texture and solidity (it should not stick to hands), and then it should be left to stay for about 5 minutes and it is subsequently divided in small balls. At this point they are put in proper containers in order to start leavening until they will be ready for being used. It must be noticed that for every 2 Kg. of flour (4.4 lbs.) are needed 60 grams of yeast (2.1 oz.).

Flour

Flour is a fundamental element because it is the essential ingredient of pizza dough. It is obtained by milling wheat. In Italy are sold four types of flour: zero, double zero, one, whole. The most used type is certainly double zero, because it can be worked easily, whereas the other ones can be used as well, however they require more attention. Double zero flour, as mentioned above, is the easiest to use, however it should be noticed, as it is the most refined of them all, it also lost some of its elements such as vitamins, proteins and mineral salts during the milling and refining processes and it is therefore more "poor" as opposed to the other ones. A professional pizza maker pays the most scrupulous attention to the flour to be used for making dough. When he or she is about to buy flour, the type will be considered, that is the level of refinement (that is 0, 00, 1 and whole types), sifting, that is the level of separation of the flour from bran, the strength represented by the "W" symbol which goes from weak flour (100 W) to strong flour (450 W). Weaker flours are best for the preparation of non leavened foods whereas the stronger ones must be necessarily mixed before being used in order not to get a non eatable food. The "strength" of flour does not have any connection with quality, it just represents an index that should be considered according to the type of preparation to be made.

Leavening

Leavening is a natural process done by a multitude of microorganisms that attack particular substances and causing their decomposition, while getting the result of the production of carbon dioxide and ethyl alcohol that give dough both volume and aroma. The yeast traditionally used for the production of pizza has always been beer yeast.

Beer Yeast, which can be bought in every bakery, must be kept in the refrigerator until it is being used. Leavening, being a natural process, takes place according to specific rules and that must be followed and considered before adding yeast to the dough. Temperature plays a fundamental role, the quantity of yeast to be added varies according to the temperature. For example, in case dough must leaven, before being used, for 60 minutes at a room temperature of 16-20° C (60-68° F), it will be needed about 70 grams of yeast (2.4 oz.), in case room temperature is of 20-25° C (68-77° F), the quantity of yeast will be lesser, about 50 grams. (1.7 oz.)

Baking

Some support the idea that the best oven for baking good pizza is the one heated with the fire of wood. This is probably because the proper characteristics of such an oven, made with natural materials which allow an uniform and even baking, while absorbing excessive humidity from the beginning of baking and keeping it during the whole process as well and favoring an even baking without excessively drying the foods inside of it. Wood, while it is burning, passes all its aromatic substances to the oven and therefore they will be released during the baking process and passing them to the foods in a delicate and appreciable way. Whether an oven heated by the fire of wood is better or worst is certainly a matter of personal taste and preference, however the resulting pizza is certainly different from the one baked in oven heated by gas oil.

Seasoning

When a pizza is about to be seasoned, it is good not to exaggerate with ingredients, it is advisable to pay attention to the quality and the good matching of flavors and, keeping in mind ingredients used for seasoning must get along very well, to harmoniously mix together, pizza will not be evaluated for its aspect but rather for its taste.

Pizza is certainly the most renowned food of the so called Mediterranean diet. The classical ingredients of pizza are flour, tomatoes and mozzarella, typical and traditional elements of the Mediterranean diet.

Among the most common ingredients for making pizza there are:

- Cereals - Complex carbohydrates, that are absorbed by the body slowly as opposed to the simple ones, they satiate and offer constant energy while neutralizing hunger and giving a durable satiety. They are good for any diet aimed to weight

loss.

- Extra-Virgin Olive Oil - it is the most genuine and sound fat, typically Mediterranean, rich in HDL cholesterol, that is the one which favors the cleaning of arteries, as well as vitamins A, D, E and K.
- Mozzarella - it is rich in lysine and other animal proteins typical of any cheese.
- Tomato - Source of vitamins, gives a great amount of vitamins to pizza as well.

The above mentioned ingredients are just a small part of the ones that are generally used for the making of pizza, however variants are practically endless and the ingredients to be added to the seasoning of the dough give pizza all their characteristic organoleptic and nutritional qualities. One of them, for example, is basil, which has anti-dyspeptic and antiseptic properties, it is also an anti-inflammatory and promotes digestion. Garlic has antiseptic properties for the bowel, it is a cardiogenic and diuretic. Oregano, another fundamental ingredient of Neapolitan pizza, has expectorant properties, stimulates appetite and has anti-painful properties.

Benefits of Mediterranean diet are commonly known, it is a good prevention for the typical diseases of our modern society such atherosclerosis, infarct and hypertension. Pizza contains many vitamins and iron, avoid the formation of uric acid, does not makes fat and it is more digestible as opposed to other foods. Thanks to its characteristics it is a valid food that can easily make a meal and, when completed with fruit and vegetables, it is also a valid alternative to the consumption of meat.

Variants of Pizza

An interesting variant of pizza is "calzone", which is clearly and obviously derived from pizza, similar in its ingredients, the preparation of the dough is practically the same, it just differs in some parts of the making and in the type of seasoning. It is made with a flat disc of dough which is subsequently stuffed only for its half, the other half is folded on the stuffing and the border is pushed all along in order to seal the dough. It is baked just like pizza in a heat oven. Another variant consists in frying the calzone in hot oil instead of baking.

The origin of calzone seems to be Campania however, just like pizza, its production and consumption spread everywhere in Italy and then abroad. Calzone, called "casone" in Neapolitan, is Italian for *trousers* and for some etymologists this is a term widely spread and common in Italy even though its exact origin is not clear.

In the beginning pizzas, calzones, cakes and buns were an important resource in order to satisfy hunger. With time and with the availability of new resources as well as of a better availability, both economic and of food resources, the simple cakes and buns are enriched and unusual ingredients are added to them, from food destined to farmers and humble people it becomes a food for kings, just like pizza Margherita. According to some old documents it seems that the commune of Trieste (Italy) in

the 1400 ordered to nuns the making of "calzoni" and "calisoni" to be presented as a gift to noble and illustrious people.

A variant of calzone is "pizzella del pezzente" (little pizza of the beggar) which is made by frying a disc of dough and seasoned with tomatoes and mozzarella when it is still hot in order to have mozzarella to melt. Of course, the seasonings are always different and changing, the classical "tomato and mozzarella" can be replaced, for example, by capers and olives or by ricotta cheese and salami.

Wine Parade

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

Rank	Wine, Producer
1	➤ Capo di Stato 1998, Conte Loredan Gasparin
2	▲ Semillon Sauvignon 2001, Cape Mentelle
3	▲ Masseto 1998, Tenuta dell'Ornellaia
4	➤ Château Lynch-Bages Pauillac 2000
5	➤ Teroldego Rotaliano Granato 1998, Foradori
6	▲ Chardonnay 2000, Planeta
7	▲ Muffato della Sala 1999, Castello della Sala
8	➤ Château Laroque Saint-Émilion Grand Cru Classé 1998
9	➤ Zinfandel Barrel Select Mendocino County 1999 - Fetzer Vineyards
10	➤ Shiraz 2000, Plantaganet
11	▲ Rioja Reserva "Pagos Viejos" 1997, Bodega Artadi - Cosecheros Alavares
12	↔ Sauvignon Blanc 2000, Cakebread
13	☆ Château Talbot Saint-Julien 1998
14	▲ Château Pontet-Canet Pauillac 2000
15	▲ Trentino Bianco Villa Margon 2000, Fratelli Lunelli

Legend: ➤ up ▲ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry

Classified

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