

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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Times of Crisis? Let's Have Less Wine

I frequently have the chance to talk to wine producers and, inevitably, the subject of sales is one of those that, in recent times, is getting particular attention and it is cause of preoccupation. For those making wine, this is an obvious and understandable concern. I must say, for the sake of truth, in the last months many producers I talk with, are less and less catastrophic than in the past years, they tell about very slight signs of reprise. A small sun ray, after having undergone the hard consequences of a storm and frequent thunderstorms, it is of course something giving a sort of optimism, although cautious and minimal. The times having characterized the past years, and - this cannot deny - keep on influencing the economy of the present, have strongly affected profits of wineries, therefore - although we are seeing this humble sun ray - being cautious is a wise defense.

According to a recent research done by Coldiretti (an Italian association of farmers), in recent years - specifically, from 2008 to 2014 - Italy has been recorded a particularly negative period for wine consumption. This is not breaking news: the fact wine economy was not in good health in recent years, it is something well known and absolutely evident. Coldiretti research is however important because gives a measure of these uncertain times, of how much Italian wine has lost in the past years. I do suspect it was not just because of the economic crisis characterizing these years, they however played a fundamental role. After all, nowadays wine is considered to be an elitist product, therefore it does not represent a primary need. In case someone has to make a choice, in times of a lesser availability of money, it is normal we give up - although being sorry for that - what we do not consider to be a fundamental need.

The research of Coldiretti points out that, in these years of crisis, about 1.7 millions of Italians gave up the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Crisis has of course played a fundamental role in this, however I believe it was also because of the laws introduced in Italy about the blood alcohol content related to subjects driving a vehicle. The research, in particular, revealed

that in Tuscany the consumption of wine went down of 11.8%, therefore recording a lowering of 13% in regular consumers of the beverage of Bacchus. Tuscany, one of the most important wine regions of Italy, records an incredible increase of 32% in the daily consumption of beer. A result confirming, as a matter of fact, the special moment the beverage of Ceres is having in Italy, also thanks to the remarkable results achieved by the many craft breweries in this country.

In case the consumption of wine can be a reason of preoccupation, the research of Coldiretti unfortunately gives us other reasons for being really concerned. The 14.5% of Italian young people, from 18 to 24, is addicted to the deplorable activity called *binge drinking*, done by abusing the consumption of aperitifs, liquors and spirits. In case it is needed to clarify what *binge drinking* is, it consists in the consumption of alcoholic beverages in order to get drunk and lose control. A behavior being the antithesis of intelligence, something to be concerned of - very concerned - and should make us all think, in particular, about the social condition of certain wicked youngsters. In this specific case, we can be moderately happy to know - at least in this case - wine is not responsible of this deplorable and unfortunate behavior.

During the period 2009-2014, according to the research of Coldiretti, in Italy has been recorded a lowering of wine consumption of 2.9%, the consumption of spirits and liquors diminished of 1.3%, whereas beer went up of 0.1%. The daily consumption of wine in the table of Italians has gone down as well: from the average five glasses we have passed to four. A trend confirmed by the lowering of consumption and purchase of wine in families, recording - all over Italy - a lowering of 19% in regard to 2008. The only figure going up, like already said, is the consumption - although we should talk about abuse - of spirits in youngsters, in particular during weekend. Moreover, it is also recorded a concentration of consumption of wine and alcoholic beverages in between meals. It seems Italians are abandoning the traditional habit of associating wine to food, a central element of Italian cooking and meals.

In Italy it is therefore spreading the habit of casual drinking, typical in informal and frugal social moments, even worse and

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preoccupying, the detestable and certainly idiot habit of *binge drinking* getting more and more common in youngsters. We should ask ourselves the reason why such habits are becoming more and more common. The media are offering a *rebel and selfish* model of behavior - let me add *evidently idiot and dull* - and this certainly is one the causes for this *insignificant social model*. The idea of being strong and believing everything is possible, is certainly denied by such behaviors: it simply is the opposite, however effective in giving the illusion you can do everything whereas you are just doing nothing. If the going down of consumptions corresponds to these *new fads*, I guess the times we believed to be the worse, simply were the best. If it is true modern society is the consequence of what has been handed down by past generations, we should ask ourselves - and quite concerned - what kind of education we taught to youngsters and what kind of heritage we are going to give them.

Antonello Biancalana



WINE TASTING

Contrasts of Franciacorta and Prosecco di Valdobbiadene

The two famous Italian sparkling wines compared one to each other in our glasses: two different production techniques going beyond simple bubbles

Franciacorta and Prosecco di Valdobbiadene certainly are the most famous Italian sparkling wines in the world. Representatives of Italian bubbles - not the only ones, of course - they express different productive methods and styles: the former is the result of classic method, the latter of the refermentation in closed tank. Two different methods producing results quite distant one from each other, respectively capable of enhancing particular wine making characteristics and styles. We cannot in fact talk - and it would not make much sense - which one is the best of the two, as each of them has its own characteristics capable of enhancing specific wine making techniques. Likewise, both classic method and the refermentation in closed tank give appreciable results with specific grapes only, not usable, in qualitative terms, with both methods.

The refermentation in closed tank enhances the aromatic characteristics of grapes, whereas the classic method is best suited for the production of sparkling wines having a good body and sensorial complexity. For this reason, the grapes generally used for the refermentation in closed tank are characterized by a strong or however remarkable aromatic profile. It is not by chance with this method are produced the famous Asti - using Muscat Blanc grape - and Prosecco di Valdobbiadene, made with the grape having the same name, to which is today preferred the old name "Glera". The classic method is mainly used with grapes capable of making wines with a good body and non particularly aromatic, including Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc. Production times are quite different in both cases: few months for the refermentation in closed tank, at least one year for classic method, a period which is however considered - in this case - very short.

Two different methods, perfectly suited for a tasting by contrast. Before starting the evaluation of wines, let's understand - in general terms - the productive characteristics of the two methods. The refermentation in closed tank is widely used for the production of countless sparkling wines, in which are mainly enhanced the young and fresh aromatic profile of grapes and wines. The method was invented and patented by Federico Martinotti in 1895, at that time headmaster of Experimental Wine Making School of Asti. The method was then revised in 1910 by French Eugène Charmat and, after his improvement, became common and credited to him. This technique has then been revised and improved in 1970 by Italian Nereo Cavazzani, by introducing agitators in order to obtain a deeper complexity and allowing longer production times. The method is today known as "Martinotti-Charmat", as well as "Italian method", "Martinotti method" and, finally, "Charmat method".

The production of a sparkling wine by using this method generally provides for the use of a base wine and then put in a closed tank, therefore an air tight container. It is also added a

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The perlage of a sparkling wine produced with the method of refermentation in a closed tank

mixture of yeast, an operation favoring the beginning of a second fermentation of wine. Because of the tank's air tightness, carbon dioxide is trapped inside the container and therefore gets solubilized in wine and giving origin to the characteristic effervescence. The fermentation generally ends in twenty days, whereas the whole process has a variable duration according to the type of wine to be produced. "Short Charmat" has a duration of three months, whereas by doubling this time - six months - the method is called "long Charmat", used for the production of wine having a deeper complexity. The method invented by Cavazzeni provides for longer times which can also be of 12 months, therefore increasing both the structure of wine and the organoleptic complexity.

The production of a sparkling wine using the classic method is older and provides for the refermentation of a base wine inside a bottle. The method became famous in the world thanks to Champagne and it is in France known as *méthode champenoise*, whereas in Italy it is called "traditional method" or "Benedictine method". To the base wine is added a mixture of selected yeast and then put inside a bottle capable of standing high pressure. The characteristic of the classic method consists in a long period of refermentation and aging in the bottle and this is what gives the wine a deeper complexity. This period can also last many years, however it is rare to be shorter than twelve months. Yeast, at the end of fermentation, undergoes a process of decomposition and release to the wine its own sensorial characteristics, therefore increasing body.

The bottle is therefore opened - an operation called *degorging* - it is removed the sediment produced by the yeast, for the style where this practice is needed, it is added the so called *liqueur d'expédition*, therefore capped with the classic mushroom shaped cork. A fundamental role in the definition of a classic method's character is played by the *liqueur d'expédition*, defining, among the other things, sweetness of

wine. Produced with secret recipes and characterizing each producer, it is generally made of wine and sugar - sometimes grape brandy as well - and frequently wines aged in cask or barrique. The adding of this mixture is called *dosage* and its use is not provided for *pas dosé* or *nature* styles, as these wines are absolutely dry and, like to say, *non corrected*. The adding of *liqueur d'expédition* allows in fact producers to correct some sensorial characteristics of a wine: quality *pas dosé* classic method sparkling wines require - as a matter of fact - impeccable production techniques.

In case you need to know more about the respective production techniques, we invite our readers to read our past reports dedicated to these subjects. Our tasting by contrast will examine a "non vintage" Franciacorta Brut and produced with the typical three grapes allowed by the disciplinary: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc. On this regard, it should be noticed the production disciplinary of Franciacorta provides for a minimum aging on lees for at least 18 months, it is however not uncommon to have longer times. In choosing a Prosecco di Valdobbiadene we will pick one made with 100% Glera grape, while noticing in the production of this wine can also be used other varieties, including Verdiso and Perera. We will choose an Extra Dry style, the most common sweetness style for this wine. The sensorial tasting will be done in two distinct glasses and the wines served at a temperature of 10 °C (50 °F), in order to enhance - as much as possible - the respective olfactory profiles while ensuring a good development of effervescence.

Let's pour the two wines in their glasses and let's start our comparative tasting by proceeding with the evaluation of appearance. One of the specific characteristics of this type of wines is represented by effervescence, in particular the development of bubbles. The first contrast we will notice from the observation of the two glasses is in fact relative to bubble size and their development. Sparkling wines produced with the method of refermentation in closed tank show, in general terms, bigger bubbles than those produced with the classic method. We will also notice differences on the development of effervescence: neat and linear in Franciacorta, quicker and "frenzy" in Prosecco. Because of production times, definitely longer in Franciacorta, the color of Prosecco shows nuances of greenish yellow, a quality hardly seen in Franciacorta.

Contrasts are evidently detected to the nose as well. In general terms, aromatic or semi-aromatic varieties are well suited to the refermentation in closed tank, therefore Prosecco is certainly suited to this type of technique. Grapes with a lower aromatic strength - however capable of making wines with a good body - are best suited to the refermentation in bottle. It should be said also the refermentation in a closed tank can be used for the making of wines aged for a long time, a characteristic giving a fuller structure and olfactory complexity. Sensorial complexity is however a characteristic of classic method - provided it is allowed a proper aging in bottle prior to degorging - in which the decomposition of yeast plays a fundamental role. This productive peculiarity makes classic method not very suited to aromatic varieties because their characteristic aromas would be lost or substantially changed.

Let's start the evaluation of aromas in Prosecco di Valdobbiadene. By keeping the glass in vertical position and without swirling, let's proceed with the analysis of opening aromas. The olfactory profile of this wine is mainly oriented to sen-

sations of fruit and flowers, in particular pear, apple, wistaria and broom. The opening of Franciacorta expresses different aromas, more complex than Prosecco. From the glass will be perceived sensations of apple, bread crust, yeast and banana, sometimes hazelnut. Let's proceed with the swirling of the glasses in order to favor the development of the remaining olfactory characteristics. Prosecco proceeds its olfactory sequence with sensations recalling fruits and flowers, in particular pineapple, hawthorn and plum, including hints of citrus fruits and tropical fruits. The development of Franciacorta proceeds with complex sensations as well as fruits, such as plum, pear, butter, praline, grapefruit, croissant and citrus fruit peel.

Contrasts continues, inevitably, to the gustatory analysis as well. Let's taste Prosecco di Valdobbiadene: in the mouth is confirmed the profile of fruits already perceived to the nose - apple, pear and peach - with an effervescent attack followed by a moderate sweetness and live crispness. The structure is of moderate body and, sometimes, even light body. Let's now evaluate Franciacorta: the attack is effervescent and crisp, with an impact of carbon dioxide less aggressive than the previous wine. The taste is dry with a slight hint of sweetness, however balanced by acidity. The structure, compared to Prosecco, has an evident fuller body. Moreover, it will be perceived a rounder sensation: not only the sign of a longer aging, but also the contribution of yeast and the typical varieties used for the production of this wine.

The final phase of the tasting, in which are being evaluated the sensations produced in the mouth by the wines after having swallowed them, continues to reveal the contrasts between Franciacorta and Prosecco di Valdobbiadene. Both wines - in general terms - are characterized by an evident long persistence, therefore confirming the quality for which they are known. The finish of Prosecco di Valdobbiadene gives the mouth a lighter sensation than Franciacorta, as well as a hint of sweetness, totally absent in the famous classic method from Lombardy. Prosecco di Valdobbiadene is characterized by flavors of fruits, the same ones perceived to the nose, whereas Franciacorta gives a more complex and rounder profile. Two totally different ways of making sparkling wines, two ways of interpreting bubbles, sometimes opposite, both in productive terms and for the different organoleptic characteristics.

❖ ❖ ❖

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



Asolo Prosecco Superiore Brut 2013 Giusti Dal Col (Veneto, Italy)

🍷 Glera

Price: € 10.50

Score ❖❖❖ ★

- 👁️ Brilliant greenish yellow and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage.
- 👂 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of apple, pear and wistaria followed by aromas of peach, hawthorn, pineapple, citrus fruits and broom.
- 👄 Effervescent and crisp attack, however balanced by alcohol, light body, intense flavors, agreeable.
- 🍷 Persistent finish with flavors of apple, pear and peach.
- 🍷 Fermented in closed tank.
- 🍴 *Aperitifs, Dairy products, Risotto with crustaceans and vegetables, Eggs*



Umberto I 2008
Giusti Dal Col (Veneto, Italy)

Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon

Price: € 42.00

Score ☆

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

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

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

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

30 months in barrique.

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

Intense, clean and pleasing, starts with hints of plum, black cherry and blackberry followed by aromas of violet, blueberry and geranium.

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

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

6 months in steel tanks, 6 months in bottle.

Stuffed pasta, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed meat with mushrooms



Offida Passerina La Fandella 2013
Cardocchia (Marches, Italy)

Passerina

Price: € 9.00

Score ☆

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

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

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

Persistent finish with flavors of apple, pineapple and peach.

Aged in steel tanks.

Pasta with fish and mushrooms, Stewed fish, Mushroom soups



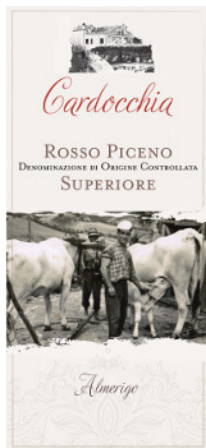
Enò Rosso 2013
Giuseppe Casano (Sicily, Italy)

Nero d'Avola

Price: € 10.00

Score ☆

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



Rosso Piceno Superiore Almerigo 2012
Cardocchia (Marches, Italy)

Montepulciano (65%), Sangiovese (25%), Cabernet Sauvignon (10%)

Price: € 11.00

Score

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

Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of plum, black cherry and black currant followed by aromas of dried violet, blueberry, vanilla, tobacco, chocolate 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.

14 months in cask, 6 months in bottle.

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



Monteregio di Massa Marittima Rosso Barbaspinosa
2012
Moris Farms (Tuscany, Italy)

Sangiovese (90%), Cabernet Sauvignon (10%)

Price: € 12.90

Score

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

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

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

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

12 months in barrique.

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



Avvoltoire 2011
Moris Farms (Tuscany, Italy)

Sangiovese (75%), Cabernet Sauvignon (20%), Syrah (5%)

Price: € 33.00

Score

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

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

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

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

12 months in barrique, 6 months in bottle.

Game, Roasted meat, Braised and stewed meat, Hard cheese



Angelo Primo 2010
Cantine Paradiso (Apulia, Italy)

Uva di Troia

Price: € 15.00

Score

- Intense ruby red and nuances of garnet red, little transparency.
- Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of black cherry, blueberry and blackberry followed by aromas of plum, dried violet, tobacco, carob, chocolate, vanilla and menthol.
- Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness.
- Persistent finish with flavors of black cherry, plum and blackberry.
- 12 months in barrique, 3 months in steel tanks, 4 months in bottle.
- Broiled meat and barbecue, Roasted meat, Stewed meat, Hard cheese*



Capotesta 2010
Cantine Paradiso (Apulia, Italy)

Primitivo

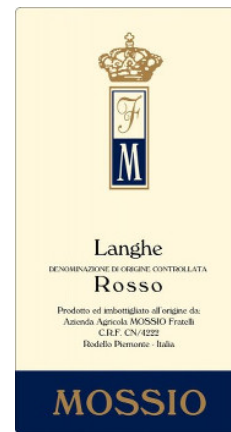
Price: € 16.00

Score

- Intense ruby red and nuances of garnet red, little transparency.
- Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of plum, blackberry and black cherry followed by aromas of dried

violet, blueberry, vanilla, chocolate, tobacco, cinnamon, mace and menthol.

- Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness.
- Persistent finish with flavors of plum, blackberry and black cherry.
- 12 months in barrique, 5 months in steel tanks, 4 months in bottle.
- Stuffed pasta with meat, Stewed meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Roasted meat*



Langhe Rosso 2012
Mossio (Piedmont, Italy)

Barbera (40%), Nebbiolo (40%), Dolcetto (20%)

Price: € 15.50

Score

- Brilliant ruby red and nuances of garnet red, little transparency.
- Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of plum, cherry and violet followed by aromas of raspberry, blueberry, vanilla, rose, chocolate, pink pepper, face powder, tobacco and menthol.
- Properly tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing crispness.
- Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, plum and raspberry.
- 12 months in cask, 2 months in bottle.
- Roasted meat, Braised and stewed meat with mushrooms, Hard cheese*



Dolcetto d'Alba Bricco Caramelli 2013
Mossio (Piedmont, Italy)

Dolcetto

Price: € 12.50

Score

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

Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant, starts with hints of cherry, blackberry and plum followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, strawberry, raspberry, geranium, cyclamen, anise, almond and mint.

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

Very persistent finish with long flavors of cherry, blackberry and blueberry.

Aged in steel tanks.

Cold cuts, Pasta with meat and mushrooms, Roasted white meat, Sauteed meat



Alte d'Altesi 2012
Altesino (Tuscany, Italy)

Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

Price: € 20.00

Score

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

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

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

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

14 months in barrique, 3 months in bottle.

Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Braised and stewed meat, Hard cheese



Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli 2010
Altesino (Tuscany, Italy)

Sangiovese

Price: € 65.00

Score

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

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

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

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

24 months in cask, 4 months in barrique, 4 months in bottle.

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

EVENTS

News

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



NOT JUST WINE

Aquavitae

Review of Grappa, Distillates and Brandy

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



Acquavite di Vinaccia Barricata
Giusti Dal Col (Veneto, Italy)
 (Distiller: Distilleria Centopercento)

pomace of white and red berried grapes

Price: € 25.00 - 500ml

Score ❖❖❖☆

Limpid, brilliant amber color.

Intense, clean, pleasing and refined with aromas of prune, vanilla, citrus fruit peel, tobacco, hazelnut, peach jam, date and honey with almost imperceptible alcohol pungency.

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

Persistent finish with flavors of prung, honey and peach jam.

Distilled in a batch steam operated alembic still and aged in barrique.



Wine Parade

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

Rank		Wine, Producer
1	↗	Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli 2009, Altesino
2	↘	Adarmando 2011, Tabarrini
3	↘	Montiano 2011, Falesco
4	↗	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Podium 2010, Garofoli
5	↘	I Sodi di San Niccolò 2008, Castellare di Castellina
6	↗	Brunello di Montalcino Vigneto Manachiara 2007, Tenute Silvio Nardi
7	↗	Torgiano Rosso Riserva Rubesco Vigna Monticchio 2007, Lungarotti
8	↘	Sagrantino di Montefalco Collepiano 2007, Arnaldo Caprai
9	↗	Offida Rosso Il Grifone 2008, Tenuta Cocci Grifoni
10	↘	Pelago 2009, Umani Ronchi
11	↗	Trento Extra Brut Riserva Lunelli 2006, Ferrari
12	↘	Villa Gresti 2006, Tenuta San Leonardo
13	↗	Camartina 2011, Querciabella
14	↘	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi 2007, Tedeschi
15	☆	Trento Extra Brut Perlé Nero 2007, Ferrari

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry