

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

International Edition

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The Culture of Wise Drinking

Wine is getting more and more appreciated among people and, with that, the attention TV and magazines are paying to it, this product, that just ten years ago or so seemed to be destined to a marginal role both of the economy and of culture, is becoming a real and proper mass phenomenon. It seems the spreading of wine had, in a sense, followed the one of TV shows dedicated to cooking, as well as the increasing attention magazines and newspapers are dedicating to cooking and wine with special columns; today, practically every TV show or column in a magazine which is about cooking, dedicates a considerable amount of attention to wine and to food matching. This certainly is a good sign, of course, but above all, it is the sign that the demand for a better knowledge and culture about the world of enogastronomy is a need of many.

The same destiny had, like to say, the many propaedeutic or introductory courses about organoleptic wine tasting, they are quite popular and successful, people attend to them, people want to know more and, when consumers become more exacting and demanding, the ones who work in the enogastronomical business, such as wine shops, restaurants, wine bars and shops where wine is sold, they are forced to improve and to increase their knowledge in order not to take the risk of being excluded from the opportunity offered by this moment. The transformation has, as a consequence, involved the ones who produce wine as well, those who were mainly oriented to mass production, with scarce attention on quality, were forced to change in a significant way, if not completely, their production strategies and methodologies in order not to be excluded. Quantity in wine business seems not to give high profits anymore, saved rare and uncommon cases, what consumers request the more are quality wines, a trend that makes one think that, at last, the motto "drink less and drink better" is becoming a sort of common belief among wine lovers.

Whenever one goes to a wine bar or restaurant, often there can be seen groups of people having their meals and matching that food with wine, a bottle in the center of the table which will probably be equally divided among four or more people, considering that from a bottle of 0.750 liters (25.3 fl.oz.) can be served an average of 8-10 normal glasses, it is more likely to think that everyone will drink something less than 200 ml of wine (6.76 fl.oz.), a quantity which is considered tolerable, particularly when consumed during meals, and, according to medical and scientific researches, it is not harmful or noxious to the body. The same also happens when groups of young wine bar goers are being observed; rather than having considerable quantities

of alcoholic beverages, they usually prefer to buy a bottle of wine, preferably good wine, share the cost among the components of the group, and they just limit themselves to drink one or two glasses of wine, usually accompanied by some food, and then, hopefully, they stop having any other alcoholic beverage.

It seems that the "fashion" of "drink less and drink better" is getting more and more popular, however, everyone knows the dramatic effects and the catastrophic consequences of alcoholism; drinking wine with no moderation, or any other alcoholic beverage, takes from the pleasure of well living to the sufferings of a cursed life. A paradox which is a real burden and concern for every wine lover and, last but not the least, for the society. This aspect should not be forgotten and, above all, it is good to remember alcohol is a toxic and poisonous substance, even though it is pleasing in tolerable quantities, however it can become dangerous. This is true, of course, when it is consumed in considerable quantities and without moderation. Alcohol, and it is silly to deny this, has made many families desperate and made disgraceful the life of many individuals. Let's not forget these facts as well.

The pleasure of a good glass of wine, the enchanting joy of its charming aromas and the satisfaction of its taste is a pleasure, a real pleasure that we all probably know and that we can hardly renounce to it, however this pleasure remains such only and only if one possesses the right cognition and the proper lucidity in order to fully appreciate it. It should not be forgotten that drinking

Contents

The Culture of Wise Drinking	1
MailBox	2
ABC WINE	
New Zealand	3
WINE TASTING	
Tasting White Wines	5
Wines of the Month	7
WINE PRODUCERS	
Ca' del Bosco	10
Cellar Journal	14
EVENTS	
News	14
CORKSCREW	
Matching Food and Wine	15
NOT JUST WINE	
Balsamic Vinegar	17
Wine Parade	19
Classified	19

too much, because of the effects of alcohol, not only diminishes the psychophysical capacities of an individual, it also progressively diminishes the sensorial capacity and sensitivity; the more the wine is drunk, the less its aromas and taste can be perceived. It should be, this fact, a sort of warning the body gives to tell the right time to stop has come. This is a risk professional wine tasters know and avoid to take in order to guarantee the reliability and the correctness of their job.

The culture of wise drinking also passes for the consciousness of what it is going to happen every time one decides to have some wine, the pleasure it can give as well as the risks that can be taken in case it is abused. Medicine has recognized, and still recognizes, the many benefits this millenary beverage can give to the human body, it is known that when wine is consumed always and however with moderation, it is capable of preventing certain heart diseases, among these heart failure, improves the circulation of blood and helps the prevention of some cancers. This is always and however true only when it is consumed with moderation. If we listen to the authoritative voice of medicine which reminds us about the benefits of an intelligent and moderate consumption of wine, it is also good to remember the equally authoritative voice of medicine which tells us about the many risks because of the abuse. Even that is part of the culture of wise drinking. It is not only looking for, buying and knowing good wines, it is not showing off a culture and a knowledge about the wine subject, it is also, and above all, remembering that moderation is an essential part of this culture. This is something that was known since ever, even in the many and wise sayings, the many sayings of people's culture, there are so many that give good advices on how to drink wine. Among the many, the famous "who does not drink wine is a sheep, who drinks it with moderation is a lion, who drinks too much wine is a donkey", with respect for the animals which are involved in this "pill of wisdom". If it is true we believe we are men and women belonging to the culture of wise drinking, if we think we are worth wine supporters, let's also remember to be intelligent and worth supporters of moderation, a respect that we mainly owe to ourselves and a respect we owe to quality wine producers who produce it with the intent of making something unique and particular in order to be appreciated. Culture of wise drinking is also that.

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.

First of all, congratulations for your magazine. I discovered DiWineTaste three months ago thanks to the suggestion of a friend of mine, and since then I read your magazine every month. Congratulations for your job, it is certainly useful to the ones, like me, who is getting into the charming world of wine. I recently went to a reception and at the end of the meal was served some Asti Spumante in flûte glasses. In a report of yours about wine glasses, published in issue 6 (March 2003), you say aromatic and sweet sparkling wines, such as Asti, should be served in the cup glass. I told this to the person who was in charge of serving the wine and he told me the cup glass is not used anymore and that every sparkling wine must be served in the flûte. Whom shall I listen to?

Giancarlo Maccotta – Menfi, Agrigento (Italy)

Dear Mr. Maccotta, thank you for your good words about DiWineTaste and we sincerely hope our publication will always be of your interest and that you will continue to read it. The legend goes that cup glass was created as a wish of Marie Antoinette, who was a champagne lover, and it seems it was shaped on her breast, the legend says it was her left breast because it was closer to the heart. The cup glass suddenly became popular and it became the glass to be used for champagne. To tell the truth, cup glass is not suited for "classic method" sparkling wines because of its wide opening which tends to quickly end the *perlage* and to excessively disperse wine's aromas. However, this characteristic is well suited for aromatic and sweet sparkling wines, such as Asti, because they help to mitigate the aromatic intensity of the grape while leaving the other aromas to emerge and to be perceived. Moreover, because these kind of wines are usually produced with the *Charmat* method, bubbles quality is inferior to the ones produced with the classic method, therefore this is a factor that can be neglected. Serving an Asti Spumante in the flûte, no matter this is getting a more and more frequent trend, mainly in restaurants and in banquets, means to penalize its aromas, in particular the most delicate ones and, lastly, the shape of the flûte directs the wine to the back side of the mouth and therefore does not allow the characteristic sweetness of these wines to be properly valued.



During a vacation in France I bought a wine I did not know and I found it delicious. In the label it is written "Banyuls Grand Cru". What kind of wine is that? What are the grapes used to make it?

Marcelo Balmaceda – Buenos Aires (Argentina)

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Somm. Antonello Biancalana

Address

WEB: www.DiWineTaste.com E-Mail: Editorial@DiWineTaste.com

Contributors:

Stefano Passerini

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The wine you are talking about is produced in an appellation of origin area belonging to the *Languedoc-Roussillon* region, in the south-west area of France, and it is called *Banyuls AC*. The wine belongs to the category of French *Vin doux naturel* and the grapes are usually cultivated in the slopes of the Pyrenees mountains, near the Spanish territory. Banyuls is a wine mainly produced with *Grenache Noir* grape and it is fortified. These wines must have at least 15% of alcohol by volume and must be produced with at least 50% of Grenache Noir, whereas *Banyuls Grand Cru* must be produced with at least 75% of Grenache Noir and must be aged for 30 months in casks. The wines are produced as semi-dry or sweet. Moreover there also is the *rancio* style which is purposely oxidized by leaving casks under the sun in summertime. This technique gives the Banyuls a mahogany color and rich, complex and intense aromas. Banyuls is usually served as aperitif or accompanied to desserts, however it is also very good when drunk alone.

ABC WINE

New Zealand

The renowned homeland of kiwi birds, in few years has become a reference model for white wines produced with its Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay

According to an enological point of view, New Zealand can be considered as a sort of miracle. Within a little more than ten years the country got transformed from a mediocre wine producer into a quality wine producer, moreover, it was successful in adding its two most renowned wines, the ones produced with Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, to the list of the most excellent and best white wines of the world. Particularly, wines produced with Sauvignon Blanc have characteristics so unique and extraordinary as to make one think that New Zealand it is the preferred land for this grape. If Sauvignon Blanc is now famous worldwide, often outclassing even the best exemplars of the world, there is another *international* grape, Chardonnay, which is certainly not anything less and is considered among the best examples of the world.

