

DiWINEtaste

Wine Culture and Information

International Edition

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About Men and Wines

Wine exists because of the existence of men. Vine, for its legitimate biological and survival needs, would have never made wine. Not even vinegar. Nature, it is well evident, has no interest in wine: it simply is a product having no use for Nature's needs and goals. On the other hand, man really does: it is since tens of centuries, year after year, he keeps on making this *enjoyable* beverage, for his own pleasure, as well as for affirming his commercial skill and, with that, the chance of making an economic profit. With time, man has given wine many meanings, ritual and sacred ones, as well as becoming an essential element of social life with which have been celebrated the most significant and important moments of history. To the wine was also given less noble meanings, quite disreputable, because of its well known effects on the health, something usually happening when one abuses of it or exceeds on its consumption.

A *versatile* beverage, just like many things created by man, it gets a different meaning according to traditions, history, culture and social contexts. Vine - which notoriously is a liana and, for its nature, creeps to trees and other things in order to get a reliable support - it has been *domesticated* in order to favor its cultivation according to "man's needs" and to make wine. Wine does exist because man exists. Etruscans understood the "wild" nature of the vine, in times before the ancient Greeks arrived to Italy. Etruscans were not used to drink a lot of wine, they however understood its commercial value and therefore they made it. Some Etruscan amphora have been found even in Burgundy, probably used for transporting wine, even though it is not clear how Etruscan wine actually reached Burgundy. Etruscans favored the nature of vine and let it creeping to the trunk of high trees.

The ancient viticultural technique called *alberata* - that is allowing the vine to creep on trees - a technique almost disappeared today, was in fact an Etruscan technique, then abandoned when ancient Greeks arrived to Italy and spread their viticultural techniques. Everything however had the very same goal: cultivating the vine in order to allow wine production. Vine, it is very likely, did not have any interest in this forced change. It is not however a price paid for nothing and without

having anything in return. Also vine, undoubtedly, did benefit of evident advantages from the interest showed by men for the production of wine. Vine today is widely spread all over the world, the activity of research done by men allowed the improvement of its species through clonal selection. For the sake of truth, it should be noticed man has also caused the risk of vine extinction, such as in case of phylloxera or some miserable phytosanitary practices.

The result has however been extraordinary: a marriage between man and Nature which allowed - wine just like many other products - the production of a beverage of such a high cultural, social and anthropological value. An old saying reminds us that *you can learn from your own mistakes*, and this is what certainly happened in the complex interaction between man and Nature in the production of wine. Like to say, Nature provided the essential elements for the production of wine - vine and territory, above all - man, by making use of his genius, culture, passion and honesty, has been successful in taking advantage of these conditions in order to make a noble beverage. The concept of nobility certainly is a relative matter and, by considering what sometimes is being poured in glasses, the borderline between nobility and roughness is frequently uncertain, if not incomprehensible. Roughness in wine is frequently kept hidden by ignoble reasons of commercial or cultural speculation and, sad to say, they frequently are successful in their *rough* goal.

There are, lucky us, many and extraordinary examples of men who worked for the keeping and the development of wine nobility. Men who kept themselves behind the scenes and away from definitions, labels, fashion and speculation of the moment, who preferred to make wine by listening to their passion and culture, instead of selling an empty "fashionable definition" with which concealing their wines. Many of them, after having given a fundamental contribution, also to the advantage of all the other ones who today make wine or work in this world - and this certainly is a noble intent - have been then discredited or denied. Besides the infamous proof of ingratitude, it is also the proof there are many who sometimes talk about subjects and men without knowing their history, origin, works

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and importance. They simply open their mouths, talk in order to say something. These “subjects” too - unfortunately - are by many considered “men of wine”.

Writing a list of these great men who have contributed in such a high and fundamental way to the history of wine would be very hard, also because I would risk to unjustly omit someone. It would also be harder to write a list of those who today denies the work of these great men - subjects who think, poor them, to be even better - and who cannot understand without their work, today many of them would simply have a different job. A job probably not about wine. As far as I am concerned, I believe I am grateful to many persons, also to those I have never personally met but who however taught me a lot with what they wrote or did. I owe the same gratitude to all the ones I personally know - some of them honor me with their precious friendship and esteem - and I am aware of the fact I did not give them in return as much as they taught me. Last but not the least, I am also grateful to all the wines I tasted so far: they too taught me a lot - for better or for worse - not only their history and life, but also the ones of those men who made them.

