

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

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About Certain Restaurateurs Who Believe to Be Sly

Milan, Isola district, in an unusually sultry evening to be the beginning of June. Not so far, by just walking to the end of a street, there is Piazzale Carlo Archinto, the place where the great Luigi Veronelli was born - his family had a house right in this square - and here he lived the first part of his life. Isola district probably is one of the most typical places of the capital of Lombardy, where, maybe, it can still be found a certain *milanese identity*, of what it is left of a Milan of the past and that, today, they preferred to barter with a frivolous and frantically empty appearance. Isola district, with its straight streets, it is rich in restaurants and places where you can spend some good time, placidly sitting at a table: it is quite impossible not to find the right place for spending some good time. Right this sultry evening of June seems to be the right occasion to go to a restaurant of this district, a place I added a long time ago in my personal list of places to visit.

The restaurant also offers the chance to have a dinner outside, in a gazebo in the adjacent street. It is a pity to be late: what they can offer is a table in the inside room, a place near a window looking out to this street, it seems to promise a sort of relief to the sultry heat. The table is attended by a waiter who, according to what I can understand, is also the head waiter and sommelier of the restaurant, he seems to be gentle and welcoming, two qualities I always appreciate and like. Everything seems to be right - according to what this place can offer - I am certainly not expecting to have the culinary and gastronomic experience of my life. Indeed, I certainly expect a lot less: by considering what I see, I guess the service and quality will be the one you usually get in an average restaurant. After all, the furniture and table setting, the organization of service and reception, cannot make me think about something different from that. So far, so good.

As usual, I focus on wine list as I generally order my meal according to the wine I wish to have. It is not something I do every time, I however admit this is what I do most of the times, also according to the restaurant and what they have in their menu and wine list. In a sultry evening like that, I am think-

ing about the relief a fine glass of white wine can give and this seems to be the right time for having a Fiano di Avellino. The wine list, to tell the truth, has just one, so I do not have alternatives. It is a wine usually sold in wine shops at about ten euros, here they serve it at the table for twenty-five. A pretty high profit for a wine the restaurateur certainly buys for about five euros: it is obvious it is the common habit of certain "restaurateurs" who believe wine is something to speculate on and from which getting high profits. It is also true that, knowing its wholesale price - I personally know its producer - and the price at which can be usually found in wine shops, it is up to me to order it or not. After all, the price is clearly stated in the wine list, although vintage is missing and this is something I always consider to be bad.

I admit these high profits always make me think about the typical "sly restaurateur", one of those who believe clients are usually *naïve persons* and can be deceived and cheated the way they like. For these "intelligent restaurateurs", wine represents a product from which getting very high profits, while complaining they do not sell it and have a lot of bottles in the cellar. They do not understand a wine sold at an honest price makes them sell a second bottle to the same table and, by uncorking a second bottle, they may also sell more dishes. The wine I ordered has been brought to the table, served by this "head waiter", whom, after having uncorked the bottle, turns around and smells the cork. With a smile, takes the bottle and pours the wine in my glass for a preliminary tasting. I smell the wine and - alas - it is unequivocally corked. It can happen, of course, although I wonder what the "head waiter" smelled when he turned around.

«Pardon me, the wine is corked», I say. «Do you think so?», he replies. «I think so!», I insist. The "head waiter" takes the cork from his pocket, still screwed in the corkscrew, and removes it with his *bare hands*. This is not however something I would have passed on: when I order a wine at the restaurant, I always want them to leave the cork at my table; this is something I would have asked him anyway. By holding the cork with his hands, he quickly passes it under my nose: he prob-

Contents

About Certain Restaurateurs Who Believe to Be Sly	1
WINE TASTING	
Contrasts of Passito di Pantelleria and Cinque Terre Sciacchetra	2
Wines of the Month	4
EVENTS	
News	8
NOT JUST WINE	
Aquavitae	8
Wine Parade	8

DiWINEtaste OnLine

- ▷ Home Page - www.DiWineTaste.com
- ▷ Wine Guide ▷ Aquavitae ▷ EnoForum ▷ Polls
- ▷ EnoGames (EnoQuiz - EnoGlass - EnoTemp) ▷ Events
- ▷ Serving Wine ▷ Back Issues ▷ Wine Place Guide
- ▷ MailBox ▷ Wine Parade ▷ Mailing List
- ▷ Tell a friend about DiWineTaste ▷ Alcohol Test

ably thought that, by doing do, it was quite impossible for me to smell something. «Sir» - I tell him - «it is so evident the cork is tainted by TCA». I wonder whether he knows what it is. «It certainly is the smell of barrique», he says with a huge smile. «Well» - I say - «this would be quite bizarre as this wine has been aged in a steel tank. Don't you think so?». I see he has now a surprised and irritated look, then he says he would have replaced the bottle, of course. He also says, with an arrogant and conceited voice, he is an expert and that - besides working in that restaurant - he is a retailer of wine, two things I personally consider to be aggravating.

He takes the bottle and glass away and, after sometimes, he comes back with a new bottle. Same ceremonial, he uncorks the bottle and smells the cork. And of course, the very same funny show: he removes the cork from the corkscrew with his bare and quickly passes it under my nose. «Pardon me», I say while I take the cork from his hand by using my table napkin. This time the cork seems to be right, the "head waiter" serves the wine and I believe that was the end of this episode. Food is nothing special, not bad but certainly not fancy, it is just the same you would get in so many restaurants. The final surprise is however in the bill. The wine is listed just once - 25 euros - while a dish I ordered once and sold at 10 euros, is listed twice. In other words, the corked bottle, paid about 5 euros by the restaurateurs, has been charged with a dish I did not order and costing twice that amount. Not only the restaurateurs did not want to lose the cost of the faulty bottle, he also wanted to make a profit of it. Dear *sly restaurateurs* and dear *expert head waiter* and retailer of wines, besides having behaved in a dishonest and ignoble way, I will not ever come to your place again and, don't worry about this, I will spread a very bad word about you and your restaurant whenever I can. And I did that already. What goes around comes around: I too, sometimes and my way, am "sly".

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WINE TASTING

Contrasts of Passito di Pantelleria and Cinque Terre Sciacchetra

A comparison about two Italian areas so distant one from each other, two different wines including the grapes used for their productions

Sweet wines, those made from dried grapes, as well as fortified wines, belong to less consumed style by modern consumers. Once considered as medical remedies for the treatment and rehabilitation of patients, sweet wines were always found in the tables of noble and wealth people, in particular to show off their wealthy status. Very expensive wines - something true for quality wines and those really made from dried grapes - they made the glory of certain wine areas of the world, a fame that, in many cases, is still alive today. It is enough to name a couple of them - Sauternes and Tokaji - in order to evoke in many wine lovers' mind the idea of an excellent nectar, both emblems of very high and historical quality. It must be said, for the sake of truth, most of the charm of these wines is also thanks to the effects of *Botrytis Cinerea* - also known as *noble rot* - capable of enriching the elegance of these wines.

The decline of these prestigious wines is also because of the change of taste and fads of our times, in which dry wines represent the main wine making model. Sweet wines made from dried grapes and, even more, those made from grapes affected by noble rot, represent a quite demanding wine making task. Last but not the least, it is something quite expensive as well, because what you get from dried grapes is far lesser than what you get by making table wines. In general terms, dried grapes lose a significant quantity of water - and therefore juice - something which can also be more than 40% of weight, then making a far lesser quantity of wine. Despite of modern trends in consumption, sweet wines made from dried grapes represent one of the most complex and amazing sensorial exercises for any taster. The complexity of these wines is in fact the most demanding task any taster can experience from his or her glass.

Sicily is a land of great sweet wines made from dried grapes. In this island are in fact made some of the most famous sweet wines of Italy, such as the renowned Passito di Pantelleria, Malvasia delle Lipari and Moscato di Siracusa. Sicily seems to be particularly suited for the production of this style of wines, not only for the generosity of sun, but also for the varieties particularly suited for the making of sweet wines. Protagonist of sweet Sicilian wines certainly is Moscato di Alessandria - known in the island as *Zibibbo* - which, besides being used for Passito di Pantelleria, is also found in many IGT sweet wines of the region. Coming from Egypt, Moscato di Alessandria was introduced in Sicily by Phoenicians and since then used for the production of sweet wines. Moscato di Alessandria seems to be so well suited for the production of sweet wines that even the name used in Sicily to call this grape can confirm that.

The term *Zibibbo* in fact derives from Arab *zabib*, meaning "dried grape", confirming the use they have always made from this variety, that is allowed to dry and consumed as a dried

fruit or vinified. The best land for Moscato di Alessandria certainly is the charming Pantelleria island, the place where it is made the renowned “passito”, an absolute excellence of Sicilian and Italian wine making. Here vineyards, cultivated with the *alberello* technique, have a charming and particular character, cultivated in the typical terracing, a technique introduced by Arabs in this island. A viticultural practice unique and special, for which UNESCO wanted to nominate the “traditional agricultural practice of cultivating the *vite ad alberello* (head-trained bush vines) of the community of Pantelleria, as heritage of humanity. From these precious vineyards is being harvested Zibibbo grape and, after having properly dried under the sun, it is crushed and made a very sweet and dense must, used for the production of Passito di Pantelleria.

Far from Pantelleria, we find another place where it is practiced a charming viticulture, that is the land of Cinque Terre, in province of La Spezia, Liguria. For the specific beauty of the place, coastlines, hillsides and how man has been capable of taking advantage of the nature of these places, Cinque Terre have been nominated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. In these lands are produced white wines with Bosco, Albarola and Vermentino grapes, including the famous Sciacchetra, one of the most looked for and rare sweet wines made from dried grapes in Italy. Vineyards are cultivated in very steep terracing - pieces of land adapted from the wild nature - and vines are cultivated as bushes, a typical practice in areas characterized by strong wind. Viticulture and harvesting are done in quite extreme conditions as to require, in certain cases, the use particular monorail carriages running along the steep and rugged sides sloping down to the sea.

In these lands, adapted from the severity of nature in order to allow the cultivation of vine, are harvested the precious grapes that, after having been properly dried, give life to the rare and precious Cinque Terre Sciacchetra. The production of this wine is very low, also by considering the grapes cultivated in Cinque Terre are also used for dry white wines. Having a deep golden color, sometimes intense amber as well, Sciacchetra is a sweet wine of rare elegance and complexity. This characteristic is also the result of the minimum aging time set by the production disciplinary and which must be of at least one year, at least until the first day of November of the next year following harvesting. Sciacchetra is a rare wine and, maybe, also because of the limited interest for sweet wines of our times, it does not benefit from the fame of other wines belonging to the same category. This precious wine of Liguria however represents one of the highest and more prestigious excellences of Italian and worldwide wine making.

The wines we will choose for our tasting will belong to the same vintage and must not however be older than two years. We should notice, first of all, Sciacchetra is produced with three grapes - Bosco, Albarola and Vermentino - whereas Passito di Pantelleria is made from just one: Zibibbo. Moreover, it should be said that, as opposed to Moscato di Alessandria, the three varieties used for Sciacchetra are not aromatic. We should also notice in the production of Sciacchetra is usually favored a higher percentage of Bosco grape because of the thickness of its skin, a characteristic limiting the breaking of berries. A fundamental factor allowing the use of sound berries, as opposed to what happens when grapes having a thin skin are used instead. Wines will be poured in two glasses



The color of Cinque Terre Sciacchetra observed by tilting the glass

and tasted at the temperature of 15 °C (59 °F), in order to ensure the proper development of organoleptic qualities without favoring the excessive perception of sweetness.

Let's pour the two wines in their respective glasses and begin our tasting by contrast from the analysis of appearance. Sweet wines produced with dried grapes have a special and noble appearance since the very moment we evaluate color. In these wines hues are deep and brilliant, also getting elegant golden colors and even amber. Wines of our tasting are no exception to this characteristic. Passito di Pantelleria shows in fact an intense and deep golden color, almost amber, with evident nuances of golden yellow. The appearance of Cinque Terre Sciacchetra is, in general terms, deeper while showing an evident intense amber yellow color. Nuances, observed by tilting the glass and by evaluating the wine to the edge towards the opening, shows hues of the same color. The two wines show a good transparency, not so high, however allowing seeing the object put behind the glass.

The evaluation of the olfactory profile certainly represents the most amazing and extraordinary part of the sensorial tasting of sweet wines made from dried grapes. Dense aromas, complex, sometimes complicated, sweet wines made from dried grapes - when produced with quality criteria - offer to the taster one of the highest educational exercise possible. So different from the typical aromas of table wines - and they too are of course charming - the evaluation of the olfactory profile of sweet wines produced with dried grapes requires a lot of concentration and attention. The richness of these wines is given both by the use of dried grapes - a process that, as a matter of fact, concentrates the juice inside the berry - as well as time and aging. These wines, besides being capable of aging for many years and becoming, at the same time, more complex, are usually sold after many months, even years, from harvesting.