When New Zealand started seriously thinking about the opportunities offered by the wine business, they mainly thought about investing on the most cultivated grape of Germany at those times, Müller Thurgau, it was chosen because of the similarities of the climates of both countries and therefore they believed it could give good results. Later they thought it was Pinot Noir the grape on what they should have paid the highest attention for the enological future of the country, at the end, unsuspectingly, they were Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay that surprised the whole world. Today Pinot Noir and Müller Thurgau, represent only a marginal part of New Zealand's viticulture. Currently the enology of the country is mainly paying its attention on Chardonnay which, in certain areas, has even surpassed Sauvignon Blanc in terms of production quantities, however, it is Sauvignon Blanc

the grape that marks New Zealand in the world.

History of viticulture and enology in the land of Maori, the local and ancient people of New Zealand, is a fact which is not even two hundreds years old. It was in 1819, after New Zealand was colonized by English as a result of the expeditions of captain James Cook, that the very first vine was planted in Kerikeri, in the far north-eastern area of the Northern Island, by Reverend Samuel Marsden, an Anglican missionary. The variety of vine he planted is still unknown and there is no sure information whether wine was ever produced with those grapes. It was only twenty years later, in 1839, that there are sure information about the very first wine ever produced in New Zealand, by Scottish James Busby, with the grapes he himself planted near Waitangi in 1836. Both Samuel Marsden and James Busby, left written documents where they expressed their undoubted trust in New Zealand as a land perfectly suited for the cultivation of the vine and for the production of quality wine. However their "prophecy" was proved and turned into reality only in the middle of the 1980's.

The first wine producers of New Zealand were English who had no sufficient knowledge in this matter in order to allow them a production of quality wine. Other serious obstacles which opposed to the development of the enology of the country were the social prejudice towards wine and the rigid restrictions imposed by the authorities, they even established prohibitionism in the country. As a matter of example, it was only at the end of the World War Two that wine could finally be sold in shops and it was only in 1960 wineries could legally sell their wine to hotels and restaurants. Moreover, at those times there was a law in force that forbade wine, as well as any other alcoholic beverage, to be sold after 10:00PM. Even oidium and phylloxera opposed to the development of local enology; at the end of the 1800's, here as it was in other countries of the world, vineyards were practically devastated by these feared flagella.

The development of New Zealand's enology did not certainly have an easy life. Because of the damages made by oidium and phylloxera, viticulturists started cultivating French-American hybrids, such as Baco Noir and Isabella, known for

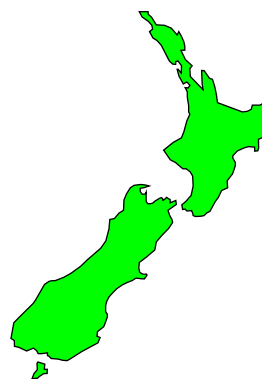


Fig. 1: New Zealand

their resistance to those feared diseases, and they started selling the berries of the vine as fruit instead of making wine from it. As it was already known in other parts of the world, wines produced with these grapes were sweet and certainly quality was not their best asset. Wines produced with these grapes were usually fortified in the hope of obtaining a better product, the result was not worth the effort for making them. However, until the end of 1960's, Isabella was the most planted grape in New Zealand, when they finally decided to try again the cultivation of some species of *Vitis Vinifera*, the European vine used to make wine. The first vineyard of European vines was planted in the renowned Marlborough area only in 1973, whereas the official establishment of New Zealand Wine Institute was in 1975. The spreading of vine had, during those times, a rapid and increasing development until 1983, when the production was so high that they had problems because overproduction, with serious losses in the next years, and the government had to intervene in 1986 by setting new laws in order to promote the uprooting of vineyards and with the result that a quarter of the country's vineyards were uprooted.

The production of wine boosted as a consequence of those years and from 1990's on, New Zealand enology is having a great time of success and fame; its white wines produced with Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay grapes have reached successful results and they are now considered as solid and proper reference models for many wine producers of the world.

The Quality System of New Zealand

New Zealand's quality system does not have rigid laws about the cultivation of grapes and the production of wine, there are no indications about the species of grapes that can be planted nor about areas where the many species can be cultivated. There are not even indications about the yields per hectare nor aging times for wines before they can be released on the market. The only laws set by the system regulate only wine labeling aspects and, therefore, some rules about wine making. The quality system of wine production in New Zealand is regulated by the *Food Act and Food Regulations* which sets the following:

- In case the variety of the grape is mentioned in the label, at least 75% of the wine must be produced with the mentioned grape.
- In case two varieties are mentioned in the label, they must be indicated according their importance. In case a wine has "Chardonnay-Sauvignon Blanc" written in the label, this means that Chardonnay is present in higher quantities than Sauvignon Blanc.
- In case the area of origin of the wine is mentioned in the label, as well as a district or region, at least 75% of the wine must be from the mentioned area.

It should be noted that the current production of mono-varietal wines of New Zealand, that is the ones produced with only one variety of grape, is usually made of 85-100% of the same variety, a quantity far greater than the one set by law.

Production Areas

The viticulture of New Zealand is mainly oriented towards white wines where Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay are the most important grapes in the enological scenario of the country. Sauvignon Blanc was the grape that made New Zealand famous worldwide by arousing a great interests for its wines, however nowadays the country is mainly interested to the production of wines made of Chardonnay that currently represents the most planted grape in New Zealand.

No matter Chardonnay is the grape that is currently having most of the attention by producers, it is Sauvignon Blanc the grape that made New Zealand famous worldwide and it probably is the grape that marks the country according to the enological point of view. However wines from Sauvignon Blanc produced in this part of the world do not have equals in any other country of the world, their characteristics are such that practically make them inimitable. These wines are an explosion of fresh and intense aromas, from citrus fruits to aromatic herbs, from exotic fruits to charming herbaceous aromas. According to the typical enological practice used for this grape, New Zealand's Sauvignon Blancs are made in steel tanks and do not have any aging in cask, a production characteristic that rightly exalts their fruity, fresh and aromatic character, both to the nose and to the mouth.

New Zealand is divided in two islands, Northern Island and Southern Island, and the wine production is present in specific areas of both islands. A characteristic of New Zealand is its climate, particularly cool, also thanks to its stretched shape which is strongly influenced by the effects of the ocean. New Zealand's climate allows grapes to ripe homogeneously, with the result of producing wines rich in aromas and rich in natural acidity, something which can be found in the northern hemisphere of the world in Germany only. However the climate of the country is also characterized by rains that, as a matter of fact, represent one of the main problems of New Zealand's viticulture.

The viticulture of New Zealand is mainly oriented towards the cultivation of the so called "international" species and, among white grapes, there are Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Pinot Gris, Müller Thurgau and Gewürztraminer, whereas among red berried grapes there are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir, the most cultivated red berried grape in the country which is also used for the production of sparkling wines. More than 40% of New Zealand's vineyards are located in the Northern Island, particularly in the areas of Gisborne and Hawke's Bay. Gisborne is known for the production of excellent wines made of Chardonnay grapes, as well as a good production of Müller Thurgau, whereas Hawke's bay, thanks to the characteristics of its soil as well as to the particular climate conditions, is considered one of the best areas of the country and it is from this area where the best Sauvignon Blancs and Chardonnays of New Zealand are from. In this area, moreover, there is also a good production of red wines produced with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Another interesting area of the Northern Island is Auckland, where there is the highest number of wineries. The area of Auckland is the only one to have sub-areas, Kumeu/Huapai,

Henderson and Waiheke Island, all of sure interest. In the southern area of the Northern Island there is another interesting area, Wairarapa/Martinborough, particularly suited to the production of wines made of Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Even the Southern Island is rich in interesting areas according to an enological point of view. The most renowned one is certainly Marlborough, the largest wine area of the country, which is located to the northern part of the Southern Island, and, alone, has a surface planted with vines which represents almost the 40% of New Zealand. Marlborough is famous for its excellent wines produced with Sauvignon Blanc which is also the most cultivated grape of this area. North-West from Marlborough there is the small area of Nelson, a rather hilly area where are mainly produced wines made of Chardonnay, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc grapes. South from here there is the area of Canterbury, characterized by a rather cool climate, where are mainly produced wines made of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, as well as wines made of Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc. The farthest southern wine area of the country is Central Otago, which is located below the 45th parallel, where are produced wines from Pinot Noir and Gewürztraminer.

WINE TASTING

Tasting White Wines

After having discussed general techniques for tasting wines, it is time to put into practice the many concepts applied to any type. This month we will discover white wines

The techniques for the tasting and the organoleptic evaluation of wines are, in general terms, applicable to any kind of wine, each one of them will be evaluated in its aspect, aromas, taste and balance, however the peculiar differences of every category of wine require the taster to do the evaluation by considering specific factors according to the category itself. Apparently, wines differ one from each other in the color, an obvious characteristic that would make the taster not to consider all the other differences. If it is true that every wine, even belonging to the same type, is different from any other else, this consideration is surely true among the many types.

Colors, nuances, aromas and taste are organoleptic characteristics that every wine has, however it is obvious that each one of these characteristics varies from wine to wine, even more clearly, from type to type. Colors of a specific category does not have anything in common with the colors of wines belonging to other categories; the same is true for their aromas as well, their taste, their balance. These differences, in general terms, are determined both by the variety of grapes and by production methodologies, in a more specific way, besides what was considered so far, are to be added the production area, climate conditions, grape ripeness level, cultivation techniques, type of soil and quality of grapes. A series of characteristics that, alone, justify the fact of evaluating with proper attention every type of wine and,

last but not the least, suggest the adoption of specific evaluation "strategies".

Color

The variety of colors commonly observable in white wines is quite vast, it depends by the type of grape, certainly not in a determinant way as in red wines, the way they were pressed and, particularly, the wine making technique. Information that could be get from color are mainly indicative about the wine making technique. In general terms, a wine having a pale color, almost colorless, is usually the sign of a wine making produced with excessively strict and industrial systems, moreover it could also be the sign of a very high yield and therefore of grapes of disputable quality. On the other hand, a young white wine with very intense and deep colors is usually the sign of a wine fermented in cask. These rules, to be considered as general, are however to be treated with proper exceptions according to the type of grape used to make that specific wine. As a matter of example, a wine produced with Riesling grape usually has a pale yellow color, therefore this cannot be considered as a lack, certainly a wine produced with Chardonnay grape, in particular when aged in cask, has a more intense color.

Color in white wines, just like any other type of wine, also indicates their age, the same wine will show in its youth evident greenish nuances, up to getting, at the end of its life, even brown colors; as a matter of a rule, every white wine tends, with age, to darken its color. In this evolution of colors, white wines show in their youth pale yellow colors, sometimes almost colorless, with evident greenish nuances, then they usually get lemon yellow, straw, gold, amber and, at the end, brown or deep amber. Let's see in detail the many types of colors and the indication that can be get from each one of them:

- **Pale/Greenish Yellow** - Besides being the typical color of many young wines, it usually indicates a wine whose grapes were cultivated in cool areas and that did not reach full ripeness. Wines produced with grapes cultivated in warm and sunny areas hardly show greenish nuances. Greenish nuances are mainly because of chlorophyll which is present in dry white wines during their youth, a characteristic which will tend to disappear with aging. In case greenish nuances do not tend to disappear with age, this could be the sign of an excessive quantity of sulfur dioxide in the wine which is slowing down the aging process.
- **Straw Yellow** - This is the typical color of the majority of white wines, even young ones, and that can be found in white wines for a pretty long period of time during the aging process. Generally this color can be, for the majority of wines, the sign that it did not reach the end of aging yet and therefore it is perfectly drinkable, provided there are not other defects or faults.
- **Gold Yellow** - This is the typical color of wines fermented and aged in wood containers after three or four years of aging in bottle, sometimes even more, according to the type of grape used to make the wine as well as the time the wine

stayed in the wood container. Even certain young wines produced with grapes cultivated in particularly warm and sunny areas may have this color. All other white wines generally get a deep gold color after five or six years of aging in bottle.

- **Amber Yellow** - When present in white wines, this color may be the sign of an oxidation, wrong keeping of the bottle, in particular, when it was excessively exposed to the light, or in case of degenerative diseases. Even the prolonged and excessive aging in bottle may get the wine to have this color, in other words, the wine has passed by a long time its best characteristics and it is on its way to decline already.
- **Brown** - It can be found in white wines that are decrepit and “dead”, which passed by many years their best condition and reached the end of their decline.

Aromas

In a white wine, one usually expects fresh aromas which evoke flowers and fruits, an almost obvious characteristic as white wines are usually consumed when are young. In general terms, young white wines are characterized by aromas of white flowers (such as hawthorn) and fruit with white pulp (pear, apple), in young whites having a more complex character can also be found yellow flowers (acacia, broom) and fruit with yellow pulp (peach, apricot, medlar) and, sometimes, other fruits such as hazelnut and almond. Mature whites are characterized by dried flowers, honey, dried and toasted fruit.

Aromas in a white wine depend by many factors, among the most important ones we find the variety of grape and its level of ripeness. Wines produced with unripe grapes generally have vegetal aromas, such as mowed grass and leaves, whereas the ones produced with more mature grapes have aromas of flowers and fruit, grapes that reached full maturation, as well as over-ripe grapes, have more complex aromas such as honey and, often, cooked or dried fruit. One of the grapes that best expresses this aromatic variety according to its ripening level, is Sauvignon Blanc. Wines produced with this grape, when unripe and not fully mature, have rather vegetal and “green” aromas, such as the typical aromas of box, elder, green bell pepper, tomato leaf, sage and other aromatic herbs. Wines produced with the same grape, when ripe, have charming aromas of flowers, such as acacia, honeysuckle, and more properly, aromas of fruit such as exotic fruits, peach, apple and pear.

Aromas in white wines can also express the so called *aromatic* character, that is the typical aroma of grape, a characteristic which is practically exclusive to *aromatic* or *semi-aromatic* grapes. The family of aromatic grapes it is not vast, however when they are used for the production of wine, their presence is rather evident. The aroma of grape can be easily found in Muscat Blanc and Gewürztraminer, the olfactory evaluation of wines made with these grapes is an excellent exercise for the neophyte which is getting into wine tasting as well as for the full understanding of this charming aroma; in these wines the aroma of

grape is so strong and evident which is practically impossible not to notice it. Every grape whose wines have aromas similar to Muscat Blanc or Gewürztraminer are considered as *aromatic*. This aroma is also present, even though with lesser intensity, in other grapes and it will clearly be perceivable even among all the other aromas. These grapes are called *semi-aromatic*.

In white wines are often found aromas typical of aromatic herbs or seasoning herbs such as sage, thyme, fennel, lavender, mint or lemon-verbena. An aroma which is getting more and more frequent in white wines is the one of banana, a peculiarity of certain grapes, such as Chardonnay, as well as of those wines which underwent the process of malolactic fermentation. Even typical aromas of citrus fruits and their flowers, such as lemon and orange blossom, give wines a very pleasing touch of class. Aromas of flowers are however the most charming characteristics of whites, in these wines the range of flower aromas is rather vast and complex, from white flowers to yellow flowers, in white wines we can find the delicacy of a blossoming garden. Among the most common aromas of flowers in white wines can be found acacia, which is often a peculiarity of Chardonnay, hawthorn, present in many white wines, yellow or white rose, typical of Gewürztraminer and Muscat Blanc, the noble lily, present in wines produced with Riesling, Pinot Gris and Gewürztraminer, as well as elder flower usually found in Sauvignon Blanc.

Talking about flowers, it is sometimes possible, in rare cases to tell the truth, to find in white wines aromas of flowers typically common in red wines. This is the case of violet, present in many red wines, which can be sometimes perceived in wines made with Viognier grape and produced in Rhône Valley and in certain white wines of Valle d’Aosta. Even the aroma of jasmine and iris, also present in red wines, can be perceived in some whites, particularly in certain wines from Sicily or France. The aromatic freshness of flowers in white wines is an aromatic characteristic that, with time, tends to vanish, or better, it tends to transform into dried flowers, in other cases it even turns into aromas of herbal teas. Likewise, aromas of fruit tend to transform into dried or cooked fruit. In certain white mature wines there can also be found aromas which directly recall honey and jams.

Taste and Balance

The main tasting characteristic of white wines is represented by acidity, a factor which gives crispness and agreeability to this type of wine and that is a peculiarity that marks every young white wine. The presence of acidity is fundamental in white wines because it contributes in a determinant way to its

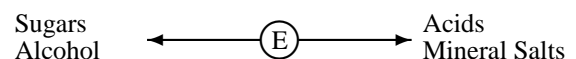


Fig. 2: Balance in White Wines

balance, this organoleptic sensation is the main element that is capable of contrasting, that is balancing, alcohol. The diagram shown in figure 2 illustrates the relation among the many organoleptic elements in the determination of balance.

Acidity in white wines tends to diminish with time and therefore after a specific period of aging in bottle, whites tend to lose their typical crispness, a factor that certainly make them less pleasing, that is less balanced, and a good reason to appreciate properly white wines during their best time: youth.

Practical Application

The many qualitative aspects in white wines can be better understood by doing a comparative evaluation among the many types and, possibly, produced in different areas. In this practical test it will be given the opportunity to evaluate and to understand the organoleptic differences among white wines. In order to do that, it is suggested to get three wines: a Gewürztraminer, produced in Alsace or in Alto Adige, a young Chardonnay non aged in wood, produced in Sicily or in Collio, lastly, a Sauvignon Blanc, produced in the Loire Valley or in Alto Adige. All wines must be young and produced in the last vintage.

By evaluating the aspect of the three wines, Sauvignon Blanc will be the one having a more pale color and will have greenish nuances. Chardonnay will be the wine having an intermediate tint compared to the three, probably a straw yellow, whereas Gewürztraminer will have a deep color, almost tending to gold yellow. At the nose the three wines will reveal very different aromatic characters, in particular, it should be noted the aromatic characteristic of Gewürztraminer, probably present in lesser quantity in Sauvignon Blanc as well, and completely absent in Chardonnay. In Sauvignon Blanc it will be possible to perceive aromas recalling vegetal essences, such as box, green bell pepper and tomato leaf, characteristics which are absent in all the other wines. In Chardonnay will be found its typical aromas of banana and acacia, characteristics that could also be found in all other wines. Proper attention should be paid to the many aromatic intensities, it is more likely that Gewürztraminer will be the one having the highest aromatic "strength", followed by Sauvignon Blanc and, lastly, by Chardonnay. Aromas of the three wines should be clearly different from each other, each one of them will have proper olfactory characteristics that will be hardly found, saved particular aromas, in the other wines.

Even the taste of the three wines will be different. Sauvignon Blanc will be the wine to be more crisp, that is more acid, than the others, whereas Gewürztraminer will seem to be more round and agreeable. Likewise, both persistence and final aromas in the mouth will be different one from each other, it will be more likely Gewürztraminer to be the one having the longest persistence among the three and, certainly, it will leave in the mouth the same aromatic flavor that was perceived by the nose.

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



Lugana Brolettino Grand'Annata 1999 Ca' dei Frati (Italy)

Grapes: Trebbiano di Lugana

Price: € 16,50

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

This wine shows a beautiful and brilliant golden color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose has good personality, clean, elegant, intense, refined and pleasing aromas of pineapple, hawthorn, coffee, broom, litchi, apple, hazelnut and vanilla as well as aromas of wood. In mouth is very correspondent to the nose, very balanced, intense and of good body, pleasing crispness. A well made wine. The finish is persistent with clean and pleasing flavors of pear, coffee and apple. Brolettino Grand'Annata is aged in barrique for 15 months and for 24 months in bottle.

Food match: Roasted fish, Roasted meat, Stuffed pasta with meat



Tre Filer 2000 Ca' dei Frati (Italy)

Grapes: Trebbiano di Lugana (60%), Chardonnay (20%), Sauvignon Blanc (20%)

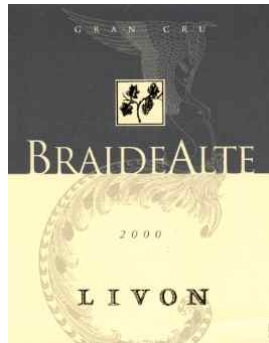
Price: € 11,10

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

A great sweet wine. It shows a beautiful and intense golden yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals great personality, intense, rich, pleasing and refined aromas of dried apricot, pineapple, ripe banana, peach jam, broom, litchi, apple, honey, hazelnut, pear, gooseberry and

vanilla. In mouth is very agreeable with excellent correspondence to the nose, very balanced sweetness, intense flavors. The finish is very persistent, practically endless, with very long, clean and pleasing flavors of apricot, pear, honey, litchi, pineapple, banana and apple. A great wine. Tre Filer is produced with graped dried on mats and is aged for 12-14 months in barrique and for one year in bottle.

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



**Braide Alte 2000
Livon (Italy)**

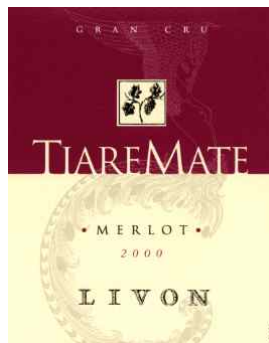
Grapes: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Picolit, Moscato Giallo

Price: € 17,55

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a beautiful and brilliant straw yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals great personality, intense, clean and elegant aromas where a wood aroma is clearly perceived followed by good aromas of banana, hawthorn, honey, pear, peach and vanilla as well as hints of rosemary. In mouth is very correspondent to the nose, balanced and intense, very agreeable, round and crisp. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of pear, peach, honey and vanilla. A truly well made wine. Braide Alte is fermented and aged in barrique for 8 months and for 12 months in bottle.

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



**Collio Merlot TiareMate 2000
Livon (Italy)**

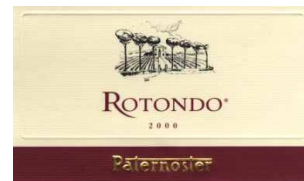
Grapes: Merlot

Price: € 14,40

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

A great wine. The wine shows a beautiful and deep ruby red color with nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose denotes great personality with very elegant, intense, refined and clean aromas such as black cherry, cloves, cherry, chocolate, bilberry jam, plum jam, licorice, black currant and vanilla. In mouth reveals a great correspondence to the nose, very balanced attack, full body and pleasing and intense flavors. The finish is very persistent with long and pleasing flavors of black cherry, plum, black currant and bilberry. Simply a great wine. TiareMate is aged for 18 months in barrique.

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



**Aglianico del Vulture Rotondo 2000
Paternoster (Italy)**

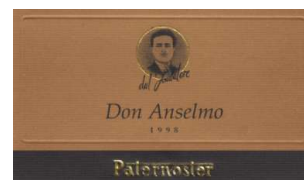
Grapes: Aglianico

Price: € 25,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of purplish red, little transparency. The nose reveals good personality, intense, clean pleasing and fruity aromas of black cherry, dried fig, bilberry and plum followed by good aromas of licorice, cocoa and vanilla as well as pleasing hints of mint. In mouth denotes good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack however well balanced by alcohol, intense and pleasing flavors, good body. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of black cherry, plum and bilberry. A very well made wine. Rotondo is aged in barrique for 14 months and in bottle and in bottle for 12 months.

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



**Aglianico del Vulture Don Anselmo 1998
Paternoster (Italy)**

Grapes: Aglianico

Price: € 26,70

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows a deep ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals personality, rich, intense, pleasing and clean aromas of black cherry, black cherry macerated in alcohol, carob, chocolate, dried fig, bilberry, plum and

dried violet followed by pleasing aromas of vanilla and fennel. In mouth denotes good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack which is balanced by alcohol. Intense flavors and good body. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of plum, bilberry and black cherry. A well made wine which will give its best after a further aging of 2-3 years. Don Anselmo is partly aged in cask and partly aged in barrique followed by 12 months of aging in bottle.

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



**Alto Adige Müller Thurgau 2002
Elena Walch (Italy)**

Grapes: Müller Thurgau

Price: € 8,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a brilliant greenish yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals good personality, with elegant, intense, clean and refined aromas of acacia, apricot, pineapple, banana, litchi, green apple, peach, sage as well as an intense and aromatic hint typical of the grape. In mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a pleasing crisp attack however well balanced, intense and agreeable. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of peach, litchi, banana and pear. A truly well made wine.

Food match: Pasta and risotto with fish and vegetables, Vegetables, Eggs, Crustaceans, Boiled fish



**Alto Adige Merlot Riserva Kastelaz 2000
Elena Walch (Italy)**

Grapes: Merlot

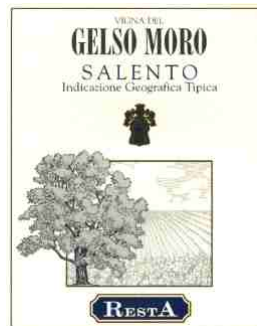
Price: € 26,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals clean, elegant, intense and refined aromas of black cherry, plum jam, bilberry, black currant, violet, coffee, licorice and vanilla followed by hints of cocoa. In the mouth is very correspondent to the nose, very balanced, smooth and pleasing tannins. Intense flavors and

good body. The finish is persistent with pleasing and clean flavors of black cherry, black currant and bilberry. A well made wine. This Merlot Reserve is aged in barrique for 20 months and for 8 months in bottle.

Food match: Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stuffed pasta



**Gelso del Moro Rosso Negroamaro 2000
Vinicola Resta (Italy)**

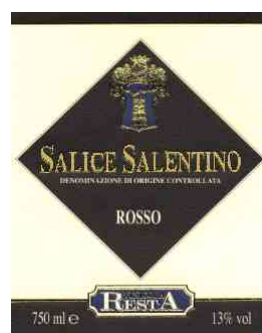
Grapes: Negroamaro

Price: € 4,20

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine has a beautiful and intense ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, little transparency. The nose opens up with rich aromas of jams, clean, neat and of personality. There can be perceived good and intense aromas of black cherry, caramel, fig jam, bilberry jam, mulberry jam, plum jam, dried violet and vanilla. In mouth has good correspondence to the nose and a balanced attack, good body and intense flavors. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of plum jam and bilberry jam. Gelso del Moro Rosso is aged for 4 months in oak casks.

Food match: Broiled meat and barbecue, Stuffed pasta, Hard cheese



**Salice Salentino 2000
Vinicola Resta (Italy)**

Grapes: Negroamaro (80%), Malvasia Nera (20%)

Price: € 4,70

Score: ◇◇◇◇

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals intense, elegant, clean and pleasing aromas of black cherry, bilberry, mulberry, hazelnut, plum, dog rose, enamel, dried violet and vanilla. In mouth is clearly perceivable an intense and agreeable flavor of mulberry,

very persistent. Very balanced and tannins in an agreeable state already. The finish is persistent with clean and pleasing flavors of mulberry and hazelnut. A well made wine. This Salice Salentino is aged for 10 months in oak casks.

Food match: Game, Roasted meat, Hard cheese



Aglianico del Vulture La Firma 2000
Cantine del Notaio (Italy)

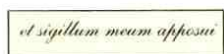
Grapes: Aglianico

Price: € 21,00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

The wine has a beautiful and intense ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose reveals personality with elegant, intense, clean and pleasing aromas of black cherry jam, bilberry jam, plum, licorice, leather, dried violet, cocoa, carob and vanilla. In mouth denotes good correspondence to the nose, a slightly tannin attack however well balanced by alcohol. Intense flavors, good body and smooth tannins. The finish is persistent with clean flavors of plum, bilberry and black cherry. La Firma is aged in cask for 12 months and for 4 months in bottle.

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



L'Autentica 2000
Cantine del Notaio (Italy)

Grapes: Moscato Bianco (70%), Malvasia Bianca (30%)

Price: € 18,00 - 500 ml (16.90 fl.oz.)

Score: ◆◆◆◆

The wine shows a beautiful and intense straw yellow color and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals intense and pleasing aromas where bitter almond is evidently noticed, followed by dried apricot, pineapple, peach jam, honey, pear and vanilla as well as hints of enamel. In mouth denotes a good correspondence to the nose, good balance and intense flavors, sweetness well balanced with the rest. The finish is very persistent with long and clean flavors of dried apricot, honey and peach jam. A well made wine. L'Autentica is produced with grapes harvested in the first week of November and is aged in cask for 14 months and in bottle for 4 months.

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

WINE PRODUCERS

Ca' del Bosco

At Erbusco, in the heart of Franciacorta, homeland of refined sparkling wines, Maurizio Zanella's winery produces excellent still wines as well as excellent bubbles

Talking about Franciacorta means, first of all, talking about the extraordinary sparkling wines produced with the classic method, certainly to be considered among the excellence of bubbles in the world, and when the subject is about the sparkling wines production of Franciacorta, Ca' del Bosco is surely one of those wineries which is almost impossible not to mention for the quality of its "Franciacorta Metodo Classico" as well as for its excellent still wines, both white and red, that successfully support and complete the production of this renowned winery in Erbusco.

The creator of Ca' del Bosco's success is Maurizio Zanella, founder of the renowned Franciacorta's winery, whom with passion and attention for details, alone good presuppositions for quality production, was successful, and he is always successful, in creating great wines that are rightly and solidly placed since a very long time at the top of the quality production in the world. One of the main aims of Ca' del Bosco is certainly quality, a goal that the winery also achieves by means of researching and experimentation. In order to do that, the winery has a laboratory with specific equipments that are used for the proper verifications and tests in order to offer its customers a product of superior quality. Quality in Ca' del Bosco begins, first of all, in the care and scrupulous selection of grapes harvested in the winery's vineyards, a process that can be done thanks to the help and experience of competent professionals.

The history of Ca' del Bosco begins at the end of the 1960's, precisely in 1968, when at Erbusco they started planting the very first winery's vineyards; from those vineyards, as well as other few in other vineyards of Italy, began the so called "Italian Enology Renaissance" as well as launching Franciacorta towards quality sparkling wine production of the world. Everything began few years earlier, precisely in 1965 when in Franciacorta moved in a house in the wood, Annamaria Clementi Zanella,



Maurizio Zanella in his cellar

mother of Maurizio Zanella, to whom is now dedicated the most prestigious and refined Franciacorta of the winery. It was among the Erbusco's hills that Maurizio Zanella started cultivating the passion for creating great quality wines. After high school, he studied at the Faculty of Agronomy at the Catholic University of Piacenza and improved his enological culture by studying for two years at the *Station Œnologique de Bourgogne* and at the University of Enology of Bordeaux.

The evolution of Ca' del Bosco's production can be summarized in four significant "historical" phases, during each of them the winery introduced new types of wine up to getting to the present production. During the first phase, in the beginning of the 1970's, the winery released two still wines: a white and a red of Franciacorta. The second phase, during the period from 1978 to 1980, the winery decides to start the production of sparkling wines and releases Franciacorta Brut, Dosage Zero, Rosé, Annamaria Clementi and Satèn, at those times known as *Crémant*. In the 1980's, a period that can be considered as the third phase, Ca' del Bosco focuses on the production of still wines and releases the Maurizio Zanella, a wine named after the founder itself and produced with the classical Bordeaux blend, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot, a Chardonnay, Pinero, produced with Pinot Noir grape and, finally, Elfo, an interesting white wine produced with Sauvignon Blanc and other local grapes. During the fourth and last phase, the winery completes its production line with other "non vintage" bubbles, as set by the disciplinary of production for the Appellation of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin (DOCG) Franciacorta. The way for the production of great quality wines is however alive and active even nowadays and it is one of the latest wines created at Ca' del Bosco which is having a new and proved interest towards the Franciacorta's winery: Carmenère, a particular and excellent wine produced with a particular grape: Carmenère.

The peculiarities of Ca' del Bosco are not just wines. The winery is elegantly decorated with paintings, ancient furnitures and artistic objects that culminates with a particular gate, entrance to the winery, made by sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro and named as *Inno al Sole*, (*Hymn to the Sun*). This gate is made of a round structure of 5 meters of diameter (16.5 feet) which is

divided in two sides of 25 quintals each (2.4 tons). The design of this gate ended in 1987, whereas the construction ended in 1993. The gate, located at Ca' del Bosco's entrance, was commissioned by Maurizio Zanella who asked sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro to design and make a gate representing the emblematic entrance towards vineyards and the estate. The gate, according to an artistic point of view, does not only have the purpose of a portal, it is also the consecration of the relation between wine and art, because, as stated by Maurizio Zanella himself, "art is also making quality wine". By means of this work of art Zanella wanted to set the way for a new civilization of wine, by creating a privileged connection among quality of its structures, lands, men, wine and the quality of art. According to this philosophy takes form the round shaped gate, made of bronze with a core of steel, with points upwards similar to arrows, a big sun, because it is the sun the real nourishment of grape and with its rays warms and enlightens the sweet hills of Ca' del Bosco.

The events of Maurizio Zanella, as well as those of Ca' del Bosco, are rather singular and surprising. He starts making wine, and to believe in the production of quality wines, in a period when in Italy were mainly produced wines that could not be considered as bad, however they could not have any chance when compared to the wines of that country which already made of quality its peculiar characteristic: France. The choice of Maurizio Zanella about producing quality wines began after he traveled in France, in the beginning of the 1970's, precisely in Bourgogne, and at just 17 years old he was absolutely amazed by the French quality and truly disappointed by the Italian one. It was during that time he decided his job would have been making great wines in the lands where he lived. A decision that surely took lots of courage, even because at those times his decision was not even understood by his Italian "colleagues" wine producers and, not to mention, he was considered, together with other few "pioneers" of the renaissance of Italian enology, as a visionary. Time proved Maurizio Zanella was right and within less than ten years his wines are already renowned in many countries of the world. With the success of his wines he is also successful in turning into reality his wish of getting the world of art closer to the one of wine, once again, a difficult choice for those times, however, as Zanella himself reminds, those were times when wine was living a new era and therefore it was necessary to impose



"Inno al Sole", entrance gate of Ca' del Bosco

changes that could be immediately evident.

After about twenty years, the results achieved by Ca' del Bosco confirm that Maurizio Zanella was absolutely right in being determined in his aims. His wines are now celebrated everywhere and they always achieve the best results and the best successes in every place; Ca' del Bosco's wines are always awarded and get the best acclaims both from customers and the professionals working in the wine business. His still wines have always been successful everywhere and whenever they competed or compared to great wines from other countries, including France, they always ended up being awarded with the best triumphs and honors. The same is also true for Franciacorta sparkling wines, just to mention one, the excellent Cuvée Annamaria Clementi 1996, considered as one of the best Italian sparkling wines "Metodo Classico", and it often outclasses even the most outstanding French Champagne in occasion of many wine contests, moreover, it is the only Italian sparkling wine to be included in the first one hundred wines of the century. Cuvée Annamaria Clementi is not the only sparkling wine of Ca' del Bosco to "dare" so much. The result of a recent survey organized by a famous German magazine, conducted on sparkling wines from all over the world whose work was guaranteed by seven professional wine tasters, Ca' del Bosco's Franciacorta Dosage Zero was awarded to the prestigious first place and left behind a number of worth representatives of international class, including also thirteen Champagnes and three Franciacortas.

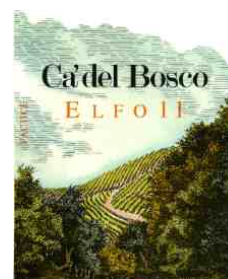
The ambitions of the "volcanic" Zanella are not only that. Within September 2003 it will be completed the new cellar at Ca' del Bosco, a project of increasing and renewal of the company which involved the winery for two years, and that will occupy an area of twenty thousand square meters (23 920 square yards) in order to have room for new services and structures capable of guaranteeing a production of one million and two hundred thousands bottles. The new structure will also have an underground aging cellar of thirteen thousands square meters (15 550 square yards) that will host two thousands barriques, as well as other rooms for aging and laboratories for analyses, in particular one expressly built for the analysis of the land and of the foliar apparatuses. At the end of the work the new area of Ca' del Bosco destined to vineyards will be about 140 hectares (246 acres). Ca' del Bosco also joined the group of producers who decided to adopt the appellation *Curtefranca* in order to clearly differentiate "Terre di Franciacorta" wines as well as avoiding any confusion with the sparkling wines produced in the very same area and simply called "Franciacorta". For this purpose the winery has created a new look for these two *Curtefranca* wines, a white and a red, by designing a new label which depicts the original Ca' del Bosco's mark of the 1980's. Even in the vineyards they are about to do new works in order to improve quality with a density of nine thousands vines per hectare and they will manually harvest grapes which will be gathered in boxes containing fifteen kilograms each. (33 lbs.) Since two vintages, as the grapes are being harvested, they are stored in refrigerators waiting to be pressed according to the "rhythm" of work for the pressing machines. Within twentyfour hours from harvesting, grapes are manually selected and then pressed. The production of white wines does

not have any destemming process, the bunches are pressed as a whole, while selecting during the many working phases, different qualities of must. The production of red grapes goes under a destemming process and then they are pressed and the must is then transferred in steel tanks where the alcoholic fermentation takes place.

Ca' del Bosco's wines are sold in 28 foreign countries, to whose it is destined about the 30% of the production. Both in Italy and abroad, the distribution policy is mainly in favor of the restaurant and wine shop business. The current production of Ca' del Bosco is rather diversified and vast and provides *Curtefranca Bianco*, *Curtefranca rosso* and *Chardonnay* as "Terre di Franciacorta DOC" wines; *Elfo 11* and *Carmenèro* as "table wines"; *Pinero* and *Maurizio Zanella* as "IGT Sebino" wines; *Franciacorta Brut*, *Franciacorta Satèn Vintage*, *Franciacorta Rosé Vintage*, *Franciacorta Brut Vintage*, *Franciacorta Dosage Zero Vintage* and *Cuvée Annamaria Clementi* as "Franciacorta DOCG" sparkling wines.



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



Elfo 11
Ca' del Bosco (Italy)

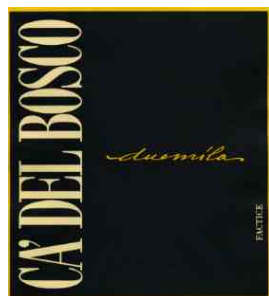
Grapes: Sauvignon Blanc (90%), Other grapes (10%)

Price: € 18,00

Score: ❖❖❖❖ ★

The wine shows a greenish yellow color, very transparent. The nose reveals the typical aromaticity of the grape with elegant, clean and very pleasing aromas. There can be perceived intense and good aromas of pineapple, anise, banana, tomato leaf, lemon, litchi, peach, grapefruit and elder. The mouth has a crisp attack, however balanced and agreeable, with intense flavors and good correspondence to the nose. The finish is persistent with clean flavors of lemon, peach and elder. A well made wine. Elfo 11 is aged for 8 months in steel tanks.

Food match: (Pasta and risotto with fish, Vegetables pies, Roasted spiced fish)



**Terre di Franciacorta Chardonnay 2000
Ca' del Bosco (Italy)**

Grapes: Chardonnay

Price: € 44,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

The wine shows a light straw yellow color and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent. The nose denotes personality, with clean, pleasing, intense and elegant aromas such as pineapple, banana, broom, apple, hazelnut, pear, peach, grapefruit and vanilla. In the mouth reveals a good balance with a slightly alcoholic attack, very balanced and bodied, with intense flavors and excellent correspondence to the nose. The finish is very persistent with long flavors of pear, apple and grapefruit. A great white. This Chardonnay is fermented in barrique and aged for 11 months in new barriques.

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



**Maurizio Zanella 1999
Ca' del Bosco (Italy)**

Grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon (45%), Cabernet Franc (30%), Merlot (25%)

Price: € 46,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇★

A great wine. The wine shows a beautiful and brilliant ruby red color and nuances of ruby red, little transparency. The nose denotes personality, with intense, elegant and clean aromas such as black cherry, carob, cherry, chocolate, plum jam, eucalyptus, strawberry, licorice, bilberry and vanilla. In mouth reveals an excellent correspondence to the nose and an excellent balance since

the first moments. Intense flavors and tannins which already have a good level of aging. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of plum and black cherry. A wine which will give its best with a further aging in bottle, however it is drinkable already. Maurizio Zanella is aged in barrique for 15 months.

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



**Carmenero 1999
Ca' del Bosco (Italy)**

Grapes: Carmenère

Price: € 47,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇★

The wine shows an intense ruby red color and nuances of purplish red, little transparency. The nose denotes great personality with elegant, intense and clean aromas such as black cherry, cocoa, bilberry, black pepper, bell pepper, plum, black currant and vanilla. In mouth reveals an alcoholic attack however balanced by tannins which already are smooth and round. Excellent correspondence to the nose with intense flavors. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and black currant. A great wine that will give its best with a further aging in bottle. Carmenero is aged in barrique for 16 months.

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



**Franciacorta Satèn Millesimato 1998
Ca' del Bosco (Italy)**

Grapes: Chardonnay (70%), Pinot Blanc (30%)

Price: € 31,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇★

This sparkling wine shows a fine perlage, persistent bubbles and in good quantity, good foam. The color is a deep straw yellow and nuances of straw yellow, very transparent. The nose reveals great personality, with elegant, clean and complex aromas such as ripe banana, butter, bread crust, kiwi, yeast, litchi, apple, honey, hazelnut, pear, grapefruit and vanilla. In mouth denotes a crisp and dry attack, however balanced and with intense flavors, excellent correspondence to the nose. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of grapefruit, apple, pear and banana. This sparkling wine is produced with a base wine aged for 7 months in steel containers and 11 months in barrique. The wine stays for at least 40 months on the lees.

Food match: White meat, Pasta and risotto with vegetables and fish, Roasted fish, Fried fish, Crustaceans



Franciacorta Dosage Zero Millesimato 1998 Ca' del Bosco (Italy)

Grapes: Chardonnay (65%), Pinot Blanc (16%), Pinot Noir (19%)

Price: € 28,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇★

This sparkling wine shows a very fine perlage, good quantity of persistent bubbles, good foam. The color is intense straw yellow and nuances of straw yellow, crystalline. The nose reveals good personality, elegance, complex and clean aromas such as pineapple, banana, butter, bread crust, kiwi, yeast, lemon, litchi, unripe apple, honey, hazelnut and pear. In mouth has a pleasing dry and crisp attack, excellent correspondence to the nose, intense flavors and balanced. The finish is persistent with pleasing flavors of pear, banana, honey and pineapple. This Franciacorta is produced with a wine aged both in steel tanks and small oak casks. The wine stays on lees for a minimum of 35 months before being disgorged.

Food match: White meat, Pasta and risotto with vegetables and fish, Roasted fish, Fried fish, Crustaceans



Franciacorta Cuvée Annamaria Clementi 1996 Ca' del Bosco (Italy)

Grapes: Chardonnay (55%), Pinot Blanc (25%), Pinot Noir (20%)

Price: € 53,00

Score: ◇◇◇◇◇

A great sparkling wine. It has a very fine perlage and persistent bubbles in great quantity, abundant and persistent foam. The nose reveals great personality, with very elegant, refined, clean and pleasing aromas such as apricot, pineapple, banana, butter, bread crust, yeast, litchi, apple, honey, hazelnut, pear, grapefruit and vanilla. In the mouth has an excellent correspondence to the nose, crisp and balanced attack with pleasing, clean and intense flavors. The finish is very persistent and practically endless with clean and pleasing flavors of banana, litchi, pineapple, honey, pear, apple and grapefruit. A magnificent sparkling wine. Cuvée Annamaria Clementi is produced with a base wine fermented in barrique and undergoes full malolactic fermentation and therefore is aged in barrique for 7 months. It stays on the lees for 5 years and 8 months.

Food match: Roasted white meat, Pasta and risotto with fish, Stuffed pasta, Roasted spiced fish

Ca' del Bosco - Via Case Sparse, 20 - 25030 Erbusco, Brescia - Italy Tel. +39 030 7766111 Fax +39 030 7268425 - **Winemaker:** Stefano Capelli - **Established:** 1968 - **Production:** 950.000 bottles - **E-Mail:** cadelbosco@cadelbosco.com - **WEB:** www.cadelbosco.it

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

Matching Food and Wine

Food always had in wine its best companion, a strict bond that always accompanied men to the pleasure of eating

The presence of wine in the table, particularly in those country where the enological culture has ancient origins, such as Italy, France and Spain, is a characteristic that since many centuries accompanies people's meals, it always had a fundamental importance as well as a scrupulous attention. Wherever there was wine they always tried to formulate the best matching with food, in past times, to the service of noblemen, were hired real and proper experts that were in charge of the "delicate" duty of pleasing and delighting their master's taste by proposing the most suitable and best wines for their meals.

Even in the houses of less wealthy people they tried, more or less, to do the same, however the scarce availability both of money and practical things, could not make the availability of a vast choice of wine to be matched to meals possible, therefore they had to be contented with what their places had to offer, both in the glass and in the plate, while trying, as much as possible, to adapt one to the other in order to have a good match. Today things are greatly changed, the progress of markets and of transportation vehicles allow the purchase and the appreciation of many products, including wines, coming from many places, even far away from the one where they are bought: now it is rather frequent to find an Australian or New Zealander wine in Italy or in France, as a matter of fact. This new opportunity allowed the exploration of new horizons even in the area of enogastronomy because by having a wider possibility in choosing wines, it makes more versatile and more flexible the matching of food and wine.

However the subject of enogastronomical matching is rather vast and complex, many have tried to formulate "scientific" methods in order to create the most satisfactory matching possible and agreeable to anyone, the effort in creating an "universal" method that could be used in any circumstance, with any wine and with any food, does not consider, as a matter of fact, that unpredictable and indisputable element, which is always found is anything where the personal gratification of individuals is part of the "game" and must be satisfied: *subjectivity* and *personal taste*. The famous "rule" that fish must always and anyway be matched to white wine, besides not being absolute, there are reds that go well with dishes made of fish, does not have any practical meaning if we consider the subjectivity of the one that is *actually* going to eat a dish made of fish and decides to match it with wine. There are many people out there who prefer red wine with fish, this is therefore their best matching no matter the "general rule" suggests it is wrong and not proposable. Once again, the ancient saying of Latins "*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum*" (there is not dispute about tastes), is still applicable, particularly and above all on enogastronomical matching. It should be however remembered and considered that the many

technical methods for enogastronomical matching are based on proved chemical facts and *objectively* agreeable according to the common taste, therefore they are to be considered as valid and respectable systems that certainly allow the formulation of a good matching.

Matching Systems

In the course of centuries there were established many schools of thought about the subject of enogastronomical matching. Many of them based their ideas on traditions and social customs of the places where they were at, with no consideration for logical and technical aspects. Essentially can be mentioned five main systems for the matching of food and wine:

- **Subjective**
- **Traditional**
- **Seasonal**
- **Aesthetical/Emotional**
- **Technical/Logical**

Subjective matching does not require particular comments, it simply is what is determined by personal taste and preferences, not always agreed by others, however indisputable according to the personal point of view. Traditional matching is to be considered of relevant importance, first of all in the places where it is from, where, traditionally, they always matched certain wines with specific local dishes, such as in Emilia (Italy) where Lambrusco wine always accompanies "zampone", or the traditional matching between Champagne with caviar or oysters. Traditional enogastronomical matching cannot always be correct according to a technical or logical point of view, as it is in Champagne matched with caviar or oysters; according to a technical point of view they have characteristics that are not matchable, while mutually exalting each other tastes that, together, are not very pleasing, saved for a subjective point of view.

Seasonal matching, which can be comparable in many aspects to the traditional one, is based on the *seasonal* availability of certain foods and certain wines, that are available in a limited period of time, often within few weeks. This is the case of, for example, roast chestnuts, typical food of the autumnal season, matched to Cagnina wine, common in Romagna (Italy), or in Umbria they have roast chestnuts matched with vernaccia, a sweet wine because of the non completed fermentation of must and typical of the region. Same food, same season, different wines. Aesthetical and emotional matching is the one, compared to the others, that never take into account foods to which wines are to be matched, a characteristic that, alone, could not make this specific case as a matching. This is the case when wines are chosen, and most of the time foods as well, just because of the prestige and the condition imposed by the circumstance as well as one's mood, for example choosing expensive and prestigious wines, although not matchable with that food at all, in very formal occasions or when one wants to impress someone else, in case of a romantic or business dinner, or in those cases when one wants to show off his or

her presumed wealth or to explicit a specific social condition. Instead of a matching this could be defined as a behavioral strategy in order to obtain higher prestige and approval from others and from society.

Lastly, logical and technical matching which is uniquely based on chemical considerations and on *objective* foundations about taste and physiological reactions of the taste-olfactory apparatus in consequence of the stimuli from food and wine, a condition that *should* guarantee appreciable results according to the “common taste”.

A Technical and Logical Approach

In a logical and technical matching system, however far from being defined in scientific terms as infallible, first of all, are to be evaluated every single characteristic both of the food and of wine, and therefore formulate the best matching according to the principles that regulate the physiology of taste. The formulation of a correct technical and logical matching requires the knowledge of the characteristics of the food to be matched, not only organoleptic ones, but also cooking and preparation techniques that, as it is commonly known, alter the taste of foods. Even without being enogastronomical experts one can however proceed by means of a *method* in order to formulate a good matching of food and wine. A correct matching is the one where the organoleptic characteristics of food do not prevail over the ones of wine and vice versa, in other words, food and wine must mutually exalt and complete each other.

General principles that are usually applied to food/wine matching are two, precisely concordance and contrast. This means that specific organoleptic sensations of food, in order to be rightly matched to a wine, will be associated to the same organoleptic sensations of the wine, whereas others will be contrasted by specific organoleptic characteristics opposed by wine. An example can be the one of the sweetness of a food which is always associated to wine's sweetness (concordance) rather than contrast, that is to a bitter wine, the result would be unpleasing almost to the totality of the individuals. On the opposite, a food which appears to be “unctuous”, needs an agent that would cleanse the mouth, a job that, according to contrast, can be done, for example, by wine's alcohol.

The principle of concordance is generally the most easy to apply and offers a number of solutions for the majority of foods. One of these is certainly represented by aromas, or better to say, by the aromatic intensity or strength of foods and of wine. Any food emits proper aromas, as well as the ones of the ingredients used for its preparation, such as spices and aromatic herbs. A very aromatic food is matched with a very aromatic wine, a food having delicate aromas is matched to a wine having light aromas. The same applies to sweetness of food: a very sweet food requires a very sweet wine, a slightly sweet food requires a wine whose sweetness is not very high. The same is also true for the “structure” of food: a rich dish, robust and structured, such as, for example, braised meat with very reduced and tasty sauces, requires a wine having a pretty robust body as well as a long persistence, a light and delicate dish, such as a vegetable

soup, requires a light and delicate wine. Likewise, delicate tastes require delicate wines, moderate tasty foods can be matched with wines having an average body, robust and full bodied wines go well with rich and robust foods. Foods having strong tastes are matched to wines having strong and intense flavors, foods having persistent tastes require persistent wines.

The contrast principle is more complex and its application requires a scrupulous evaluation both of the food and of wine. Let's try to understand this principle with a simple example. Let's suppose to squeeze a lemon and to add its juice to a glass of water. Tasting the solution will reveal a rather sour taste. In case some sugar is being added to the solution, acidity does not change, however sweetness makes the solution more tolerable and pleasing. In other words, sugar contrasted lemon's acidity. The same consideration can be done for sour or lightly sour foods, a wine having a certain sweetness or a certain roundness, will tend to contrast the sensation of acidity. The same principle can be applied in case a wine is very acid; a food having some sweetness will probably be its best companion. The same considerations can be applied to salty foods, as it is commonly known, salt neutralizes acid, therefore a salty food can be happily matched to an acid wine. Salt in food, such as in case of hard cheese, reveals and complements wine's sweetness, a good reason for matching sweet wines to salty and tasty cheese, such as, for example, Gorgonzola or Roquefort.

Another example where contrast can be useful is offered by tannins in red wines. According to a chemical point of view, tannins bond to proteins, a phenomenon that can be always observed in one's mouth when a sip of very tannic red wine is being drunk, soon after an evident roughness and astringency can be perceived in the mouth, tongue does not slip with its usual easiness: tannins got bond to mucin, a protein present in saliva. In case a tannic wine is being matched with a food rich in proteins, such as meat or cheese, tannins will bond to the proteins of food and diminishing as a consequence the rough and astringent sensation because of the bond of saliva's mucin with wine's tannins. This property of tannins will be besides useful for all those foods that produce lots of salivation, therefore producing the sensation of “succulence”, just like rare meat, the astringent properties of tannins will stop salivation and therefore the balance in mouth will be reestablished.

Enogastronomical matching is however a subject that leaves excellent opportunities to experimentation and research. By playing with the principles of concordance and contrast can be created special effects that can particularly exalt wines or foods. This kind of approach is usually popular among wine lovers that prefer to organize their meals with the explicit purpose of exalting and magnifying a specific wine instead of a food. The same is true for the opposite thing; it can be used a wine in case specific and determined qualities of a food should be exalted. However there is one thing which is surely true: a mediocre food is not improved by a good wine and a good food does not improve a mediocre wine. An advice that could be given to the ones who want to experiment with the enogastronomical matching is to create wrong matching on purpose, such as a light wine with a robust food, or a very acid wine with an acid food: these are just

a couple of examples that will allow to understand, better than one thousand words, the principles of concordance and contrast we talked about. Likewise, it could be good to match the very same wine to different foods, even very different one from each other, it will be useful to understand the organoleptic characteristics of a wine can change in a relevant way according to the food it was matched to, of course, even a food changes its taste according to the wine it is matched to. Another advice that can be given to anyone who wants to explore the enchanting world of enogastronomical matching is to learn to dare and to experiment: sometimes what can be apparently seen as unacceptable, not proposable and that makes no sense, could instead turn into something very pleasing and rich of surprises for the palate.

NOT JUST WINE

Balsamic Vinegar

The most precious of the Italian condiments is an ancient product rich in aromas and surprising in flavors, few drops of the valuable vinegar are capable of making every dish special

Before starting to talk about balsamic vinegar it is essential to state some fundamental concepts: traditional balsamic vinegar is not vinegar because it is not produced with an alcoholic liquid but it is produced with a sugary liquid, *mosto cotto* (cooked must), whereas balsamic vinegar which is usually found in supermarkets is made of vinegar, of more or less quality, to which is added some caramel.

Traditional balsamic vinegar is produced by using “mosto cotto”, must of Trebbiano grapes, harvested when overripe. During the cooking process, part of sugar may get caramelized although this may happen for just a minimal part of it. The next process, acetification, is done in “acetaie” (literally “vinegar factory”), that are usually placed in garrets and it is made by transferring the vinegar from cask to cask, made of different woods, until the end of the transformation process takes place which usually lasts for about 12/15 years.

Talking about balsamic vinegar it should be said that there are three different appellations: “Balsamic vinegar of Modena”; “Traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena”; “Traditional balsamic vinegar of Reggio Emilia”, as well as a fourth category, “balsamic condiments”.

As far as traditional balsamic vinegars are concerned, these are regulated and safeguarded, balsamic vinegar can be produced with concentrated “mosto cotto” to which caramel may be added. Balsamic condiments are not regulated and therefore are not subject of any law.

During the aging process in cask, sugar is metabolized by yeasts (*saccharomyces*) and by bacteria (*aceto bacteria*), at the end of the process, 100 cubic centimeters (3.38 fl.oz.) of liquid gives 75 grams of product (2.6 oz.), some ethanol that, by reacting with acids, gives esters, responsible for aromas.

Short Essay on History

There is no certainty on how and when balsamic vinegar was made for the first time. Perhaps in a very ancient time someone found out, after a very long time, some forgotten “mosto cotto”, that had a natural acetification process, with its unmistakable sweet-sour taste. The first information about vinegar and “mosto cotto”, seems to be dated back to ancient Egypt, around the third millennium before Christ. Greeks and Romans used it as a condiment and to preserve foods, as well as an ingredient for beverages made of mosto cotto diluted with water, or after it was boiled, it was used as a sweetener as common as honey. In ancient times it was pretty common to mix vinegar and must in order to obtain a sweet-sour taste, those practices are as ancient as more than one thousand years ago. The first documents are dated back to eleventh century where, in a chronicle of monk Donizone, it is mentioned a little cask of the famous “*laudatum acentum*” (lauded vinegar) that Marquise Bonifacio, Lord of Canossa, gave to King Henry III of Franken, it was 1046. It is more likely that around the year 1228 in Estense’s palaces there were casks used to keep balsamic vinegar. In the period of time that goes from centuries twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth, it is certain of the existence of corporations of vinegar makers, whose members had to keep the production and working practices secret. The Reggian Ludovico Ariosto wrote in one of his satires «In my house it is better a turnip than my cooking skills, cleaned and cooked in a spit, which I season with some vinegar and “mosto cotto”».

Some documents dated back to 1598, that is when Dukes of Este moved to Modena, promoting it to the capital city of the dukedom, balsamic vinegar is often cited and it is also mentioned that the court paid a particular attention for this product which was already known and particularly appreciated as to be used as a gift for very important people. It is said that in the table of the Estense family balsamic vinegar was always present. It was so appreciated and they used it quite a lot, they even reserved the left tower of their palace for the production of balsamic vinegar.

In the 1700’s, balsamic vinegar was known all over Europe, this is proved by the request of an English merchant to the duke Francesco III. The usage of balsamic vinegar, before being appreciated for its organoleptic qualities, was used as a medical treatment. Information about this usage can be read on the “*Del governo della peste e delle maniere di guardarsene*” (On the treatment of pestilence and on the ways to prevent it) written by Ludovico Antonio Muratori, a studioso from Modena, who described in its work some remedies based on balsamic vinegar as an antidote against the fearful disease. The appellative “balsamic” appeared for the first time in 1747, precisely in the “Registro delle vendemmie e vendite dei vini per conto della Ducale Cantina Segreta” (Registry of harvesting and selling of wines for the dukedom’s secret cellar). In 1796 in Modena were auctioned the “acetaie” of Duke Ercole III, located in the tower of the duke’s palace. Fortunately not all the “acetaie” were sold and in 1859 king Vittorio Emanuele II and the prime minister Camillo Benso Earl of Cavour visited the acetaie of dukedom. It is interesting to note the the prime minister wanted to choose the best casks in order to be transferred to the castle of Moncalieri, how-

ever the scarce technical knowledge on how an acetaia should be properly run, completely ruined that extraordinary patrimony.

Fate wanted that the tradition of balsamic vinegar, passed from father to son, from the families of Modena and Reggio Emilia, from ancient times to now, allowed the surviving of a tradition which did not have any significant change. With regard of this, it should be mentioned that in 1861, lawyer Francesco Aggazzotti, wrote a letter to his friend Pio Fabriani, where he describes in a very detailed way the procedure for the making of balsamic vinegar. Lawyer Aggazzotti dramatically changed the production technique by adopting as a raw matter *mosto cotto* instead of vinegar made from wine. Since then, this production technique became the tradition for balsamic vinegar and his letter became the "bible" for producers.

Fausto Sestini in 1863 wrote: «in the provinces of Modena and Reggio Emilia it is made since ancient times a particular kind of vinegar to which the physical appearance and the excellence of the aroma gave it the name of balsamic vinegar». In the nineteenth century it was common to enrich the dowry of noblewomen with casks of balsamic vinegar.

The first rules for the production were set by law 162 in 1965, whereas the Ministerial Decree of 1995 regulates the production of balsamic vinegar of Modena. In 1983 was issued a decree to regulate the traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena, whereas in 1993, on April 5th, law 93 regulated and distinguished traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

The disciplinary for the culinary condiment known as "traditional balsamic vinegar of Reggio Emilia" requires that it must be produced by "must cooked in direct fire and produced by the pressing of grapes traditionally cultivated in the province of Reggio Emilia". Grapes used for its production are: Ancelotta, Trebbiano, Occhio di Gatta, Sauvignon, Sgavetta, Berzemino and Lambrusco. For the production of traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena are used: Trebbiano, Lambrusco, Ancelotta, Sauvignon and Sgavetta, cultivated in the province of Modena. It is forbidden the usage of must treated with any additive or substances.

Production

The production processes for traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena and traditional balsamic vinegar of Reggio Emilia are practically the same. The proper quantity of grapes are capable to producing flavors and aromas which are impossible to create with just one type of grape.

Must is obtained by pressing grapes and it is subsequently cooked over a gentle and direct fire, in steel opened cauldrons, for many hours, this operation sterilizes the must from any fermenting process. At the end of the cooking process remains about 45% of the product. The final sugar measure is of about 30-36. Before the aging process begins, it is poured in old wooden vats and it is left in demijohns during wintertime in order to decant. In springtime a first alcoholic fermentation takes place followed by an acetic oxidation, helped by aceto-bacteria. This production phase, because of the effects of evaporation, concentrates sugar, nourishment for yeasts (saccharomyces), which transforms sugar

into alcohol. The alcohol produced this way nourishes the aceto-bacteria, responsible for the transformation of alcohol into acetic acid. After many months the liquid is drawn and used to fill up the casks of the line. The line is a set of casks made up to 10, 12 or even more elements, usually of different type of woods in order to pass from wood to vinegar different aromas. The most typical woods are, in decreasing order, oak, chestnut tree, cherry tree, ash tree, mulberry tree and juniper, the latter being particularly used because of its inimitable aromas. In some cases wood of locust tree is used as well. However new casks are not suited for the production of balsamic vinegar, it must be used at least for one year in order to allow aceto-bacteria to impregnate wood. Opposite to wine which is kept in cellars having a constant temperature and humidity, balsamic vinegar is aged in garrets and attics where the broader thermal excursion can take place. The winter's cool promotes the decanting process whereas the torrid hot in summertime promotes the fermenting and evaporating process. It is of fundamental importance not to completely fill casks, they must be filled for just 3/4 of their volume, because oxygen promotes the aceto-bacteria activity. Every year must be done the operation of reinforcement, which consists in raising up the level of the liquid in the last cask by using the liquid of the preceding one. The operation of pouring off and reinforcements is strictly done in wintertime, that is during the most cold months of the years, in order not to compromise the limpidity of the product. Only after 12/15 years a minimal quantity of product can be drawn, and this is done in order not to compromise the quality of the entire lot.

Safeguarding

In regard to traditional balsamic vinegar of Reggio Emilia, it is safeguarded by a consortium established in 1986, the Consortium of Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Reggio Emilia Producers. In order to safeguard the product, the consortium adopted an exclusive bottle as well as an identification seal that differentiates three different styles "orange seal", "silver seal" and "gold seal" respectively in order of increasing quality. Orange seal indicates a vinegar having light and delicate flavors, suited for carpaccios and salads as well as being suited for seasoning crustaceans, lamb ribs, chicken breasts and rare meat. Silver seal has an intense aroma, somewhat sweet. It is excellent used as it is for mayonnaise sauce and in sauces for fish or boiled meat, risotto and pasta. Gold seal is an extraordinary and complex product, rich in aromas, somewhat sour and sweet, persistent aromas, and can be used with important cheese, fruit salads, strawberries or cherries, panettone, something to enjoy at the end of the meal.

As for traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena, it is usually released after a strict and scrupulous examination of the Consortium of Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena Producers, which directly stick on every bottle the warrant seal with a serial number. It is bottled in the exclusive bottle designed by "Giugiaro Design" and is classified as: "white cap" which is aged for at least 12 years; "gold cap" extra old which is aged for at least 25 years. It is forbidden to mention in the label any reference concerning the year of production or presumed age of the product.

Use of Balsamic Vinegar

Balsamic vinegar is a product which is obtained by a long, wise and patient work. Using it for cooking means using a rare and renowned product, therefore it must be wisely used. It is not possible to determine a standard quantity, because every vinegar is different from any other and personal taste are different from individual to individual. Before making use of it, it is best to taste a small quantity of it in order to test its organoleptic characteristics. Experience teaches that it is best to add it at the end of the preparation of a dish, saved when it is used to season raw vegetables. Even the popular wisdom teaches that a spoon per person it is best. During its life, balsamic vinegar has different aging levels, therefore different aromatic characteristics; after 50 years of age it starts losing fluidity while its viscosity increases, however it gets richer in aromatic substances. Such a particular and very important product must be chosen according to the type of food to be seasoned, it must be used according to its characteristics and according to the food it is going to be matched to, for example a young balsamic vinegar will be matched best with raw vegetables and salads, whereas an aged product will enrich best important dishes such as roasted meat, scallops, appetizers, broiled meat and, *dulcis in fundo* (sweet at the end), strawberries, ice cream and chocolate pies. In dishes that prepared by cooking, it must be added just before the end of cooking, the needed time in order to flavor the dish and in order not to vanish the aroma. In case a warm dish is being served, the balsamic vinegar will be added just before it will be served, experience teaches two ways of seasoning: pour vinegar on the plate before being prepared or, as the plate is prepared, add the precious condiment evenly. It can also be enjoyed at the end of a meal, this time alone, and it is a good digestive. However it must be remembered that balsamic vinegar must be used with moderation in order not to cover other flavors.

There are many popular beliefs about the “medical” and “cosmetic” use of balsamic vinegar. It is said that a spoonful of balsamic vinegar is good for throat ache. A sip of balsamic vinegar is a good remedy for curing drunkenness. Grandmothers used it diluted with water to soften and enlighten hair. Balsamic vinegar was also used as a disinfectant for wounds and for keeping away mosquitoes. To quench thirst a teaspoon of balsamic vinegar in a glass of water. Balsamic vinegar was also considered aphrodisiac as well as a remedy for back ache and rheumatism.

As for the keeping, balsamic vinegar does not require any particular attention. It is enough to keep it in a glass container, closed and not sealed, after having being used. There is only one rule that should be obeyed: it must be kept away from substances that emit strong and particular aromas in order not to compromise its fragrance.

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	➤	Teroldego Rotaliano Granato 1998, Foradori
4	➤	Masseto 1998, Tenuta dell'Ornellaia
5	➤	Château Lynch-Bages Pauillac 2000
6	➤	Château Laroque Saint-Émilion Grand Cru Classé 1998
7	➤	Chardonnay 2000, Planeta
8	➤	Shiraz 2000, Plantaganet
9	➤	Muffato della Sala 1999, Castello della Sala
10	➤	Zinfandel Barrel Select Mendocino County 1999, Fetzer Vineyards
11	➤	Sauvignon Blanc 2000, Cakebread
12	➤	Rioja Reserva "Pagos Viejos" 1997, Bodega Artadi - Cosecheros Alavares
13	☆	Colli Bolognesi Pignoletto Superiore "Prova d'Autore" 2001, Bonfiglio
14	➤	Trentino Bianco Villa Margon 2000, Fratelli Lunelli
15	➤	Château Talbot Saint-Julien 1998

Legend: ➤ up ➤ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry

Classified

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