Antonello Biancalana



WINE TASTING

Temperature and Sensorial Tasting

Sensorial perception is strongly affected by the temperature at which a wine is being evaluated. Not just a simple number, but a fundamental factor

The temperature at which a wine is served represents a critical element for the correct perception and development of its organoleptic characteristics. The right temperature of service can in fact improve the pleasingness of a wine as well as drastically change its real nature. For this reason, temperature is the best friend of any sommelier, whom - in order to ensure

the best possible condition of tasting - use it according to the sensorial qualities of wine to be attenuated or emphasized. In other words, the accurate choice of the temperature of service can be proficiently used to *hide* certain faults as well as emphasizing specific qualities. A mediocre wine, therefore, can taste better than what it really is; likewise, an excellent wine can be worsened when served to the wrong temperature.

It must however be said temperature is not capable of making astonishing sensorial miracles: a bad quality wine can be slightly improved according to the temperature at which it is being tasted, it will however keep its real quality. The temperature at which a beverage or food is tasted has the property of changing the sensorial perception, including tactile stimuli. A food or beverage tasted at different temperatures will have, not only different tastes and aromas, but also different tactile profiles, by drastically affecting its organoleptic perception. For example, we could consider the difference in tasting a cold beverage - even the *simple* water will do - with the very same beverage tasted at a quite higher temperature. Its sensorial profile, as well as the psychological approach towards the beverage, will be different.

It could be considered, for example, the tasting of a cold beverage in summer: psychologically speaking, the low temperature anticipates the pleasure it can give in terms of *wellness* to contrast the hot temperature. The same beverage, served cold in winter, will give a completely different psychological effect, by wishing a higher temperature or even hot. The pleasingness of a beverage - and wine, of course, is no exception - is strongly determined by the temperature of service which can be properly used according to room temperature and season in order to improve its enjoyability. Not only from a tactile point of view - a very important sensorial characteristic - but also, and in particular, for the improvement of the perception of aromas, flavors and tastes.

The effects of temperature on the sensorial perception of a food or beverage are - or, better said, should be - well known to wine tasters. Every taster knows that tasting a wine at a *wrong temperature* can significantly affect the reliability of his or her job. Like already said in the past, wine quality is expressed in function of the absence of faults, or - at least - to their minimum possible presence and minimum impact. The temperature at which a wine is tasted can in fact *hide* the presence of faults or, better said, strongly attenuates their perception. This is true both for the perception of wine aromas as well as for its taste. Tasting a wine at a very low temperature, means strongly *flattening* its sensorial profile, as well as significantly attenuating the impact and the intensity of any possible fault.

As for the temperature of tasting - that is the critical and analytic operation having the goal of determining the quality and characteristics of a wine - it follows principles different from the ones used for service. The temperature of service, that is the one used for the best expression of a wine's pleasingness and used in *ordinary consumption*, it is in fact based on rules allowing the reaching of this goal. In the ordinary service of wine, temperature is used in order to emphasize certain wine qualities and the attenuation of any possible fault. On the other hand, in sensorial tasting the goal is to favor conditions such to proficiently perceive any possible presence of faults and, therefore, the temperature is determined according different criteria. On this context, therefore, it is favored the expression of faults.

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Among the worst pitfalls of sensorial tasting there is low temperature. If it is true - we will see later - a high temperature can favor and emphasize the perception of certain wine qualities, also negative ones, low temperature has the property of attenuating most of the stimuli. For this reason, in choosing the temperature of sensorial tasting of wines, it is usually favored a temperature slightly higher than the *common* ones and used for the service of wine. The reason is essentially associated to the best development of the organoleptic sensations - good and bad ones - although this could also favor the excessive development of the ones sensitive to heat. It is - in any case - an acceptable compromise in order to favor the perception of the worst enemies of quality: faults.

Let's understand the effects of temperature on the many sensorial aspects during the evaluation of a wine. The only sensorial characteristic not affected by temperature is appearance. If it is true temperature however affects the appearance of wine, this effect is the result of a slow process taking place within months or years. In the evaluation of appearance during sensorial tasting, temperature is therefore a negligible factor as the change to which the wine is subjected is very short. We will see later, temperature has evident effects both on the development of aromas as well as of taste, even completely changing - with an excessively wrong use - the profile of a wine.

In the olfactory evaluation of a wine, the first aspect to be analyzed - always - is the presence of faults, sometimes being evident and *macroscopic*, sometimes *light* and *weak*, as to be completely ignored by a careless nose. As for the development and the perception of aromas, temperature plays a fundamental role and according to the volatility of odorous substances. As the temperature goes down, the perception of aromas will be attenuated and completely disappear, whereas high temperatures favor their development, including the violent ethereal character of ethyl alcohol. Temperatures lower than 5 °C (40 °F) will significantly attenuate the development of any aroma, whereas the ones higher than 20 °C (68 °F) will excessively emphasize the ethereal character of alcohol, while making all the other aromas smell as *rough*.

On this regard, it can be done a simple experiment. Let's take a wine and pour the same quantity in two tasting glasses, then let's seal both with a cellophane film. One glass will be



Sensorial tasting of white wines is done at a temperature higher than the one used in service

kept in the freezer of your fridge, whereas the other will be left at room temperature. After one hour, remove the cellophane film from both glasses and smell the two wines: the cold one will be almost *mute* and with no aromas, whereas the other one will develop more intense aromas and it will be possible to smell - in particular in summer - the ethereal and volatile character of ethyl alcohol. Another experiment which can be done is about a wine having an evident fault, such as - for example - the *infamous* cork taint. After having cooled down the wine in a freezer for one hour, the disgusting fault will seem to be disappeared, more precisely, its perception will be strongly attenuated. The same wine, as the temperature goes up, will seem to accentuate this displeasing smell.

Temperature substantially affects the perception of taste and of tactile stimuli of a wine. The sensations generally defined as *round* - sweetness, the impact of alcohol and roundness - are emphasized with high temperatures and, on the other hand, are attenuated by low ones. Some gustatory sensations defined as *hard*, have an opposite behavior, in particular astringency and the perception of bitter flavor. On this regard, we should notice the sensation produced by astringency is to be considered as a tactile stimulus, produced by the interaction of tannins with the mucosa of oral cavity and, in particular, with its property of bonding with proteins. Astringency in wine also produces a bitter flavor, which nature and intensity depend on the type of polyphenols found in a wine and on their *ripeness* at the moment of tasting.

Astringency increases the intensity of its tactile stimulus as the temperature goes down, whereas tends to get *rounder* as the temperature goes up. The perception of bitter flavor follows - in general terms - the same type of pattern: a low temperature accentuates its perception. On this regard it should be said the perception of a bitter flavor is also in function of *round* substances found in wine that, in this case, work a contrasting action. The perception of *round* substances - including sugar - is stronger as the temperature goes up, therefore, in this case, the contrasting action to the bitter flavor will be more effective. Carbon dioxide - responsible of effervescence in sparkling wines - changes its development according to temperature. Low temperatures significantly slow its release, therefore prolonging the *show* of bubbles in the glass.

According to an organoleptic point of view, carbon dioxide has a basically acidic taste, a gustatory sensation which perception remains unaltered with temperature changes. Acidity is well perceptible at any temperature, we should however notice its pleasingness is better at low temperatures. In sensorial tasting, white wines are usually evaluated at a temperature of 12-14 °C (52-57 °F) and according to their evolution, whereas reds are evaluated at a temperature of about 18 °C (64 °F). Sparkling wines are never evaluated at the *canonical* temperature of 8-10 °C (46-50 °F) because the perception of aromas and faults would be attenuated, therefore it is used a higher temperature instead. In any case, the temperature for tasting wines is never higher than 20 °C (68 °F), as this temperature would make alcohol volatility too aggressive and the finesse of aromas would be compromised. In sensorial tasting, it should be noticed the main goal is the evaluation of wine quality and the correspondence to its type. Temperature is one of the factors favoring - when correctly used - the conditions for a better analysis and, as such, it must be determined according to the

type of wine.



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



Barolo Arborina La Foia 2008 Cutro Marco (Piedmont, Italy)

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 38.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆

Barolo Arborina La Foia shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing and refined aromas that start with hints of cherry, plum and violet followed by aromas of blueberry, raspberry, vanilla, chocolate, cinnamon, tobacco and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and pleasing crispness, however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of cherry, plum and blueberry. Barolo Arborina La Foia ages for 4 years of which 2 in barrique.

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



Barolo Riserva La Foia 2005 Cutro Marco (Piedmont, Italy)

Grapes: Nebbiolo

Price: € 38.00

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

Barolo Riserva La Foia shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of brick red, moderate transparency. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas that start with hints of cherry, plum and dried violet followed by aromas of raspberry jam, cocoa, vanilla, tobacco, leather, dried rose, cinnamon, mace and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and pleasing crispness, however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of cherry, plum and blueberry. Barolo Riserva La Foia ages for 7 years of which 5 in cask.

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



Orcia Vin Santo 2004 Altesino (Tuscany, Italy)

Grapes: Trebbiano Toscano, Malvasia Toscana

Price: € 18.00 - 375ml

Score: ◆◆◆◆★

Orcia Vin Santo shows a brilliant amber yellow color and nuances of amber yellow, transparent. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of dried fig, raisin and almond followed by aromas of honey, almond, citrus fruits peel, caramel, leather, vanilla, date, tobacco and nail polish. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a sweet and round attack, however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleading crispness. The finish is persistent with flavors of raisin, dried fig and honey. Orcia Vin Santo ages for 7 years in small barrels followed by 4 months of aging in bottle.

Food match: Hard and piquant cheese, Dried fruit tarts



Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli 2008
Altesino (Tuscany, Italy)

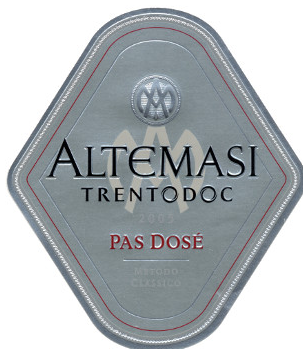
Grapes: Sangiovese

Price: € 65.00

Score: ♦♦♦♦☆

Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli shows a brilliant ruby red color and nuances of garnet red, moderate transparency. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of black cherry, plum and dried violet followed by aromas of blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, vanilla, chocolate, mace, licorice, tobacco and menthol. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, a tannic attack and however balanced by alcohol, full body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is persistent with flavors of black cherry, plum and blackberry. Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli ages for 4 years in cask, 4 months in barrique and 4 months in bottle.

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



Trento Pas Dosé Altemasi 2005
Cavit (Trentino, Italy)

Grapes: Chardonnay (60%), Pinot Noir (40%)

Price: € 21.53

Score: ♦♦♦♦☆

Trento Pas Dosé Altemasi shows a brilliant golden yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage. The nose denotes intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant which start with hints of apple, ripe banana and bread crust followed by aromas of plum, hazelnut, honey, pear jam, hawthorn, yeast, vanilla and mineral. The mouth has good correspondence to the nose, an effervescent and crisp attack, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors,

pleasing roundness. The base wine for the making of Trento Pas Dosé Altemasi ferments in barrique and referments in bottle on its lees for 78 months.

Food match: Pasta with fish and crustaceans, Stewed fish, Roasted white meat, Broiled crustaceans



Trento Riserva Brut Altemasi Graal 2005
Cavit (Trentino, Italy)

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

Price: € 28.50

Score: ♦♦♦♦♦

Trento Riserva Brut Altemasi Graal shows a brilliant golden yellow color and nuances of golden yellow, very transparent, fine and persistent perlage. The nose reveals intense, clean, pleasing, refined and elegant aromas which start with hints of ripe banana, apple and plum followed by aromas of bread crust, praline, yeast, honey, citrus fruits, butter, hawthorn, vanilla and mineral. The mouth has excellent correspondence to the nose, an effervescent and crisp attack, however balanced by alcohol, good body, intense flavors, pleasing roundness. The finish is very persistent with long flavors of ripe banana, apple and plum. The base wine for the production of Trento Riserva Brut Altemasi Graal ferments in barrique and then referments in bottle on its lees for 72 months.

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

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	↔	San Leonardo 2006, Tenuta San Leonardo
2	↗	Camartina 2008, Querciabella
3	↘	Trento Brut Riserva Methius 2006, Dorigati
4	↘	Avvoltore 2009, Moris Farms
5	↗	Brunello di Montalcino 2007, Donatella Cinelli Colombini
6	↘	Trento Talento Brut Riserva 2007, Letrari
7	↗	Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Podium 2010, Garofoli
8	↘	Confini 2007, Lis Neris
9	↗	Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi 2007, Tedeschi
10	↘	Franciacorta Pas Dosé Récemment Dégorgé 2006, Cavalleri
11	↗	Villa Gresti 2006, Tenuta San Leonardo
12	↘	Offida Rosso Il Grifone 2006, Tenuta Cocci Grifoni
13	↗	Langhe Riesling Herzu 2011, Ettore Germano
14	↘	Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Loreto 2007, Mastrojanni
15	↘	Sagrantino di Montefalco Collepiano 2007, Arnaldo Caprai

Legend: ↗ up ↘ down ↔ stable ☆ new entry