Let's proceed with the olfactory analysis of the two wines. By keeping the glasses in vertical position and without swirling, let's proceed with the preliminary smell of the two wines. Let's smell the glass of Passito di Pantelleria and, after that, the one of Cinque Terre Sciacchetra: the aromatic difference of the two wines is evident. Moscato di Alessandria - or Zibibbo - offers to the nose an aromatic character sim-

ilar to grape juice, whereas in Sciacchetra this characteristic seems to be absent, while perceiving a strong aroma of raisin. Both wines offer to the nose a complex character in which can be perceived aromas of dried fruits, including dried fig, date and raisin. In Passito di Pantelleria can be perceived almond, whereas in Cinque Terre Sciacchetra will be found walnut, while having in common candied fruits, honey and citrus fruit peel. Passito di Pantelleria sometimes offer to the nose aromas of lychee, lavender and aromatic herbs, including sage and thyme. In both wines can be perceived strong aromas of white and yellow fruit jams, in particular apricot and peach.

The taste of Passito di Pantelleria and Cinque Terre Sciacchetra seem to have more common characteristics instead of contrasts. The attack of the two wines, something obviously happening in this style, is characterized by an evident sweetness. The must used for the production of these wines is, as a consequence of the drying of grapes, very concentrated and dense, therefore in the mouth is perceived a full and robust structure. To this is also added a pleasing roundness and, for certain aspects, this is unavoidable, a characteristic increasing the pleasingness of these wines. Also alcohol, found in significant quantities in both wines, contributes to the increasing of sweetness and roundness, despite it plays a role in the balance of wine with its burning sensation. The fundamental element in these wines in order to reach a proper balance is represented by acidity, a factor making a sweet wine pleasing and elegant or sickly-sweet. In both wines it is in fact perceived a remarkable acidity: not just a pleasing sensation but also an essential factor for balance.

Another amazing characteristic of sweet wines produced with dried grapes certainly is the finish, made of the sensations the wine leaves in the mouth after swallowing. The persistence of Passito di Pantelleria and Cinque Terre Sciacchetra is very good, wines that - on this regard - will never disappoint with a very long finish. Both wines leave in the mouth a sensation of balance, in which can be perceived both sweetness and roundness, balanced by a pleasing acidity. The difference in these wines is expressed by the flavors perceived in the mouth. In Passito di Pantelleria can be appreciated the characteristic flavor of grape and dried apricot, whereas in Cinque Terre Sciacchetra can be mainly perceived raisin, dried fig and honey, an undoubtedly elegant finish in both cases. Two great wines, coming from two charming lands in which viticulture represents - for certain aspects - a challenge between man and nature, capable of making divine nectars, generous of high and noble emotions.



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



Tredici M 2014 Colline di Sopra (Tuscany, Italy)

🍷 Moscato Bianco

Price: € 9.50

Score ❖❖❖★

- 👁️ Brilliant straw yellow and nuances of greenish yellow, very transparent.
- 👂 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of grape, peach and lychee followed by aromas of apple, pear, lemon, orange blossom and sage.
- 👄 Crisp attack and however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness.
- 🍷 Persistent finish with flavors of grape, peach and lychee.
- 📅 6 months in steel tanks.
- 🍴 *Pasta and risotto with crustaceans, Broiled crustaceans, Stewed fish, Cheese*



Larà 2012
Colline di Sopra (Tuscany, Italy)

 Merlot, Syrah

Price: € 8.50

Score 

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

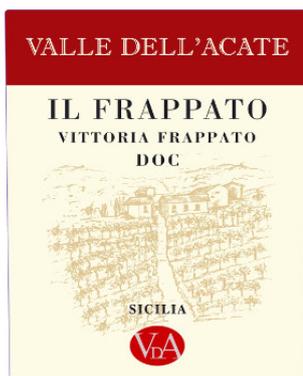
 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of black cherry, black currant and plum followed by aromas of blueberry, violet, blackberry and carob.

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

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

 8 months in steel tanks.

 *Stuffed pasta, Roasted meat, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed meat*



Vittoria Frappato 2014
Valle dell'Acate (Sicily, Italy)

 Frappato

Price: € 10.00

Score 

 Brilliant ruby red and nuances of ruby red, moderate transparency.

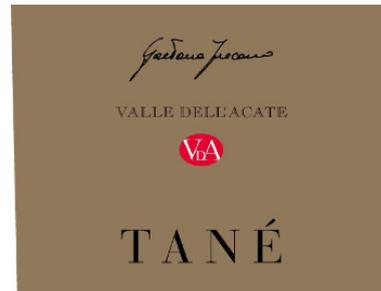
 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of cherry, blackberry and raspberry followed by aromas of strawberry, violet, plum, cyclamen and blueberry.

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

 Persistent finish with flavors of cherry, blackberry and raspberry.

 6 months in steel tanks, 3 months in bottle.

 *Cold cuts, Pasta with meat, Sauteed meat, Fish soups*



Tané 2010
Valle dell'Acate (Sicily, Italy)

 Nero d'Avola, Syrah

Price: € 25.00

Score 

 Brilliant ruby red and nuances of brick red, moderate transparency.

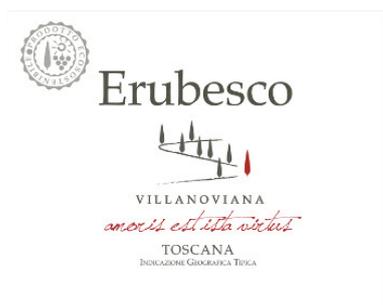
 Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of prune, blackberry jam and dried violet followed by aromas of black cherry jam, carob, vanilla, chocolate, tobacco, mace and menthol.

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

 Persistent finish with flavors of prune, blackberry jam and black cherry jam.

 12 months in barrique, 14 months in bottle.

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



Erubesco 2013
Villanoviana (Tuscany, Italy)

Merlot (70%), Cabernet Franc (30%)

Price: € 11.50

Score

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

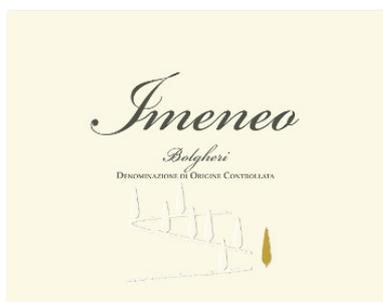
Intense, clean, pleasing and refined, starts with hints of black currant, black cherry and blueberry followed by aromas of violet, blueberry, raspberry and carob.

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

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

6 months in cement tanks, 6 months in bottle.

Stuffed pasta, Broiled meat and barbecue, Stewed meat



Bolgheri Rosso Imeneo 2010
Villanoviana (Tuscany, Italy)

Merlot (60%), Cabernet Franc (40%)

Price: € 17.00

Score

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

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

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

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

10 months in barrique.

Roasted meat, Stewed meat with mushrooms, Hard cheese



Amarone della Valpolicella 2011
Tedeschi (Veneto, Italy)

Corvina (30%), Corvinone (30%), Rondinella (30%), Oseleta, Negrara, Dindarella, Rossignola (10%)

Price: € 31.00

Score

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

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

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

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

3 years in cask, 6 months in bottle.

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



Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Riserva Capitel Monte Olmi 2009
Tedeschi (Veneto, Italy)

Corvina (30%), Corvinone (30%), Rondinella (30%), Oseleta, Negrara, Dindarella, Croatina, Forselina (10%)

Price: € 56.50

Score

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

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

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

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

4 years in cask, 6 months in bottle.

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



Soave Danieli 2014
Fattori (Veneto, Italy)

Garganega

Price: € 6.50

Score

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

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

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

Persistent finish with flavors of apple, pear and peach.

Aged in steel tanks.

Pasta and risotto with fish and crustaceans, Sauteed fish, Vegetable soups



Soave Motto Piane 2013
Fattori (Veneto, Italy)

Garganega

Price: € 10.60

Score

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

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

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

Very persistent finish with long flavors of apple, plum and medlar.

Made from Garganega grape and dried for 40 days, aged in steel tanks and cask.

Pasta and risotto with vegetable and crustaceans, Mushrooms soups, Sauteed white meat, Roasted fish

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.



Grappa di Brunello Oro dei Carati
Nannoni (Tuscany, Italy)

 Pomace of Brunello di Montalcino

Price: € 32.00 - 700ml

Score ❖❖❖❖

-  Limpid, colorless and crystalline.
-  Intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant with aromas of plum, black cherry, hazelnut, raspberry, dried violet 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 plum, black cherry and hazelnut.
-  Distilled in a batch steam operated alembic still.



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

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry