

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

International Edition

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Wine: A Very Difficult Restart

The Covid-19 pandemic – the acute respiratory disease caused by the now sadly known coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 – is causing profound and serious effects in every social activity as well as in economic and productive ones. It is known, in fact, and here I specifically refer to what is happening in Italy, most of the production activities are being locked down for two months now, with consequences that – unfortunately – are both tangible and devastating. This decision, clearly imposed by the social and health conditions of these times, has had a huge impact on almost all the productive and economic sectors of the country, of course agro-food and wine business have not been spared from it. Even wine, therefore, has undergone a substantial and decidedly worrying decay, on which it is not possible – at this moment – to make any estimate or forecast for the future. However, everyone agrees the impact caused by this pandemic is frighteningly huge with considerable economic and entrepreneurial loss.

The current situation, with regard to the viticultural and wine sectors, is extremely critical, so much so that many Italian wineries will be forced to quit their business, by the end of 2020, due to economic difficulties. This is mainly due to the lost profits of these months and, consequently, to the lack of liquidity such as to guarantee the continuation of the business. To this, not least, must be added the high quantity of unsold bottles and which, unfortunately, are *locked* inside the wineries, therefore contributing to increase the passivity. At the current condition – assuming it will not be further compromised – it is expected that one winery out of four will not be in the condition to resume operations because of the lack of liquidity. A decidedly devastating forecast and that would see – literally – the decimation of the Italian wine scene with very heavy consequences for the economy of the whole sector.

It is not difficult to predict, in fact, in case this unfortunate scenario should happen, wineries forced to quit their business will find themselves in an extremely unfavorable economic situation. Firstly, the problem of unsold bottles that will be difficult to sell in the future, especially wines that are destined to the *immediate consumption*. Too easy to predict, for example,

wines destined for immediate consumption will simply be *rejected* from the market in favor of those of the new vintage. These wines will remain “ simply “unsold” and, very likely, with a single possible destiny capable of guaranteeing a very small profit: distillation, a practice which is however regulated by specific laws and with limits on the maximum quantities intended for this purpose. Wineries that will decide to not resume the business will also find themselves in a position to recover the lost profits – not least, to cover any pending debts – and, of course, they will do so by selling facilities and equipment, vineyards included.

Too easy to think it will not be a profitable sale, indeed it will be a *below-cost sale* aimed at making a profit in the short term. The situation for wineries is objectively very difficult and complex. With the locking down of catering and beverage business – in particular, restaurants – in addition to the consequent blocking of exports, wine sales have been practically canceled for more than two months now. This condition constitutes an enormous difficulty for any commercial activity, in particular for the fact costs, even if reduced to the bare minimum, still have an impact on the company budget. Of course, most of the country’s production activities are in the very same conditions, including those which represent the main market of wineries: restaurants. In fact, it is believed, also in this sector, there will be business closing down due to lack of liquidity and lost profits.

However, the recovery of the wine economy does not seem easy because – it is so evident – the condition will not be magically restored, as if nothing has ever happened, when restaurants will finally reopen. In fact, it seems unlikely the recovery of productive and social activities could immediately return to the “normality” of a few months ago because – too easy to predict – preventive measures will be implemented and with severe limitations. Of course will be taken measures to ensure the new health safety conditions – with spacing of tables and prevention devices – with a consequent reduction in customers compared to the period preceding the pandemic. Of course, this is better than nothing and somehow we must restart busi-

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ness, obviously with caution, even if it will take a long time before recovering the losses. In all likelihood this will not be enough to guarantee an effective recovery for wineries which, not least, in few months will also be involved with 2020 harvesting.

Yes, harvesting. That is to start producing the new wine, therefore incurring in more costs, with the warehouses probably full of unsold bottles. Many hypotheses have been made about the use of unsold wine and the most recurring one – and perhaps even the most obvious – is distillation and which needs, in any case, specific legislative authorizations. Furthermore, many speculate the radical change in the wine trade and are ready to bet the “salvation” is represented by *on-line* sale, that is, through e-commerce websites. This solution, in truth, is already adopted by many wineries and which, in this period, is used – directly or indirectly – to ensure a minimum profit. Sector estimates indicate, in fact, significant increases in on-line wine sales, also a sign that Italians, despite the forced isolation, fortunately do not give up a good glass of wine. In any case, it is difficult to make predictions both on the immediate and on the future, even the near one, as the situation imposed by this pandemic allows only, so to speak, a *visual navigation*. On the other hand, what is very clear is that it has caused significant damage both socially and economically. It will take a lot of determination to get out of this, with the will and strength to recover the loss and continue to go ahead. The availability of liquidity will also be necessary to support the restart, certainly by adopting new business and marketing ways and strategies: it will not be easy at all. Provided you have, in some way, liquidity. This too will not be easy at all.

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WINE TASTING

Contrasts of Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer and Salento Rosato

Rosé wines are a great heritage of enology, not only of the Italian one. Capable of surprising with their aromas and crispness, they represent a sensorial world on their own

Rosé wines have always been considered in a very particular wine category. It must be said that, in recent years, the reputation and interest in rosé wines has finally changed, gradually gaining greater market and consumption consensus. Perhaps due to the fact they are – so to speak – halfway between whites and reds, rosé wines have always been considered *lesser children of Bacchus*. The reasons which led to this lack of consideration are many, two in particular. In past times, producers, with very few exceptions, destined for this type of wine both grapes of lesser value and the use, from a qualitative point of view, of non always impeccable wine making techniques. Secondly, and this evidently applies to every wine – no type or style excluded – but in particular for these wines: making a high quality rosé wine is decidedly difficult. Much more than a white, even more than a red wine.

Fortunately, in recent decades things have changed – quite a lot – and, finally, producers are dedicating the same efforts and commitment they usually reserve to whites and reds. Rosé wines have grown in terms of quality and that group of *very few exceptions* of the past has been joined today by many other wines of high enological value. This is an enormous advantage of which the wine world should benefit from, as there are many Italian production disciplinary – from north to south, crossing the whole country – which provide for rosé wines. The wines we will examine in the tasting by contrast of this month belong to two areas having a long tradition in the production of this style of wine. Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer and Salento Rosato are two extraordinary representatives of this category of wines, certainly among the most famous examples in Italy, although not the only ones. Different characters and grapes leading to the creation of two wines that, in common, have the pink color only.

Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer

Lagrein is the most famous and significant autochthonous red berried variety of South Tyrol. Capable of producing wines of extraordinary character, it is traditionally vinified in the styles *dunkel* – that is, “dark” by using the typical red wine making technique – and *kretzer*, vinified in “rosé”. Lagrein is inextricably linked to Gries – one of the five districts of Bozen – and, in particular, to the Benedictine abbey of Muri-Gries, for centuries involved to the production of wine with this grape. The origin of Lagrein is not entirely clear and in the past it was assumed – due to the assonance of its name – it is variety from Vallagarina, in Trentino. Another recurring hy-

pothesis supports the origin of Lagrein from the ancient city of Lagaria of Magna Grecia, in Lucania, today's Basilicata, and its famous wine *Lagaritanos*. In both cases, the assumptions are mainly based on the assonance of the name rather than on reliable evidence.

Genetic research conducted on Lagrein however deny the Lucanian origin of this grape. According to DNA analysis, it was discovered this grape is actually a spontaneous cross between Teroldego and an unidentified grape variety, however with characteristics similar to Schiava Gentile. In both cases, they are varieties of these territories, therefore confirming the indigenous origin of Lagerin and, furthermore, confirms the hypothesis that the name derives from the Germanization of *Lagarina*, therefore the homonymous valley. Lagrein *Kretzer* – that is the rosé style – takes its name from the *kroizere*, the traditional wicker trellis used to separate the skins from the must during fermentation. This operation therefore allows to obtain a wine with a rosé color, light and crisp, quite different, and not only for the dark and intense color, from the *dunkel* style and with a remarkable structure. With the aim of enhancing and preserving the crisp and light character, in addition to the pleasant expression of red fruits, Lagrein *Kretzer* is generally vinified in inert containers, such as steel tanks.

Salento Rosato

Salento, an enchanting territory in the most extreme part of Apulia, is identified – more than any other part of Italy – with the production of rosé wines. Here, of course, are also produced white and red wines, however the link between Salento and rosé wines is indissoluble and very strong. This large territory of Apulia is classified by the Italian quality system as *Indicazione Geografica Tipica* (Typical Geographical Indication, IGT) and inside are also found many *Denominazione d'Origine Controllata* areas (Denomination of Controlled Origin, DOC). Salento is also home to one of the most interesting red berried varieties of Apulia and, not least, of Italy: Negroamaro. This interesting red grape, in addition to be widely used in many red wines from Apulia, is the dominant and main variety of Salento rosé wines, often used alone, not least, blended to other varieties, including the so-called *international* grapes, such as Cabernet Sauvignon.

The most frequent companion of Negroamaro is undeniably Malvasia Nera, a blend we find in both red and rosé wines of Salento. Negroamaro, capable of producing robust and structured wines, with perceptible astringency conferred by tannins, in fact benefits from the elegant qualities of Malvasia Nera which is capable of mitigating its *roughness* and, at the same time, making the olfactory profile more elegant. The finesse of Malvasia Nera is more appreciable in rosé wines, accentuating both the crispness and the aromatic exuberance of flowers and red-fleshed fruits. However, the character of Negroamaro remains evident, giving a well-perceptible structure which, together with the alcohol content given by the richness of grape sugars, make Salento rosé wines among the most robust ones of the Italian wine scene. Vinification is in most cases carried out in inert containers – steel and cement tanks – and the use of the cask is rarely used, a practice giving a more accentuated roundness and structure.

The Tasting

We are now going to choose the two bottles that we will examine in the tasting by contrast of this month. We will pay attention to the composition of the wines, as – in both cases – the respective production disciplinary allow the use of more than one grape. This characteristic is common to almost all the Italian production disciplinary, even those having in the label a single name of variety, which must be present for a minimum of 85%. This consideration is particularly important for the choice of Alto Adige Lagrein *Kretzer*: we will therefore make sure the wine is produced exclusively with this variety. As for the choice of Salento Rosato, we will make sure it is mainly made up of Negroamaro and the remaining part of Malvasia Nera. In both cases, the vinification is carried out in inert containers – preferably in steel tanks – and belonging to the most recent vintage. The wines are served at a temperature of 12 °C (54 °F) and poured in tasting glasses.

Let's pour the two wines into their respective glasses and start our tasting by contrast. The first wine we examine is Alto Adige Lagrein *Kretzer*. Tilt the glass over a white surface – a napkin or a sheet of paper is enough – and look at the base of the wine. We can see a light cherry pink color and a high transparency: the object placed in contrast between the glass and the white surface is clearly visible. The nuance of the wine – observed at the edge, towards the opening of the glass – confirms the basic color, that is cherry pink. Let's move on to the observation of the color and transparency of Salento Rosato, taking into consideration the appearance of the wine at the base of the glass. The color of the Apulian wine is more intense than the South Tyrolean wine: we notice in fact an intense and brilliant hue of deep cherry pink, with evident hints of ruby red. The transparency is high however lower than that of Alto Adige Lagrein *Kretzer*. The nuance of Salento Rosato – observed at the edge of the glass – shows a bright cherry pink hue tending to salmon pink.

The olfactory profiles of rosé wines, also because of the wine making techniques generally used for their production and which prefer the use of inert containers, are characterized by the fresh aromas of red pulp fruits and flowers. This characteristic is clearly perceptible both in Alto Adige Lagrein



The color of Salento Rosato

Kretzer and in Salento Rosato. The sensations recalling fruit are usually reminiscent of those having a red pulp, however, in many cases, it is possible to perceive aromas of apple and peach as well as certain types of tropical fruits. Among the sensations reminiscent of flowers, the most frequent ones are rose and cyclamen, in many cases, moreover, the pleasant aroma of violet is also perceived. The olfactory sensations reminiscent of dark pulp fruits – such as black cherry, blackberry, blueberry and plum – are less frequent but not entirely unrelated to this type of wine. Furthermore, in rosé wines, depending on the grapes and the territory of origin, it is possible to perceive aromas reminiscent of aromatic herbs as well.

Let's resume the tasting by contrast of this month by proceeding with the evaluation of the olfactory profiles of Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer and Salento Rosato. The first wine we are going to evaluate, just like in the previous phase, is Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer. By keeping the glass in vertical position and, without swirling, we do the first smell in order to evaluate the opening of the wine, that is the first identifying aromas, often defined as *primary nose*. The South Tyrolean wine is characterized by intense and pleasing aromas of cherry, raspberry and strawberry, followed by the pleasing aroma of cyclamen. Let's proceed with the swirling of the glass – operation which favors the development of the remaining aromas – and do the second smell. The olfactory profile of Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer is completed with plum, blueberry, blackberry and hints of peach. Let's now pass to the evaluation of Salento Rosato, starting from the analysis of the opening of the wine. From the glass we perceive intense and clean aromas of black cherry, raspberry and plum, to which follow a pleasing aroma of rose. After having swirled the glass, the profile of the wine is completed with peach, blueberry, cyclamen, blackberry and strawberry.

Let's move on to the gustatory evaluation of the two wines. The first wine we evaluate, just like in the previous phases, is Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer. We take a sip of the South Tyrolean wine and evaluate the attack, that is, the initial gustatory sensations that are perceived in the mouth. Lagrein Kretzer is characterized by a crisp attack and good acidity, a moderate body – definitely distant from the *dunkel* style – as well as a hint of astringency, however pleasing. The balance is obtained by the effect of alcohol, generally of moderate volume, and the flavors of cherry, raspberry and strawberry are perceived in the mouth. Let's now take a sip of Salento Rosato and evaluate its attack. Also in this case it is perceived the pleasing crispness given by acidity and, compared to Lagrein Kretzer, the wine has a decidedly rounder character and the effect of alcohol is more intense, enough to give a proper balance. In the mouth we also perceive the flavors of black cherry, raspberry, plum and strawberry.

The last phase of the tasting is about the evaluation of the final sensations the wines leave in the mouth, paying attention – in particular – to the taste-olfactory persistence. The finish of Alto Adige Lagrein Kretzer is persistent in which we can continue to perceive, intense and clean, the flavors of cherry, raspberry and strawberry, as well as the pleasing crispness which characterizes this wine. The finish of Salento Rosato is equally persistent and in the mouth, compared to Lagrein Kretzer, we can perceive the more intense sensation of roundness and of alcohol. Also in this wine we can perceive the pleasing sensation

of acidity in addition to the flavors of black cherry, raspberry, plum and strawberry. Let's now do a final evaluation of the wines by placing the two glasses side by side. The difference in color is evident and, not least, in the aromas. Furthermore, the differences in structure, acidity and softness are easily identifiable.

Wines of the Month

Score legend

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

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



Campi Flegrei Falanghina Vigna del Pino 2017 Agnanum (Campania, Italy)

🌟 Falanghina

Price: € 30.50

Score ◇◇◇◇

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

👂 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of plum, apple and citrus fruits followed by aromas of pear, medlar, hawthorn, broom, chamomile, acacia honey and mineral.

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

🍷 Persistent finish with flavors of apple, plum and medlar.

📅 6 months in steel tanks, 10 months in cask.

🍴 Pasta with fish, Sauteed white meat, Broiled crustaceans, Mushroom soups



**Campi Flegrei Piediroso Vigna delle Volpi 2016
Agnanum (Campania, Italy)**

Piediroso

Price: € 30.50

Score ☆

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

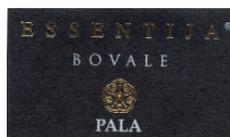
Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of black cherry, plum and raspberry followed by aromas of blueberry, strawberry, cyclamen, dried violet, chocolate, tobacco, black pepper, walnut, thyme, vanilla and menthol.

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

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

12 months in cask.

Stuffed pasta with mushrooms, Roasted meat, Stewed meat with mushrooms



**Essentija 2015
Pala (Sardinia, Italy)**

Bovale

Price: € 20.00

Score ☆

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

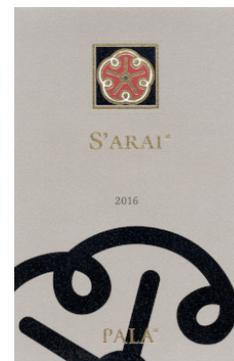
Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of plum, black cherry and blackberry followed by aromas of dried violet, blueberry, raspberry, tobacco, cocoa, leather, licorice, vanilla and menthol.

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

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

4 months in cement tanks, 3 months in barrique, 2 months in steel tanks.

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



**S'Arai 2016
Pala (Sardinia, Italy)**

Cannonau (40%), Carignano (30%), Bovale (30%)

Price: € 40.00

Score ☆

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

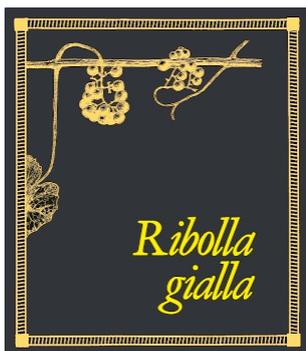
Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of plum, blackberry and black cherry followed by aromas of dried violet, blueberry, tobacco, cocoa, leather, mace, licorice, vanilla and eucalyptus.

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

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

10 months in barrique, 4 months in bottle.

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



Ribolla Gialla Brut Millesimato 2015
Collavini (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy)

 Ribolla Gialla

Price: € 36.00

Score 

 Intense straw yellow and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage.

 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of green apple, hawthorn and bread crust followed by aromas of pear, citrus fruits, peach, kiwi, plum, broom and mineral.

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

 Persistent finish with flavors of green apple, pear and peach.

 Part of the base wine is fermented in steel tanks and part in barrique. Referred in closed tank on its lees for at least 30 months. 12 months in bottle.

 *Fish appetizers, Pasta with fish and crustaceans, Stewed fish, Broiled crustaceans*



Colli Orientali del Friuli Pignolo 2011
Collavini (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy)

 Pignolo

Price: € 55.00

Score 

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

 Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of plum, blackberry and black cherry followed by aromas of dried violet, blueberry, black currant, tobacco, leather, cocoa, mace, licorice, vanilla and eucalyptus.

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

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

 At least 5 years in barrique, at least 2 years in bottle.

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



Chianti Classico Riserva Famiglia Zingarelli 2016
Rocca delle Macie (Tuscany, Italy)

 Sangiovese (90%), Cabernet Sauvignon (5%), Merlot (5%)

Price: € 22.00

Score 

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

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

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

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

 2 years in cask, at least 3 months in bottle.

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



Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Riserva di Fizzano 2015

Rocca delle Macie (Tuscany, Italy)

Sangiovese (93%), Colorino (7%)

Price: € 35.00

Score

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

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

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

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

24 months in cask and barrique, 12 months in bottle.

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



Collio Malvasia 2017
Schiopetto (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy)

Malvasia Istriana

Price: € 19.50

Score

Pale straw yellow and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent.

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

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

Persistent finish with flavors of apple, peach and pineapple.

8 months in steel tanks, at least 5 months in bottle.

Fish appetizers, Pasta with fish and crustaceans, Sauteed fish



Collio Friulano 2017
Schiopetto (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy)

Friulano

Price: € 19.50

Score

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

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

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

Persistent finish with flavors of apple, plum and almond.

8 months in steel tanks, 5 months in bottle.

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

EVENTS

News

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

NOT JUST WINE

Aquavitae

Review of Grappa, Distillates and Brandy



Wint & Lila Gin

Bodegas Loa Casalbor (Andalusia, Spain)

 Distillate of grain alcohol with added essences

Price: € 29.50 - 70cl

Score 

 Very pale straw yellow, limpid and transparent.

 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined with aromas of juniper, mint, lemon, angelica, lime, orange and hints of coriander, almost imperceptible alcohol pungency.

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

 Persistent finish with flavors of juniper, lemon, mint and orange.

 Distilled in a bain-marie alembic.

Wine Guide Parade

February 2020

The best 15 wines reviewed in our Guide and voted by Di-WineTaste readers

Rank	Wine, Producer	Votes
1	Alto Adige Terlano Chardonnay Kreuth 2018, Cantina Terlano	10134
2	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Firmus 2015, Spada	9578
3	Valpolicella Classico 2018, Spada	9218
4	Sicilia Lucido Donna Angelica 2017, Assuli	9016
5	Alto Adige Merlot Riserva Siebeneich 2017, Cantina Terlano	8979
6	Lugana San Vigilio 2018, Selva Capuzza	8213
7	Riviera del Garda Classico Rosso Dunant 2016, Selva Capuzza	8171
8	Alto Adige Terlano Pinot Bianco Riserva Vorberg 2017, Cantina Terlano	8168
9	Lugana Selva 2018, Selva Capuzza	8145
10	El Cencio 2016, Spada	8078
11	Friuli Isonzo Sauvignon 2018, Luisa	7989
12	Alto Adige Pinot Nero Riserva Monticol 2017, Cantina Terlano	7924
13	Lessini Durello Riserva Dosaggio Zero Cuvée Augusto 2013, Corte Giacobbe	7872
14	San Martino della Battaglia Campo del Soglio 2018, Selva Capuzza	7851
15	Alto Adige Lagrein Riserva Gries 2017, Cantina Terlano	7797