

DiWINEtaste

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The Scent of Wine

There is something magic when you put your nose in a glass of wine. A world unfolds to our senses, an amazing and renewed tale, like a promise repeating year after year, bottle after bottle. But also sad disappointments. It is not about aromas not exactly meeting our pleasure - and this can also happen, of course - I am talking, in particular, about those aromas that, like to say, are the sign of *unskillfulness* in wine making. I am completely aware of the fact many of you may consider this as questionable and, last but not the least, undoubtedly subjective. Good and bad, there is no doubt about this, are concepts deeply bound to the culture and personality of each one of us: what I may consider good could be considered bad by others and vice versa. After all, it would also be boring in case everyone would like the same things and in the same measure.

It is however undeniable the scent of wine is an element telling in a quite *precise* way its story and life, from vineyard to glass. From intensity to cleanness, the scent of wine is capable of telling about a grape, territory and the ones who transformed it into wine. Likewise, it tells about the ones who have been in charge of keeping the bottle and to serve it. The scent of wine also tells many things about the personality of the one who drinks it. It is a sensorial element that, most of the times, meets the idea of the reference "wine making model" of each one of us. The aromas of wine, in fact, have the property to be *shaped* - like to say - in function of the result to be obtained and according to the type of consumers to which are being destined.

Every thing done in the vineyard and in the winery, as well as in bottling and consumption, has the property of affecting the scent of wine. Grape, in particular, is the primary element giving the fundamental factors, by strongly claiming - and in function of how it has been processed - its identity or its abuse. Territory, too, is certainly nothing less: each one of them - considered as the union of soil and environment - has the power to give its character to wine aromas. Wines produced from grapes cultivated in clay soil have very different aromas from the ones cultivated in

sandy soils: the same grape expresses different olfactory personalities. Also time, better to say, the age of vine, has the property of determining the scent of wine. Wines produced with young grapes do not have the same strength and expressiveness of those which have lived many harvests in the course of their lives.

The scent of wine is everything, or at least, a very important part. It certainly is for me because, as far as I am concerned, the primary pleasure of wine tasting is represented by its aromas. To put the nose in a glass is always something giving emotions, both positive and negative ones. The smell originating from the glass is capable of telling the whole story of a wine and of the ones who made it, a genuine and loyal quality talking about techniques, territories, time and honesty. The story of wine aromas is also made from the ones which faded away - because of man's fault, producer or consumer - and the ones developing with time. Transformations capable of drastically changing, even significantly, the whole aroma profile of a young wine, even by completely changing its recognizability. Light aromas and strong aromas, arrogant or gentle, all of them contribute to the emotion a wine is capable of giving the nose.

There are wines, and this is absolutely my opinion, capable of catching your attention for a long time, even for hours, while others seem to be more "superficial" and end their story in few minutes. It should be said that, no matter what, every wine, with no exception, is worth of the attention of each one of our senses, even in case they do not exactly meet our taste. Certain wines, maybe because I have a strong passion for them, seem to be made for being continuously smelt, they also have the power to make you forget what you have in your glass should also be appreciated for its taste. I am talking about fortified and sweet wines - Marsala, Jerez, Porto and Noble Rots in particular - with them it is very easy to get lost in fantastic "dreams" enchanted by the endless evolution of their aromas. Nuances continuously developing, magically endless.

The scent of wine is a sort of officiant in the ritual of the

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meeting with men: just like a handshake, it gives you the idea of the one who is in front of you. You understand how much you can get along with a wine: its initial aromas, most of the times, represent the signal which will determine the chance of making friends or not. *Dirty* aromas, not always clean and limpid, spoiled by alien elements to wine, of course do not invite to the chance of getting to know a wine better. It is like, when you meet someone, he or she is telling you evident and odd lies. I am aware of the fact each one of us considers the *lies of a wine* in a very subjective way and, sometimes, indisputable. The same is true for genuine stories, of course. In the enthusiasm of catching all the wine aromas - and to me wine aromas represent the most important part - sometimes are also perceived evident lies. Not truly clean aromas, not truly meeting my personal concept of a sound and well made wine. It is right these wines which make me lose the enthusiasm of what I consider the highest pleasure in a wine. A dirty smell, and therefore deceitful, offends the wine and the one who appreciate it. In case the lie is told with the pretension of truth, like an absolute dogma, this also offends intelligence, for the little that can be.

Antonello Biancalana



WINE TASTING

Blind Tasting

There are many methods for the sensorial evaluation of a wine. Blind tasting certainly is the most neutral and reliable one

Sensorial tasting of wine is done in distinct ways and procedures according to the type of result to be obtained. The result does not always have the goal of determining the organoleptic qualities of a wine. Tasting, in fact, is not done in order to determine wine qualities only: a wine is tasted also for educational purposes and to improve the skill of a taster. Also in this specific case, it depends on the type of study and the educational result to be obtained, therefore the tasting method is being chosen according to the type of result to be obtained. A wine is tasted for many reasons: to understand it, determining its correspondence to a specific type, evaluating its real wine making value according to defined models and accepted as a reference.

The procedures of wine sensorial tasting are generally classified in two distinct categories: *blind* and *unblind*. The discriminating factor is represented by the way with which the samples are being evaluated by the taster. In *blind tasting* all the productive characteristics of a wine are kept hidden, including its origin, producer and wine making techniques. In this type of tasting - like to say - the taster will face the wine without the help of any clue, saved its appearance which is generally and easily determined by simply looking at the glass. In the so called *unblind tasting* is true the opposite, that is the taster knows in advance all or most of the productive characteristics of a wine, including the name of the producer, grapes, vintage and wine making techniques.

According to the result and goal of tasting, in the so called *blind tasting* sometimes part of the elements are revealed in advance, such as in case, for example, of the evaluation of wines belonging to the same territory or vintage. In these specific cases, the unfolding of certain elements is essential as well as unavoidable. However, knowing a detail about the wine to be tasted affects the reliability of the taster and it will probably influence the evaluation in function of the known factors. For example, in case a series of Montefalco Sagrantino wines are to be tasted, by providing this information, the taster will focus on the characteristics expected to be perceived in wines from this area. This means certain aspects of the wine, like to say, not corresponding to the type but significant could be ignored, and the taster could simply focus on the characteristics a Montefalco Sagrantino is supposed to have.

It should be said giving information about a wine in a blind tasting is done in function of the result to be obtained. In the above example, the denomination is revealed in order to help the determination of the correspondence of a wine to a territory and a variety. The elements provided in a blind tasting however affects the evaluation of the taster. Specifically, not only the correspondence of a wine to a specific category, but also the determination of the personal correspondence and preference of a wine accord-

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ing to that category. In order to clear this concept, in case the personal preference of a taster for Sagrantino is expressed by very robust and tannic wines, the evaluation could penalize round and less aggressive wines.

The reliability of blind tasting depends, in any case, on the number and type of element provided to the taster. The higher the number of elements the lower the reliability and *impartiality* of the result. Every known element will determine a prejudicial behavior towards the wine to be evaluated, while compromising the *reliability* of the result in function of the personal preference of the taster towards known elements. This prejudicial behavior is particularly evident in the so called *unblind tasting*, that is the exact opposite of *blind tasting*. In fact, in this type of tasting all the elements of a wine are known, therefore giving the taster a huge help. It is very likely the taster will tend to take for granted many characteristics of the wine without having perceived and verified them in wine by using his or her senses.

For many aspects, *unblind* tasting has the same value of group tasting. In case a taster tells the others he or she perceived a specific aroma in a wine - therefore providing a clue - the other tasters too will tend to perceive the same in their glasses. Another advantage of blind tasting consists in forcing the tasters to a higher concentration, therefore to do his or her job with a better attention. The taster, like to say, is forced to personally face the wine to be evaluated, free from every prejudice, he or she must use his or her skills in order to evaluate a wine. For this reason, and in order to avoid the conditioning of the tasters, blind tasting is done in an *isolated* condition, therefore avoiding the contact, even visual, with the other tasters. For example, the astonishment shown by a taster represents - as a matter of fact - a clue for all the other ones.

Moreover, blind tasting ensures one more advantage. In series tasting - that is the evaluation of many wines in the same session - all wines are considered in the very same conditions. One of the many elements which can affect the reliability of the result is in fact represented by the name of the producer. In case the

taster has a preference for a specific producer, he or she will tend to favor these wines and, maybe, will have a more critical and prejudicial behavior towards the wines of unknown producers. The fact of keeping this information hidden, let all the wines and producers to be in the same and essential equal condition. In other words, blind tasting allows the taster to discover good or bad wines also in unknown samples or in wines tasted in past occasions.

What has been said so far could make one think blind tasting is a method to be exclusively used in *professional* occasions or in wine contests. Blind tasting also has a high formative and educational purpose for anyone who tastes wine, both professionally and at an amateur level. The lack of clues therefore provides an extraordinary occasion of study, in particular for the identification of varieties, wine making techniques and territories. Confirmations and doubts are therefore satisfied at the end of tasting, that is at the moment the wines are shown and all the characteristics finally become known. This moment represents one more advantage of blind tasting: not only the association of one's own evaluation with a wine, but also the evaluation of one's own tasting skill.

Blind tasting is carried out by scrupulously realizing all the factors making it, including the way a wine is being presented to the taster. It should be said, in fact, also the simply view of the bottle shape represents, as a matter of fact, a prejudicial element for the evaluation. For example, the Burgundy bottle - not to be confused with the Albeisa bottle - is frequently used for red wines produced with Pinot Noir, therefore the sight such a bottle provides a prejudicial element to the taster. The same is true, generally speaking, for the Bordeaux bottle in which are usually bottled robust and full bodied red wines. For this reason, in blind tasting, the bottle is *hidden*, not only in order to hide the label, but also its shape. In fact, for this purpose are being used large bags in order to avoid the shape of the bottle to be revealed.

On this regard it must be noticed that wrapping a bottle with an aluminum foil, a method used in certain tasting, is a not truly correct practice. If it is true the label and the real identity of the wine are of course concealed, the shape of the bottle is clearly evident therefore offering an identifying and prejudicial element to the taster. Also the cap on the neck of the bottle gives explicit clues about the wine - including the name of the producer - therefore it is better to completely remove it. An alternative way consists in pouring the wine in the glass away from the eyes of the taster and then bringing it to him or her. By doing so it is not possible to get any clue about the bottle as - in some cases - both the neck and the opening can be personalized by producers, therefore, made recognizable.

The regularity of blind tasting is generally ensured by a person in charge of serving wines and does not take part to the evaluation. This is the only one to know the wines presented to the tasters and arrange things in order to keep the bottles hidden and unknown until the end of the tasting session. It must be noticed at the end of the session, all the wines are finally revealed and every sample is therefore associated to the relative bottle. Blind tasting can however be done at home with friends and allowing everyone of them to take part. Every person participating to



Wine bottles hidden inside bags and ready for blind tasting

the tasting, contributes to the session by bringing a bottle and making sure its identity will be scrupulously kept hidden to the others. On this regard, the bottle will be put in a large and non transparent bag and the neck of the bottle will be wrapped with an aluminum foil in order to hide the information written in the cap.

Everyone participating to the tasting will completely remove the caps of his or her bottle and will uncork it, while keeping it hidden in the bag. Every participant will know about his or her own wine only and will ensure to the other participants the fundamental condition of blind tasting. In order to make the exercise of blind tasting useful, it can be asked to all participants to be in silence during the whole tasting session in order to not influence others. Being with friends and tasting together certainly represent a pleasing moment and therefore we can also be less rigorous and, for every wine, we can also share our opinions with others. No matter of this, in order to benefit from the important educational chance offered by blind tasting, it is indispensable the wine is kept hidden until the end. The practice of blind tasting gives the opportunity to improve our skill and knowledge as well as ensuring, with your friends, a pleasing moment of sharing, growth and fun.



Wines of the Month

Score legend

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

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



Montefalco Sagrantino Passito 2006 Fongoli (Umbria, Italy)

Grapes: Sagrantino

Price: € 22.00 - 375ml

Score: ◆◆◆◆

This Montefalco Sagrantino Passito shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of blackberry, plum and dried violet followed by aromas of black

cherry jam, blueberry jam, chocolate, tamarind, cinnamon, tobacco and nail polish. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a sweet and tannic attack, however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of blackberry, plum and black cherry jam. This Montefalco Sagrantino Passito ages for 30 months in cask followed by 6 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Hard cheese, Chocolate tarts, Jam tarts



Montefalco Sagrantino Vigna dei Sospiri 2006 Fongoli (Umbria, Italy)

Grapes: Sagrantino

Price: € 35.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

Montefalco Sagrantino Vigna dei Sospiri shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas that start with hints of plum, blackberry and dried violet followed by aromas of black cherry, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate, leather and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of plum, blackberry and black cherry. Montefalco Sagrantino Vigna dei Sospiri ages for at least 36 months in cask followed by 6 months of aging in bottle.

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



Selezione Francesco Moser 2012 Moser (Trentino, Italy)

Grapes: Moscato Giallo

Price: € 9.20

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Selezione Francesco Moser shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of grape, peach and pear followed by aromas of white

rose, apple, pineapple, sage, broom and acacia. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of grape, peach and pear. Selezione Francesco Moser ages for 6 months in steel tanks.

Food match: Crustacean appetizers, Risotto with crustaceans, Vegetable flans



**Trento Brut 51,151
Moser (Trentino, Italy)**

Grapes: Chardonnay (90%), Pinot Noir (10%)

Price: € 15.10

Score: ♦♦♦♦☆

Trento Brut 51,151 shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of banana, apple and plum followed by aromas of bread crust, acacia, hawthorn, citrus fruits, yeast, broom, kiwi and pear. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp and effervescent attack, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of banana, apple and plum. Trento Brut 51,151 referments in bottle on its lees for at least 24 months.

Food match: Pasta and risotto with fish and crustaceans, Sauteed fish, Broiled crustaceans



**Langhe Sauvignon Matteo Correggia 2010
Matteo Correggia (Piedmont, Italy)**

Grapes: Sauvignon Blanc

Price: € 21.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Langhe Sauvignon Matteo Correggia shows a brilliant straw yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which

start with hints of peach, elder and apple followed by aromas of pear, gooseberry, vanilla, banana, acacia and mineral. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, agreeable. The finish is persistent with flavors of peach, apple and banana. A part of Langhe Sauvignon Matteo Correggia ages for 7 months in barrique.

Food match: Pasta with meat, Broiled fish, Vegetable soups, Sauteed white meat



**Roero Riserva Roche d'Ampsej 2009
Matteo Correggia (Piedmont, Italy)**

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 35.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

Roero Riserva Roche d'Ampsej shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of cherry, plum and violet followed by aromas of blueberry, raspberry, rose, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate, pink pepper, leather, mace and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleasing crispness. The finish is very persistent with long flavors of cherry, plum and raspberry. Roero Riserva Roche d'Ampsej ages for 18 months in barrique followed by 24 months of aging in bottle.

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



**Orvieto Classico Superiore Calcaia 2007
Barberani (Umbria, Italy)**

Grapes: Grechetto (80%), Procanico (20%)

Price: € 32.00 - 50cl

Score: ♦♦♦♦☆

Orvieto Classico Superiore Calcaia shows an intense amber yellow color and nuances of amber yellow, transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of raisin, dried fig and apricot jam followed by aromas of honey, candied fruits, almond, saffron, musk, quince jam, date, broom, lychee and nail polish. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a sweet and round attack, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing crispness. The finish is persistent with flavors of raisin, honey and lychee. Orvieto Classico Superiore Calcaia ages for 12 months in steel tanks.

Food match: Hard cheese, Dried fruit tarts



**Moscato d'Asti Canelli 2013
L'Armangia (Piedmont, Italy)**

Grapes: Moscato Bianco

Price: € 6.80

Score: ♦♦♦♦🍷

Moscato d'Asti Canelli shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of grape, peach and white rose followed by aromas of apple, banana, pear, sage, lychee and broom. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a sweet and effervescent attack, however balanced by alcohol, light body, intense flavors, pleasing crispness. The finish is persistent with flavors of grape, peach and banana. Moscato d'Asti Canelli ferments in closed tank.

Food match: Cream and fruit desserts



**Piemonte Albarossa Macchiaferro 2010
L'Armangia (Piedmont, Italy)**

Grapes: Albarossa

Price: € 12.50

Score: ♦♦♦♦

Piemonte Albarossa Macchiaferro shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas which start with hints of black cherry, plum and blackberry followed by aromas of blueberry, violet, iris, chocolate, vanilla, tobacco and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing crispness. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blackberry. Piemonte Albarossa Macchiaferro ages in cask for 14 months.

Food match: Roasted meat, Stewed and braised meat with mushrooms, Broiled meat and barbecue, Hard cheese

EVENTS

News

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

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NOT JUST WINE

Wine Parade

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

Rank		Wine, Producer
1	↔	Brunello di Montalcino 2007, Donatella Cinelli Colombini
2	↗	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi 2007, Tedeschi
3	↘	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Podium 2010, Garofoli
4	↗	Villa Gresti 2006, Tenuta San Leonardo
5	↘	Camartina 2008, Querciabella
6	↗	Langhe Riesling Herzu 2011, Ettore Germano
7	↗	Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Loreto 2007, Mastrojanni
8	↘	San Leonardo 2006, Tenuta San Leonardo
9	↗	Sagrantino di Montefalco Collepiano 2007, Arnaldo Caprai
10	↘	Trento Brut Riserva Methius 2006, Dorigati
11	↗	Pelago 2009, Umani Ronchi
12	↘	Avvoltore 2009, Moris Farms
13	↗	Maximo 2010, Umani Ronchi
14	☆	Collio Ribolla Gialla L'Adelchi 2012, Venica
15	☆	I Sodi di San Niccolò 2008, Castellare di Castellina

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry